THE

SENATE DEBATES

(OFFICIAL REPORT)

FIRST SESSION 2003 – 2008

THE SENATE

Monday, August 14, 2006

The Senate met in the Senate Chamber, Parliament Buildings, on Monday, August 14, 2006, at 11.10 a.m.

PRESENT

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

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

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

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

Senator I. St. C. LINTON

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

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

Senator G. P. I. GOODING-EDGHILL

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

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

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

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

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

Senator Sir Allan FIELDS, K.C.M.G.

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

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

Senator A. A. BYNOE

Prayers were led by Rev. Father Errington Massiah.

Mr. PRESIDENT: The Senate is in session.

PRESENTATION OF PAPERS

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

1. Value Added Tax (Refund) (Marjorie Davis) Order, 2006.

2. Barbados Economic and Social Report, 2005.

3. Annual Report and Accounts of the Barbados Agricultural Management Co. Ltd. for the year ended June 30, 2005.

4. Instrument adopted by the International Labour Conference at its Ninety-second Session held in Geneva in June 2004 concerning Human Resources Development: Education, Training and Lifelong Learning.

5. Shipping (Incentives) (Yellowfin Water Sports Inc.) Order, 2006.

6. Shipping (Incentives) (C. R. Cruises Ltd.) Order, 2006.

7. Shipping (Incentives) (Maxi Yacht Challenge Inc.) Order, 2006.

8. Annual Report of the Chief Medical Officer 2002-2003.

9. Export Promotions and Marketing Fund Order, 2006.

10. Fifth Report of the Electoral and Boundaries Commission.

11. Draft Electoral and Boundaries Commission (Review of Boundaries) Order, 2006.

12. Duties, Taxes and Other Payments (Exemption) (William Gooding) Order, 2006.

13. Value Added Tax (Refund) (Covenant Life Teaching Centre) Order, 2006.

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS

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

The question was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

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

1. LIAT (1974) (Guarantee) (Amendment) Bill, 2006.

2. Telecommunications (Amendment) Bill, 2006.

3. Final Appropriation (2005-2006) Bill, 2006.

SENATOR THE HON. E. R. GRIFFITH: I beg to give notice of the following Resolutions:

1. A Resolution to approve the guarantee of the Government, in favour of Bombardier Services Corporation of the performance by LIAT (1974) Limited of aircraft maintenance, return condition obligations and repossession containing the terms and conditions as set out in the Schedule to the Resolution.

2. A Resolution to approve the guarantee by the Government of the payment of the principal sum of Twenty-two Million Dollars and interest thereon in respect of a bond issue by the Transport Board to RBTT Merchant Bank Limited.

On the motion of SENATOR THE HON. E. R. GRIFFITH, the following Bills were read a first time.

1. Immigration (Amendment) Bill, 2006.

2. Pre-Clearance (ICC World Cup West Indies 2007) Bill, 2006.

3. Small Business Development (Amendment) Bill, 2006.

4. Export Promotion and Marketing Fund (Amendment and Validation) Bill, 2006.

5. LIAT (1974) Limited (Guarantee) (Amendment) Bill, 2006.

6. Telecommunications (Amendment) Bill, 2006.

7. Final Appropriation (2005-2006) Bill, 2006.

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

PUBLIC BUSINESS

ORDER NO. 2 – TO MOVE THE SECOND READING OF THE IMMIGRATION (AMENDMENT) BILL, 2006

Mr. PRESIDENT: Senator Griffith.

SENATOR THE HON. E. R. GRIFFITH: Mr. President, the Bill before us is seeking to impose an obligation from the Master of the vessel, to transmit advance passenger data to the Immigration Department, in advance of the arrival of that vessel. It is part of the decision taken by the countries in the region, to accommodate the travel of persons, who are expected to visit the region during 2007, to view the staging of the World Cup 2007.

Sir, as you are aware, there will be crowds larger than those to which we have grown accustomed, and we wish to make their visit to the region as memorable and enjoyable as possible. In order to do so, we need to ensure that as they travel throughout the region, they can do so without much of the congestion and delays, that would arise if we did not put in place the appropriate measures.

The question of vessels providing advance information on the passengers, to various destinations is not new to those persons who travel frequently to the developed countries, that has now become standard, although most passengers may not be aware of it. Certainly, before the vessels exit Barbados, the information is provided to the receiving destination, through the Manifest of the names and other related information of the passengers.

Sir, it is being proposed that this same approach, be used in the region, during the staging of World Cup 2007. However, our existing legislation does not provide for that, and that is why we have decided to seek parliamentary approval for the amendments before us.
11.30 a.m.

This is an approach that has been adopted by the countries in the region, having studied the issue. Sir, the CARICOM Secretariat drafting facility have identified the type of legislation, which is necessary to facilitate this and the pre-clearance, which will come to us very shortly in another Bill.

The purpose of this is to give the receiving country the opportunity to screen those passengers, who are likely to present a security problem. Sir, having received the information in advance, with the identification of the individuals and their travel documents and other related information, it then becomes possible to match that information with information, which might have been compiled previously, as people travel across the region.

Therefore, those people who have a track record that suggests they may present a security problem, can be identified and dealt with on arrival, without holding up the other individuals from having a smooth passage through a particular country and so on.

In essence, that is the objective behind this Bill. It seeks to make amendments to our Immigration Act, to provide for the advance passenger information, and to impose an obligation on the Master of the particular vessel to submit that information.

The question is when will that information be submitted. The normal practice is for it to be submitted before the vessel leaves the country from which it is departing so that the information is transmitted to the receiving country in advance of the take-off of the particular vessel, be it an aircraft or a ship.

I am sure that some of us here know of situations, where vessels have not been allowed to depart from the country of departure, because clearance at the receiving end was not given. This gives some idea of how important the receiving countries that now have this system in place treat this procedure.

I do not believe, Mr. President, that it is a system which will create any difficulty for an individual, those of us who stay within the four corners of the law and who abstain from some of the practices that are now creating problems for travellers, will not have any reason to worry about this amendment. Sir, as indicated here, it is designed to facilitate the travel and movement of persons through the region, without any difficulty.

My only hope is that after the World Cup, some of these measures which are put in place by the countries in the region to facilitate travel, will remain so that those of us who live in the region will be spared some of the hassles that we now encounter, as we try to move around from place to place.

With those few remarks, Mr. President, I beg to move that this Bill be read a second time.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Senator Dr. Lowe.

SENATOR Dr. D. S. LOWE: Thank you, Mr. President.

I do not choose to detain the Chamber on this issue for very long, except that there are a couple of points that I thought I might raise, only to give the Honourable Minister the opportunity to perhaps raise them with those who will be involved in the implementation of this policy. Perhaps, Senator Grant who is always anxious to rise to his feet to defend matters relative to these issues, might be happy to have the opportunity to sound off.

The truth Mr. President, is that the Opposition agrees this is an important direction, given that we do anticipate the inflow and exiting of thousands of individuals, during the World Cup period. In recent times, Sir, as a precursor to this issue, we have known of circumstances where exaggerated lines of visitors at the airport would have created some cumbersomeness, if you will, in terms of keeping the flow of human traffic as free as possible, relative to getting in and out of the airport. I am not too familiar with what happens at the seaport, as much as I am at the airport.

Mr. President, only last week, I happen to come through the airport, and with the implementation of this policy, which is a good policy, we still have to ensure that there is a high level of efficiency on the ground, as it relates to expediting these issues, in a way that reduces any clogging of lines, when you come into the airport, both at the immigration point and at the exiting point, when you collect your baggage and you are on your way out of the terminal.

I noted with some curiosity because it created a stir up there, I believe, it was on Thursday evening. I believe that there are about 10 immigration booths – I speak under correction – and I noted that there were only three attendants at the time, and there must have been more than 100 people waiting to be cleared.

The only point I wish to make is that policy that is good, works only when efficiency accompanies the policy. It is very taxing when you go into any point of service or

point of sale, and there are available terminals for persons to be served, and you note that there is not an adequate deployment of human resources to handle the flow of the required services.

It was unpleasant for those persons who were there that were, perhaps, little less patient than I am, and other persons were at the time. I believe it is important that the immigration personnel be applauded for the very good work that they do. If it is the issue of unavailability of human capital, then I would think that is an issue that needs to be addressed rather urgently.

If it is an issue of deployment of your personnel, I think that is an issue that needs to be addressed, so as to ensure efficiency. I am not saying it is a regular occurrence. I have gone through Puerto Rico and Miami and I have seen hundreds of people trying to get out, scores of immigration personnel at different booths, where the process moved along with more purposefulness, than I have seen recently. It might have been just a one-time case, but since we are discussing this particular Bill, I think it might be important to pass on that piece of information, that a little more vigilance be given, in terms of how persons are deployed.

Sometimes it happens when you are coming in and sometimes it happens when you are going out. I think that it is really something that is easy to fix, once the persons who are responsible for supervising and managing those elements of service, are alerted that these are minor things that can sorrow service, if they are not attended to most appropriately.
11.40 a.m.

Mr. President, we understand the urgency and the importance of this Bill, and the Government has our full support relative to its passage in this Chamber.

Thank you, Mr. President.

SENATOR R. W. GRANT: Mr. President, I rise to give my support to this Bill, which I believe is a very important Bill dealing with advance passengers information. The Leader of Government Business would have already communicated to this Chamber the importance of having such information.

Mr. President, with the passage of this legislation, we will now be able to utilise the Advance Passenger Information System known as APIS, which is utilised by many countries throughout the globe.

Mr. President, immigration and certainly our immigration personnel are of extreme importance in ensuring that our tourism sector is one which is successful. When persons come to Barbados one of first persons they will meet will be the immigration officer and when they leave Barbados one of the last persons they will meet will be the immigration officer. The immigration officer therefore has a very critical and important role to play in the development of our tourism sector and ensuring that the tourism sector is indeed a success.

Mr. President, I listened to the comments from Senator Dr. Lowe. I am sorry that he did not give a bit more details as to the time he would have been at the airport and as to which aircraft it would have been that he would have come into Barbados. Sir, the reason why I say that is because I am aware that there are times at the airport when there are quite a number of aircraft on the ground and when the arrivals terminal can have a large number of passengers. Mr. President, I am also aware that when that occurs, there are also a significant number of immigration officers who are deployed in the arrivals terminal.

Mr. President, I would have communicated to this Chamber before that the two doors going into the Departure Lounge will be opened to better facilitate the movement of passengers through the Grantley Adams International Airport. Sir, in the past what would have happened is that there would have been a security officer, who would have checked the boarding passes and the passports and the passengers would have gone on then to the immigration officer who would have checked the ED Card. We have opened both doors and what is happening now is that the immigration officer is checking all of the documents, the passports, the ED Cards and the boarding passes. Sir, that makes it a lot easier for the movement and for the flow of passengers going through the Grantley Adams International Airport.

Sir, I should indicate that when you pass the immigration officers, there are now five scanners in place which will also help with the flow. However, all of those scanners will not always be utilised because there will be times, very early in the morning, when there will be no need to utilise all of the scanners, but certainly at peak times all of those scanners will be utilised. There are six counters for immigration officers, and certainly in peak times we are seeking to ensure that those counters are adequately manned.

Mr. President, I should inform this Chamber as well that passengers going through the Grantley Adams International Airport could travel to any destination with their carry-on luggage. The airport would have been in discussion only this morning with the TSA in the United States of America and the Department of Transport in the United Kingdom. Mr. President, it has been agreed to that persons travelling out of Barbados can travel with their hand luggage and passengers can also purchase duty-free items, whether those items be alcohol or perfume. I just thought, Sir, that I will communicate that to this Chamber.

Mr. President, when you go into the arrivals hall there are 20 counters for immigration officers to function at. Sir, with the implementation of this system, as we seek to ensure that we can better deal with the flow of passengers, it is not only important that we have the available counters, it is also important that we have the necessary number of immigration officers.

At present, there are 13 additional immigration officers who are presently going through training at the Grantley Adams International Airport because there is the clear recognition that as we bring more passengers to Barbados, as we have more aircraft coming to Barbados and as we are able to build our tourism arrival numbers that we need to have more immigration officers deployed at the Grantley Adams International Airport. Sir, there are 13 new or 13 additional immigration officers functioning at the Grantley Adams International Airport.

Mr. President, I should also wish to tell this Chamber that from the beginning of September the lines in the arrivals hall prior to going to the immigration officers will be snaked. We are awaiting the stanchions which should very shortly be in Barbados and we are going to utilise those stanchions to snake passengers going to the immigration officers in the arrivals terminal.

Mr. President, there are 20 counters for immigration officers. Fifteen of those counters will be utilised for regular passengers, four will be utilised for CARICOM nationals and one will be utilised for the flight crew, but when there is no flight crew utilising that counter area, that will also be utilised for CARICOM nationals.

Mr. President, I believe that this Bill is very important, particularly in a day and age when there are constantly threats of terrorism to allow the Immigration Department to be better able to evaluate those persons coming to Barbados.

Sir, I give my full support to this Bill.

SENATOR A. A. BYNOE: Mr. President, I rise to support this amendment to the Bill, which is before us seeking to put in place advance passenger clearance.

Mr. President, I think that we should also be seeing this Bill in the light of present circumstances where security has become vital to the airline industry and indeed to the travel industry, be it by air or by sea.

Mr. President, we therefore have to be cognisant of the fact that under the present-day circumstance, governments have got to do business differently in relation to passengers passing through the various ports. Advance passenger clearance is one of these facilities that will certainly improve or can improve security in this country and in other countries.

Mr. President, I believe that we should take it beyond merely what it is that we are focussing on at this point in time, which is the Cricket World Cup.
11.50 a.m.

Mr. President, I believe that perhaps the time has come for a new concept, in relation to baggage clearance, where it may be necessary to have a separate company responsible for the clearance of baggage throughout our airport. Sir, with the necessary mechanisms in place, we then perhaps could feel a lot safer with the clearance of baggage.

Mr. President, furthermore, I also believe that we have to take another look at passenger clearance, in relation to identity. I do not believe that everything the Americans proposed has merit in it but I believe their proposal for fingerprinting all passengers is one at which we should look.

Mr. President, I say that when I think of what is happening within the CARICOM region. We, in Barbados, and in this Government, are fully promoting the Caribbean Single Market and Economy structures, *et cetera*, but there are times when listening to the public, we wonder whether or not we have addressed all the areas that can affect the comfort and well-being of our citizens in Barbados. Sir, I say that in relation to the killings we have had elsewhere, especially in Guyana, where it would seem that there is, to some extent, a different way of doing business, in relation to how arguments and disputes are settled.

Mr. President, I am of the view that in order to give our citizens a greater sense of comfort, we should find that we have to move to the point of fingerprinting every person coming into this country, so that we are sure of the identity of that person. Sir, we do know at this time, that there are people who come today, under one name, with one passport, and the next week they will come under another name, with a different passport. Mr. President, I am saying that while looking at this Bill, we ought to go beyond merely the facilitating of passengers for Cricket World Cup, 2007 and look more broadly at the security of this country.

Mr. President, I thank you and I do support this Bill.

SENATOR R. O. MARVILLE: Mr. President, I rise in support of this Bill. Therefore, I find it rather not necessary to express too many views on it. However, there was a statement on the use of queues at the airport by the Honourable Senator, who has responsibility for tourism. I would like the Honourable Member, who presented the Bill, to answer the question as to when there would be special provisions for diplomats. I understand the CARICOM

labelling includes Barbadians and that is within the regulations of CARICOM but the Honourable Member did not mention about diplomats.

I thank you, Mr. President.

SENATOR G. P. I. GOODING-EDGHILL: Mr. President, I too would like to join other Honourable Senators in supporting this Bill.

Mr. President, there is often this view of persons travelling to Barbados, having to wait an inordinate length of time to be processed. I want to make the point that it is important that we recognise that, in terms of whatever is happening in the international arena, the whole threat of terrorism, it is important that we recognise the Immigration Department would have to do appropriate processing.

Mr. President, I would want the record to reflect that I wholeheartedly support the Immigration Department. The Immigration Department is responsible for our ports of entry, in terms of their security. Recently, as Senator Grant has made the point, they were given additional staff to help with the processing.

Mr. President, as recently as two Mondays ago, when I happened to be coming through the Grantley Adams International Airport, I did not find that I had a long wait for clearance but it is important we must recognise that in an arena and in a changing world, that we must have certain protections. I must say that the Immigration Department, in processing visitors and returning nationals, do an exceptionally good job, in terms of processing. Therefore, I would not want the message going out that the Immigration Department is not doing its job.

Mr. President, when the Immigration Department is compared to other ports of entry, and particularly those of us who travel quite often and have to travel to Miami International Airport, New York airports or elsewhere, I find the wait is even longer. Therefore, I am not going to join with anybody in the view of trying to get political support from elsewhere, in trying to give the impression that there are some long queues at the Immigration base in Barbados.

Mr. President, I think it would help the Immigration Department, if, oftentimes, they would communicate the processing time because it is not as long as other jurisdictions, certainly people are processed in an efficient manner. We also must recognise there are certain checks that must be done, for example, passport information must be checked. Therefore, it is only important that we recognise the hard work done by this Department.

Mr. President, the team of officers, lead by Mr. Greaves, are doing an outstanding job and, therefore, it would be unfair for persons to suggest... Sir, this continuous nonsense being put out there about people having to wait for such a long time at the airport or the seaport, would give the impression that Barbados is so unfriendly and that we do not have friendly or caring immigration officers in Barbados. Sir, that is far from the truth. We have very caring, loyal and efficient workers within the Immigration Department.

Mr. President, Senator Lowe would not want me to go any further but I would want to make the point that those persons are very efficient and hardworking and I believe they protect our security. Therefore, at all times, we have to support and to laud the contributions of those officers.

Mr. President, I am much obliged.

SENATOR THE HON. E. R. GRIFFITH: Mr. President, I wish to thank all Honourable Senators for their contributions, in relation to this Bill, and to give Senator Marville the assurance that there will be provision for diplomats. It is customary for diplomats, who do not go through the VIP lounge, to be accommodated in the same queues as the flight crew but in many airports, I have seen diplomats, flight attendants and crew members, all in one queue but I am sure that would be taken care of, in the rearrangement of things.

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

The question was put to the Senate and agreed to.

12.00 noon

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

COMMITTEE

Madam DEPUTY PRESIDENT: The Senate is in Committee.

Clauses 1 – 5 were called and passed.

The Schedule became the Schedule to the Bill.

On the motion of SENATOR THE HON. E. R. GRIFFITH, Madam DEPUTY PRESIDENT reported the passing of one Bill in Committee and Mr. 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 Immigration (Amendment) Act, 2006.

ORDER NO. 3 – PRE-CLEARANCE (ICC CRICKET WORLD CUP WEST INDIES 2007) BILL, 2006

SENATOR THE HON. E. R. GRIFFITH: Mr. President, this Bill is another piece of legislation which has been developed by the countries in the region as they seek to facilitate the smooth conduct of World Cup, 2007. It is somewhat similar in its intention to the Bill, which was just passed, which is to allow those passengers moving from one country to another to do so without any undue delay and harassment.

Before I proceed to discuss the Bill, I wish to draw to the attention of Senators that there were some minor amendments made in the Other Place and that those amendments were circulated this morning. At Clause 2, Pre-Clearance Area, has been amended to mean an area designated by the Minister under Section 4 and not Section 5 as stated in the Draft before us. Sir, in Clauses 5 and 11, the square brackets are being removed but the amount of money remains the same. Those are the amendments which were made in the Other Place and, therefore, are part of what we are now discussing.

Mr. President, this Bill, as it says, Objects and Reasons, makes provision for the pre-clearance of certain passengers and goods for entry into Barbados for the purposes of immigration, customs, public health, food inspection and plant and animal health during the ICC Cricket World Cup West Indies, 2007. It is anticipated that all the countries in the region would adopt legislation of this kind so as to facilitate the movement of persons across the region. Sir, Special Areas, as identified in Clause 4 will be set up in different countries. Here in Barbados, we will have one which will be designated by the Minister as a pre-clearance area where persons travelling from Barbados to one of the other countries in the region can be cleared prior to departure for that country and the reverse will also take place because this is a reciprocal arrangement which is being put in place.

Mr. President, the result of it would be that passengers are treated as domestic passengers. Sir, you know how the system in the United States of America works if you are in one State and moving from that State to another one but not leaving the USA, you travel into the area designated for domestic passengers as opposed to the international passengers. In this context, it is going to be treated that way, except that pre-clearance is going to be done in the respective countries, so that when you leave the country of departure and arrive at the receiving country, you do not then have to go through immigration, customs and the usual clearances because you would have been processed before you departed from the country of departure.

Mr. President, a similar arrangement is being put in place for goods and other matters as well. Sir, with so many people coming into the region from the cricketing countries, reporters and persons working with the International Cricket board would be bringing their equipment with them and moving it from country to country and to have to go through the clearing process at every point of entry is going to be a harassment. Sir, if for example, those persons are leaving Barbados to go to Antigua with their equipment and the clearance is done in Barbados then they are spared that problem when they reach Antigua and they can travel smoothly and without delay. Mr. President, this Bill is to facilitate the pre-clearance.

Mr. President, there are many instances where this system is in place. Those of you who have travelled to The Bahamas know that when you are leaving The Bahamas to go to Miami that you are cleared in The Bahamas so that when you get to Miami that you do not have a problem and you go into the domestic area. Similarly, if you are in Canada and leave to go to the USA, you are cleared in Canada. I know for a fact that there were discussions between Barbados and the United States of America many years ago about the possibility of a similar arrangement. It was not put in place because it was not considered absolutely necessary at the time but it had been discussed. It depends on the volume of the traffic that would be leaving there to go there and so on, but it does exist in a number of other countries. Sir, for this occasion the region is seeking to put this arrangement in place to facilitate the smooth movement of the large number of persons that are expected to come to the region.

12.10 p.m.

Sir, again I must say, when we were discussing the advance passenger information, I hope that these examples, which we have been able to adopt in the region, would leave an impression on us, so great, that they would convince us that we could do similar things after this event has passed, to facilitate the proper implementation of the integration arrangements that we are putting in place for the region.

Mr. President, with that I beg to move that this Bill be read a second time.

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

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

COMMITTEE

Her HONOUR SENATOR Dame Patricia SYMMONDS: The Senate is in Committee.

Part I, Clauses 1 and 2, were called and passed.

Part 2, Clause 3 was called and passed.

Part 3, Clauses 4 to 7 were called and passed.

Part 4, Clauses 8 to 10 were called and passed.

Part 5, Clauses 11 and 12 were called and passed.

Part 6, Clauses 13 and 14 were called and passed.

Part 7, Clauses 15 and 16 were called and passed.

The First and Second Schedules became the Schedules to the Bill.

On the motion of SENATOR THE HON. E. R. GRIFFITH, Madam DEPUTY PRESIDENT reported the passing of one Bill in Committee and Mr. 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 *Pre-Clearance (ICC Cricket World Cup West Indies 2007) Act, 2006.*

ORDER NO. 4 – THE SECOND READING OF THE SMALL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT (AMENDMENT) BILL, 2006

Mr. PRESIDENT: Senator Eastmond.

SENATOR THE HON. Miss L. V. EASTMOND: Mr. President, this new piece of proposed legislation, within the context of an amendment to the Small Business Development Act, comes before us within circumstances, where we have seen the Small Business Development Act, operate for some time, having been passed in 1999. In those circumstances, there were a few areas we thought that we should amend, in order to improve the piece of legislation in terms of its operation and effectiveness of this Administration's mandate for the development of small business in Barbados.

As we can see from the Bill, in terms of the Objects and Reasons set out at the front of the Bill, the intention of the amendment is to allow a wider range of activities, with respect to small business to be considered under this particular piece of legislation, to gain benefits. In addition, it is to ensure that more small businesses can qualify easily, for benefits under the legislation, to improve the system for processing applications, for approved small business status and improve the circumstances of the regulation of small businesses.

Mr. President, I think that it is important at the outset to recognise that these amendments and this particular piece of legislation are simply tools being used by this Administration, to create a more facilitating environment for small business. The Bill must be seen within the wider context of other initiatives, that have been taken by Government. For example, the liberalisation of the telecommunication sector.

I believe that most of us now recognise that in terms of all businesses in Barbados, it is important we utilise information technology in all of our businesses. The liberalisation of the telecommunication sector has two important objectives, to lower the cost of telecommunications and to ensure that Barbadians and businesses, in particular, have greater access to new technologies. Those of us who are following these developments would recognise that there are a number of new technologies that are being introduced, such as Voice Over IP, even in terms of the newer gadgets such as the Blackberry, *et cetera*, which make our lives more efficient in terms of keeping in contact with our business operations. These things have come out of the liberalisation of the telecommunications sector.
12.20 p.m.

Mr. President, of course, there is an argument that much more can be done but, at least, that is a start, in terms of getting our businesses to recognise the importance of using technology, in order to make their businesses much more efficient, also, Sir, to make sure that they continue to be on par with their business partners, in the rest of the world. If you do not ensure that you keep abreast of the technology that is being used by your business partners abroad, you would find that eventually, there is going to be a disconnect between you and them, and you are not going to be able to transact business effectively.

Mr. President, there are many initiatives that I could cite, but I thought that I would cite a few. There is also the implementation of the new Bankruptcy and Insolvency Act, which is being utilised but many of us have not paid a lot of attention to, but that Bankruptcy and Insolvency Act is actually being utilised, and also falls under the Ministry of Commerce.

The critical point about that new piece of legislation is that it now allows us to put new proposals and plans in place so that, if a business runs into financial difficulty, it is not simply a matter of shutting down the business and redistributing the assets of the business, but one can actually develop a proposal, in order that the business can continue to function. Therefore, we are creating a more user- friendly environment for business, and not to take the approach that if a business has financial difficulties, you simply close it down and you send home the employees.

The other initiative that I would mention, in terms of creating a more positive environment for business in Barbados, has to do with the whole suite of intellectual

property legislation that has been passed in Barbados, over the last few years. The legislation, of course, encompasses legislation dealing with patent protection, copyright protection, geographical indicators, *et cetera*. All of these are part of the Government's initiative to create a more facilitating environment for business, to make Barbados more user-friendly for business and also, to bring to the forefront, and to the attention of Barbadians that there is an option of actually going into business, being employed on one's own account, and not necessarily only seeking employment. Sir, that is the broader context within which this amendment should be placed.

There is also a narrower context. I seek to explain this because, certainly, from my readings and what I heard individuals say about this legislation, this piece of legislation is not meant to be all things to all people. If you look at the suite of incentives that are available in Barbados, there are a number of incentives depending on what stage you have reached in your business.

There are some individuals, for example, who have been concerned that there is a requirement that the business be incorporated. This piece of legislation is for those businesses that have reached the stage where they wish to be incorporated. If you think about how many businesses start in Barbados, there are many individuals that would start a business in their home.

Sir, at some point in time, the business would outgrow the home, and they would think that they have to find office accommodation somewhere else, maybe a property to lease. If you are selling goods, for example, you may decide that you are going to go to another property. You may decide that on your own land, you would build a separate place to conduct your business.

You see, this for example, in hairdressing. Someone would start by doing hairdressing in their kitchen, then, they would set up a salon next to their home. Sir, at some point in time, they might decide that they are doing so well, that they wish to go, maybe, closer to a town centre. For example, somewhere like Six Roads, Oistins, St. Lawrence or Bridgetown.

Sir, as the business grows, decisions are made about where you locate your business, and how you plan to expand and develop it in the future. This is how a decision is also made about whether or not you will incorporate. Many individuals start a business with no intention of incorporating, but as the business becomes bigger, one recognises that in terms of your liability, it is more effective to incorporate the business, than to continue to run the business as a sole proprietorship, which means that all of the liabilities fall to the individual. Sir, this needs to be explained, when individuals believe that there is a huge burden being placed on an individual, by suggesting to them that they might incorporate.

Fundamentally, when you incorporate, it means that your liability then is limited to your share ownership in that particular company. What it means is that if there is a difficulty or fraud involved, all things being equal, it means that if the business fails, it does not necessarily mean that individuals whom you owe, will be able to go to court and sell your house, in order to recover your debts that are outstanding to them. This is one of the fundamental issues, in terms of even liability, in terms of whether something happens on your premises, *et cetera,* your liability can be through your company, then, the individual does not become personably liable.

I think it is unfortunate that some of us know these principles and refuse to share them with the wider Barbadian community but seek to give the Barbadian community the impression that there is something negative about suggesting that one incorporates a business, in order to carry out one's business.

One would see that all of the businesses in Barbados that are doing well, and have grown, have incorporated. They do not continue to operate as a sole proprietorship. Sir, as I have said before in This Place, it will never be my view, that in order to score points, I will ever seek to mislead individuals about what the right thing would be for their business, or for any particular circumstance.

Sir, many enlightened individuals start their businesses, by incorporating. They never run their business as a sole proprietorship because, as we know, the society is becoming much more sophisticated. Individuals are more readily disposed to sue individuals. The company was established many years ago, in order to help to shield an individual, who decides to take the risk to go out there and start a business. Therefore, that is the context within which this piece of legislation must be placed.

There are certain individuals who will not be ready to incorporate. Those individuals already have access to a number of facilities in Barbados, under various pieces of legislation. For example, the Youth Entrepreneurship Scheme, where you have young people who are ready to start up businesses. They can access those facilities. There is the Urban Development Commission. Small businesses that are not incorporated, can seek funding and other technical assistance, through that facility. They can also access funding through the Rural Development Commission.

Sir, this piece of legislation, as I said before, is not meant to be all things to all people. This piece of legislation does not, I should point out, seek to define what a small business is for the purposes of Barbados, generally.

This piece of legislation only defines what a small business is, for the purpose of this Act, and nothing else.

Sir, this does not mean that if you have an existing business which, in your own mind has always been a small business, and because we have set out a definition here, and it does not fall within the definition that it is no longer a small business. It will still be a small business. It just is not a small business as defined by this Act.
12.30 p.m.

This is something which is quite normal in legislation whenever there are definitions in the legislation. Unless it says otherwise, the definitions are for the purposes of the Act, the definitions are not meant for any wider purposes. If you are seeking to find definitions for wider purposes, you tend to look at the Interpretation Act not to specific pieces of legislation.

Mr. President, I believe that would lend some clarity to what we are doing here with respect to the Small Business Development Act. Mr. President, one would find that within this piece of legislation there is a move toward bringing greater regulatory accountability, as I stated before, and greater discipline to the small business sector for those who are ready for it. If you are not ready for it, you would not come under this piece of legislation.

Mr. President, within the context of the development of business in Barbados, we know that there has been a call for greater competitiveness within Barbados, so as to ensure that we can compete, not only with our neighbours but further afield, and this legislation also seeks to do that.

Mr. President, what I would do is to draw Members' attention to some aspects of the legislation so that we can have an elaboration of the objectives as set out in the Objects and Reasons of the legislation. I will start by looking at Clause 3. Sir, Clause 3 is the section by which one seeks to determine whether or not a business will qualify under this piece of legislation. Clause 3 refers to the fact that the business must be incorporated. Sir, I believe that I have elaborated on that previously, so there is no need to say any more on that.

Mr. President, there are two criteria out of three which have to be met. This is a change from what we had before. Before, one had to meet all the criteria in order to qualify. Mr. President, if we stick to that principle, what would happen is that if an individual manages to exceed only one criterion, it would mean then that the company would no longer qualify, and we do not want that because we know that there can be fluctuations.

Mr. President, the requirements are that the business should have not more than $1 million as stated or paid up capital, $2 million in annual sales and not more than 25 employees. Mr. President, one could argue whether it could be higher or it could be lower but usually in these things all we can do is to look to see the size of businesses we have in Barbados and those that we are seeking to target and try to set some kind of limit on them.

Mr. President, in this Clause we are also seeking to ensure that larger businesses do not benefit from this legislation. Honourable Senators who are familiar with tax evasion schemes would recognise that one of the simple things that large companies can do is to split them up into smaller companies, and this is what we are seeking to avoid here.

The Clause sets out quite clearly that a small business which is controlled by a large business would not qualify. This is simply what we wish to do, because we could see, especially when the tax rate was 40 per cent, that it would be extremely attractive for a large business paying tax at 40 per cent to incorporate a smaller business that would qualify. Mr. President, what they would do is simply split a part of their business, incorporate a company, put a portion of their business activity into the smaller company and pay tax of 25 per cent.

Sir, the legislation has a tax evasion provision in it so that if the company is controlled by a larger company that small company is not able to qualify. This explains the reason we have to know who the shareholders are.

Mr. President, there has been a view that in requesting the names of the shareholders in this particular exercise that there was some kind of sinister intent, that is not correct. As taxpayers who will be foregoing a percentage of tax through this legislation...

Mr. President, within the context of Barbados, anything that we do, it is the taxpayers that pay. The Government as such does not have any money. All of the money belongs to the taxpayers or we borrow it and taxpayers in the future would have to pay it back.

Mr. President, fundamentally, if you are going to forego tax in this instance, we believe that the benefit should go to the small businesses that we are trying to develop not larger companies that should be pretty much on their own going out into the CARICOM Single Market and Economy and into the wider world.

Mr. President, in administering this piece of legislation through the Ministry, the only way that we can determine whether or not the company is truly a small business is to know who actually owns the company. It is as simple as that and nothing more.

Mr. President, if one looks at Clause 5, one would see that we are not only requiring the production of the Certificate of Incorporation of the company but we are also requesting that we have certificates from agencies such as the Inland Revenue Department, the Land Tax Department, the Value Added Tax Division and the National Insurance Board.

Mr. President, all of these agencies have set up schemes within them so that if an individual actually owes money with respect to any of them they could come to some arrangement with the revenue authority and that arrangement would also be respected here. Mr. President, if one looks at Clause 5, paragraph (a) closely, one would see that when we look at the various certificates that are required, it says, where appropriate.

Mr. President, if the individual has entered into an arrangement and a tax clearance certificate is not going to be given, obviously it would not be appropriate, and so what we would need to know is, what is the arrangement. We are also requesting that there be audited financial statements where the gross assets or growth revenue is in excess of $1 million, and where it is not in excess of $1 million, a review engagement. This is an issue that had been raised by some of the small businesses in that it might have been too expensive for them to get a full audit of their financial statements, so instead we have asked them for a review engagement, which is not at the level and not as expensive as an audit.

Mr. President, in this particular clause what we are seeking to do is to ensure that from the outset our small businesses follow a certain level of discipline in terms of meeting their statutory obligations. There are some individuals who may believe that this is inappropriate.

Mr. President, the Ministry firmly believes, and I personally also believe, that if small businesses do not seek to meet their statutory obligations from the outset, they tend to run into trouble when their business actually starts to make money. First, they would not actually be making the money that they think they are making because they have not taken into account the statutory obligations that they are not meeting.

Mr. President, when your head starts to come above water and the revenue authorities recognise that you are a liable business, you are making money and you are selling things, they would start to take a closer look at you. Mr. President, what often happens is that when businesses start to reach the level where they are making some money and are not paying attention to their statutory obligations, someone then comes along and says you have not been paying any national insurance contributions for your employees, and then they run into considerable difficulties because this has come, it seems, as a surprise and shock to them that they had to do these things, and it means that to some extent the business itself is undermined, we do not want that.

12.40 p.m.

Mr. President, I have my own experience, in terms of setting up a business. I know that if you do not do things in the right way from the outset, it would be very difficult to correct them. I have seen, while working with an accounting firm, where businesses would have brought in boxes of receipts and invoices. These businesses have been operating for five or six years and would have never sorted out their financial statements but would have just brought boxes of stuff in, for the accounting firm to go through.

Mr. President, the accounting firm would then have to assign a junior member of staff or a manager to review those receipts and invoices. These then would have to be reviewed by a partner of the firm because of the fact that those receipts and invoices would have been in chaos. It would, therefore, mean that what the firm would have to pay the accounting firm, in that one-off transaction, would have been significantly high.

Mr. President, if, from the outset, that firm had decided to get a software package, like that of Quickbooks or ACCPAC and had begun issuing proper invoices, keeping accounts of its receipts, making sure that it pays its NIS, making sure that it pays its creditors, and that it manages its business in a disciplined fashion, it would mean that, at the end of the day, when that business started to make money, it would have known for a fact that it is definitely making a profit. It would have also known that all its statutory obligations would have already been met.

Mr. President, in terms of businesses paying over employees' National Insurance contributions, it is the saddest case in the world for employees to be working for businesses, sometimes for several years, then when something happens to them, when they check at the National Insurance Office, would realise that no contribution has been made for them. Sir, many businesses do not do this deliberately, it is that oftentimes they have not managed the process properly. Therefore, what we are seeking to do here, is to lend a helping hand in terms of ensuring that if businesses are going to benefit from the provisions of this legislation, that we also encourage them to be disciplined.

Mr. President, I do not know of any businesses that has been successful, without some level of discipline, in terms of making sure that, on an annual basis, they actually produce financial statements. When individuals raise concerns about asking small businesses to produce financial statements... If you have a small or simple business, it would mean that your financial statements are also going to be small and simple.

There are some individuals who would seem to believe that because a business is a small business, that its financial statements would be as complex as the financial statements of Goddards Group of Companies, for example. It is not. If one has a simple business, receiving income, making payments, the financial statements of that business are also going to be simple. The balance sheet of that business would not have such things as large machinery, equipment, calculating deferred taxes, *et cetera.*

Mr. President, there are many of us, when we speak of these things, who seem not to recognise that the simple shopkeeper in the village would have kept an account of what they were doing, on a daily basis. I used to see them. They would have an exercise book and would have kept a record of everything they would have sold and all payments they would have made out. Sir, we would somehow look at these individuals and seem to believe that they were not keeping proper books and records. They were. That is why they were able to start out with their little shops, that is why they were able to build big houses and send their children to school, out of running a little shop in a village because of the fact that they actually kept a proper account of what they were doing.

Mr. President, there were many failed businesses, because they were not keeping proper records, when they sold something and had cash in their pockets, felt that they had made a profit. This would have been so because they would have forgotten how much money they might have spent, neither would they have deducted that from the money they would have had in hand, neither would they have recognised that their expenses would not have been met. Therefore, they would have recognised that the business was not profitable and that they need either to enhance it or to get into some other kind of business activity. That is the reality of being in business and these are some of the things, with which we are trying to deal.

Mr. President, I would wish to say that we are now putting these requirements and mechanisms in place, to assist the small businesses. We have a small Technical Assistance Fund, which is meant to assist with this, so that if a company that is registered under this piece of legislation says that it needs to improve its business, by keeping proper books and records, and that it needs to look at a software package or computer equipment that could help, they can apply to the Ministry for such funding. Sir, we do have grant funding that we assist suitable cases with strengthening their businesses in this respect.

Mr. President, this Ministry would like to see businesses not only start and be sustained for a short period of time, we would like to see businesses being developed and being sustained over extended periods of time, or be passed on from generation to generation. Sir, we would like to see that one could start a business in 2006 and that 100 years from now that business could still be in existence because of the fact that the individuals running that business would have understood how to run the business and how to change it where necessary.

Mr. President, we are very satisfied that, with this piece of legislation, we are doing the right thing. As I said before, if a business has not reached the stage where it believes that it could incorporate and meet these requirements, there are other funds available which they could access.

Mr. President, one of the other initiatives that we have taken, as indicated at Clause 5, is that we had a Schedule to the Act, which sets out a list of business activities that a company could enter into, in order to qualify. Mr. President, in applying that Schedule to the Act, we sometimes found that, for example, individuals would apply to engage in a particular type of business, the business would have been a sound business, everything would have been in place and therefore that individual would have qualified, but on the list, one could not find the appropriate title that would have been suitable for the business, in which that person would have been engaged. Of course, what we would do then, would be to put them in a category, if you could stretch your imagination, into which they could fit.

Mr. President, that is not appropriate for us to do because as we know in Barbados and all over the world, there are all types of different businesses. For example, there might be a new business two years from now, that, at this point in time, we cannot think that a person would actually create a business opportunity out of that particular circumstance but that could happen.

Mr. President, therefore, what we have decided to do, is instead of making a list, that we put a general requirement in place, which requires the business to carry on an activity, which is of significance or substantial socioeconomic benefit to Barbados. Therefore, as long as we could see the business advancing, even in some small way, to the economy of Barbados, for example, contributing to employment, that business would be able to qualify. Sir, we believe that particular provision is very useful.

Mr. President, at Clause 8, as most of us know, some time ago, this Administration embarked on a process of reducing the corporation tax rate in Barbados. The objective was to get it down to 25 per cent. We have succeeded in doing so but in reducing it to 25 per cent, it meant that corporation tax rate was now equivalent to the small business tax rate. Therefore, we have now reduced the tax rate under the Small Business Development Act, down to 20 per cent. There is now a lower tax, which is lower than the 25 per cent, which ordinary companies would pay.

In addition, previously there were a number of items that were exempted from duty on importation, such as plant and equipment. At that time, we had not included raw materials and as many of us would know, with respect to manufacturing, for example, there is an exemption for raw materials but we have now added that, in order to enhance the benefits further.
12.50 p.m.

Mr. President, in terms of the qualifications for the small business status, in the old legislation, one of the criteria is 25 employees but, Sir, if you employed another employee which took your staff levels to 26 employees, on a strict interpretation, you would no longer qualify. Sir, instead of meeting the three criteria, we have now changed it to two, but in order to cease to qualify, the business must not meet the qualification requirements for three consecutive years. We figure that after three consecutive years that you would have graduated from the small businesses scheme. We are looking at it for a period of over three years and not one year or as soon as you do not meet the criteria.

Mr. President, we believe that is reasonable because businesses fluctuate sometimes in terms of profitability. Sir, sometimes you can have a very good year but then the next could be good or bad so we are looking at three consecutive years. Sir, we have included a provision which says that you cannot benefit under the Small Business Development Act and also benefit from one of the other pieces of legislation, such as the Tourism Development Act, the Physical Incentive Act, the Special Development Areas Act or the Shipping Incentives Act.

Mr. President, the reason for this is that the intention is not for people to engage in double-dipping or triple-dipping into the incentive pool. I have said before that whenever we forego taxes in Barbados, that the ordinary taxpayers are not receiving the benefits of incentives and it is an issue for us and the taxpayers, so if an individual is benefitting under this Act, they should not benefit under other pieces of legislation.

Mr. President, it is an option so if you are involved in tourism, you can be an approved small business but you need to look at the Tourism Development Act, to see if it is more suitable to your business than the Approved Small Business Act and if it is more suitable you go under the Tourism Development Act and not under the Approved Small Business Act. Sir, somehow the provision was taken to mean that if you were a small business in Barbados that you could not apply under the Tourism Development Act or the Special Development Areas Act but, Sir, that simply is not true.

Mr. President, I have pointed out before in my presentation that this particular Act does not seek to define any small business in the entire context of the Barbadian economy but simply define small businesses for the purpose of this piece of legislation so that an individual can choose. Sir, you can choose to seek incentives under the Physical Incentive Act or under the Approved Small Business Act. You can seek loan funding under the Rural Development Scheme or under the Urban Development Scheme. You can seek funding under the Enterprise Growth Fund, the Innovation Fund or any one of the Funds. You are not restricted, this just gives you an additional option.

Mr. President, there is a specific provision which requires the company to submit information on an annual basis so that they could be an appraisal of the business to see whether it continues to satisfy requirements and where we could look at its Financial Statements to see if there are any changes in the circumstances of the company.

Mr. President, one would see from the forms in the Schedule to the Bill that we have also sought to improve these forms by making them more user-friendly and by seeking additional information and by making them more legible and more clearly understood to the individual making the application.

Mr. President, much of the information being asked for is required by the individual in terms of running his own business. These pieces of information would be required by any person who has incorporated a business in terms of good governance of their operation so we are not asking for any additional information. Sir, the small business needs to meet some of these requirements for the Corporate Registry as well.

Mr. President, whether you have changed your directors or not is something required by the Corporate Registry in any case and just a copy would be sent to us. Sir, one of these days we will reach the stage, through the use of technology, where if the directors are submitted to the Corporate Registry that there would be no need to submit them to us as well but we have not reached that stage as yet.

Mr. President, looking at this particular Bill, I also think it is important for us to recognise that the Bill does not stand alone and that with respect to the incorporation of businesses, which we require, we have also put a scheme in place where if you incorporate your company, we actually refund a portion of the incorporation cost to a maximum of $1 700, which is quite significant. Sir, many small businesses have actually accessed the facility. They have incorporated a business, have applied for approved small business status, have applied for the refund and have received the refund. Sir, the process is actually working well.

Mr. President, in terms of the Small Business Association, one of the issues which has been recognised

by this Administration is that within the private sector there is also a need for institutional strengthening and support. This is why on an annual basis, we provided the Small Business Association with $175 000, in order to support their Secretariat. In addition to that, we also provide $175 000 for any special project in which they may wish to engage.

Mr. President, I would like to say that in terms of these initiatives that in Barbados we have got used to the notion of these innovative initiatives, so that to some extent they have become ordinary but I can assure you that all of these innovations took place after 1994. We are seeking within the context of small businesses to identify what small businesses need and seek to address them in a real way, especially, for example, in terms of encouraging individuals to incorporate. It has always been an issue, the amount of money it takes to actually do that and for us to refund them $1 700 is very significant.

Some of the other work we are doing is assisting businesses in strengthening their operational capacity. Recently, we engaged in providing assistance, to approximately 2 500 businesses in the Ministry of Commerce, in dealing with the Hazzard Analysis and Critical Control Point Project. That has to do with ensuring that, for example, if you manufacture cakes, there is a particular way to do it. The individuals who are baking the cakes, must not be in contact with the individuals who are packaging them. Therefore, you set out your plant in a particular way, so that you move from one point to the next, ensuring that the persons working at the packaging end, do not contaminate what is happening at the baking end. These are issues we are seeking to address, in a very real way to assist our businesses in Barbados.
1.00 p.m.

Mr. President, there are a number of other funds which small businesses can access. I will mention a few of them, the Small Business Venture Capital Fund, which was established in 1996. It was established with $2.1 million. In 2005, an additional $1 million was allocated, and this is equity financing. So far we have disbursed $1.8 million to small businesses in Barbados. This is not a small amount for small businesses.

Sir, the Innovation Fund, as discussed on previous occasions – innovation is extremely important to the development of business in terms of developing our entrepreneurial capacity. It is the innovative products that would make the money in the international and regional market. In 2002, the Innovation Fund was established with $5 million, and businesses have been accessing this Fund.

Sir, coming out of the Fund, we have an innovation competition, for individuals in Barbados who might have had innovations over the years and did not know how to apply them to a stage where they could think about commercialising. There are a number of these projects. Sir, there is now a facility where persons can bring forward their projects and these projects can be taken to the level of commercialisation. This is done through the Innovation Fund and the Prime Minister's Awards, which were recently held.

Mr. President, I believe that my presentation has addressed most of the issue, that would be raised in the legislation. I also believe that the legislation has been put in the appropriate context, the broader context of the development of the economy of Barbados, and within a narrow context of all of the facilities that are available to small businesses in Barbados, through the efforts of this Administration.

I am much obliged to you.

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

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

SUSPENSION

SENATOR THE HON. E. R. GRIFFITH: Mr. President, I beg to move that this Sitting be suspended until 2.10 p.m.

The question that the Sitting be now suspended until 2.10 p.m. was put to the Senate and agreed to, and Mr. PRESIDENT suspended the Sitting accordingly.
1.10 p.m.

RESUMPTION

Mr. PRESIDENT: This Sitting is resumed. Senator Dr. Lowe.

SENATOR Dr. D. S. LOWE: Thank you, Mr. President.

I am pleased to offer my contribution to this debate on this Bill that would amend the Small Business Development Act, Cap. 318C. Sir, as I look at the Objects and Reasons to this Bill, it outlines them as follows:

(a) allow benefits on a wider range of activities in which small businesses are involved;

(b) revise the criteria so that small businesses may qualify more easily for approved small business status;

(c) make provision for an improved system, regarding the processing of applications for approval or for approved small business status; and

4. strengthen the arrangements for regulating the performance of approved small business.

Mr. President, as we look at the whole matter of small business development, I believe that we all would agree that small business development is an important element of any developing society, especially as one looks at the importance of enfranchising all persons relative to their capacity to develop ideas and their ability to mobilise efforts to create wealth for themselves and their families.

Mr. President, I know that from time to time people narrowly define small business efforts as simply being able to register a business and engage in an activity that generates some level of income. When we look at small businesses, we are not just simply looking at the range of exotic services and activities that some small businesses that achieved status pursue. We are talking about business endeavours at every level of the society, particularly in those domains where ordinary citizens find themselves ploughing in specific areas that allow them to generate some income to help sustain their families and their ambitions.

Therefore, when I broadly define small businesses, I think of the vendors, the Red Caps, those persons who may only be able to raise 50 chickens – but have them so well-designated that they have a sure income from those 50 chickens in terms of those persons who will purchase – and those persons who could only probably raise 10 or so pigs – perhaps slaughter them in the backyard, which has been prohibited now by the Government and yet still see it as a legitimate business endeavour that plays a substantial role in their capacity to become enfranchised as ordinary citizens in this country.

Mr. President, while I understand that the Bill before us seems to focus on Objective 2, which deals with the achievement of business status, it starts with (a), which allows benefits on a wider range of activities in which small businesses are involved.

Mr. President, I believe that when we think of small businesses, we must examine the whole definition of small business within a developing society, where there is not simply an economic end to the activity but where there is also a social end. For example, there are two sides of small business development, the economic side and the social side.

First of all, when we look at the economic side, we know that small business development can contribute to creating domestic economic activities. We also know that it can also contribute to facilitating export opportunities by establishing niche markets. We also know that small business on the economic side can also satisfy certain levels of domestic consumption, which of course would ease our need to import so much of what we currently import and also serves to stimulate some level of employment. These are the economic variables that can be tagged on to small business development.

Mr. President, on the social side – and the Bill cites it as well – there is a social economic or social economic enfranchisement that comes along with small business development. When a man or a woman takes the opportunity to invest in the establishment of a small business not only is he or she concerned about the economic side, they are also concerned about their capacity to move their standard of living from one level to another and they are also concerned about demonstrating that through the opportunities of the country they have been able to finally establish something that they can call their own and they can be self-employed. Therefore, the social side is as equally important as the economic side.

Mr. President, in order for the social side of small development to happen, there must be a sense that there is fairness in the marketplace. By that I mean that there is equal opportunity for all individuals as long as they have a marketable idea and as long as they have what is necessary to seed that idea so that they would have a chance to pursue their endeavours in that regard.

Small business development gives expression to the creative genius in our people. Mr. President, while all may not be able to own a company that has 1 000 employees and makes a billion dollars a year, a small business endeavour is as equally important to that individual as the large business is important to the other individual.

Mr. President, it is important that when we begin to conceptualise what small development is all about that we understand that small businesses occur in different stages in terms of their development. A small business begins with an idea. Sir, my concern is what is the path that gets a small business idea from the conceptualisation position to a seeding position where then it could move into that classification where it could benefit from all of the technical assistance programmes and where it can benefit from all of the concessions that are so outlined in this Bill.

Mr. President, I would want to suggest that the route of achieving small business status is perhaps the most critical route that we should give some sort of examination to. Mr. President, I wanted to hear from the Honourable Minister whether or not there is available any information on the attrition rate of small businesses. I wanted to know whether or not there is any information to hand that would tell us, since the enactment of this Bill, how many small businesses actually came into being, how many of them were able

to move from the conceptual phase all the way to achieve legitimate small business status, how many of them are still surviving today and what are the tactics used by those businesses that have been able to move themselves from the conceptual position all the way to the small business status position and what are the indicators of failure when a business is set on its journey, whether or not it makes it to the end where it needs to go.

In my view, that information is critical information because, as I understand it, many of the people out there in the public domain who are engaging in the development of small businesses may not really fully understand the distinction that was so clearly drawn today. I think that distinction of understanding what a small business is as it qualifies under this legislation is a critical distinction and a critical piece of information that has to be out there immediately.

Mr. President, once you conceptualise a business, I believe that you could call that the incubation stage. Mr. President, I believe that incubation phase, if you will, is a phase where a lot of dying occurs in terms of small business endeavours. Mr. President, let us face it, when one becomes excited about a small business idea, one must sit down and try to understand what it would take to move that idea to a position where it can be legitimately termed a small business.

Mr. President, one has to calculate what goes into the process of actually getting this small business idea rolling. Every year a number of talented Barbadians go through a series of competitions where some of their ideas win top awards and years after they are still at the idea phase because they have not been able to put in place all of the building blocks that would allow them to move from idea to reality in terms of the business.
2.20 p.m.

Mr. President, we have to understand that while the creation of the concept is totally within the bosom of the individual, the moving of that concept to a position where it could be mobilised into a business idea, would require the help of a number of agencies and a number of individuals. It would require an enabling environment, and the Honourable Member talked about that this morning. It would require an enabling environment, that would allow that person to see that idea coming to fruition. Therefore, one would move from the conceptualisation of the idea, to what I call the seeding of that idea.

Mr. President, I think that is where a lot of the struggles become evident. Sir, truthfully, all of us have had great ideas. All of us have pondered how we could make money, using our creativity and using some of our own intuitiveness, in terms of coming up with a concept that perhaps could work. What has happened is that once we have decided that we would move our idea to a position where we begin to invest, we begin to realise that there are a number of incumbences that we often have to overcome.

Sir, the seeding process is almost like where you take your seeds and if you have greenhouse technology, you put them in an environment and you begin to nurture them along the way, to ensure that germination occurs and that, at the end of the germination, there is a healthy plant that is emerging. Afterwards, we put in all of the inputs, such as watering, manure and the right temperature, to ensure that what has moved from a seed, has a great capacity of being a plant or a fruit that would have been a productive endeavour, and the encumbrances imposed by regulations, is one of the things I hear people talking about.

Mr. President, I know of a number of persons, who have started small businesses, who had great ideas, and somehow they lost their enthusiasm, simply because they found that moving from idea to a plan, moving from a plan to implementation, and moving from implementation to management, and the stocking of human capital to source the human elements that are required, they got discouraged. Sir, this is not perhaps that there are not systems in place to enable them but that many of them apparently had not come into favourable contact with those systems, to which the Honourable Member has suggested, that are there to enable people.

Mr. President, enablement is more than just having a catalogue of services available. I believe the Right Honourable Prime Minister, in his Policy Statements, indicated – and the Honourable Member quoted it today – that some of the proceeds of the injection of $1 million, was to be used to allow the Small Business Association to decentralise its services and to establish offices in all of our urban centres, beginning in Speightstown.

Mr. President, I am sure that before this debate is over, we would be informed how this programme is going, in terms of the decentralisation of this pool of resources that are intended to be spread across the urban centres, to ensure that those persons, who are actually mobilised in their ideas, could find the help that is required.

Mr. President, I believe it is important because it does not matter how brilliant an idea is, if the enabling factors are not present. I am sure you and all Honourable Senators would agree that idea might fall by the wayside, not because of a lack of commitment to the idea, but because when that person estimated what would be required and tries to deduce what would be necessary for it to work, they might find that the hurdles are too extraneous for them to be able

to overcome them. Therefore, the struggle for surviving, in a big business environment, is one of the things I believe that becomes an impediment to many persons, who have brilliant ideas and who could turn those ideas into wonderful small businesses in this society.

Mr. President, we live in a 'big business' society in Barbados and I think we all accept that because the terms of conditions of mobilising business, even based on this Bill, you only get a catalogue of credible small business, when it achieves small business status, even though the Bill sets out as a first objective, the ability to spread open those services, so that you could create greater opportunities for small businesses to emerge in the society.

Mr. President, I would want to say there is nothing wrong in having thriving big businesses in society but that is absolutely necessary but when the big businesses get the absolute benefit of the assistance of the State, that assistance is considered as incentive. When the small business person seeks to get help, that is considered to be welfare. Mr. President, that is part of the problem because we are committed to ensure that the private sector of Barbados is a thriving private sector because the society and the country needs a thriving private sector.

Mr. President, what I would want us to understand is that if we are going to be able to achieve social and economic justice in this society, if we are going to be able to pursue a just society, it would mean that every person, who has a credible idea that could be turned into a wonderful business endeavour, must be given an equal opportunity to benefit from the same commitment which the Prime Minister so eloquently uses, in his attempt to move heaven and earth, to satisfy the needs of businesses in this country.

Mr. President, I am hoping that one day I would hear our Honourable Prime Minister saying that he is going to move heaven and earth for the small businessman or businesswoman, who, by virtue of their tenacity or their desire for success in that arena, would benefit from the spirited pronouncements and proclamations of our Right Honourable Prime Minister, to ensure that they would succeed at that level. Sir, we know there is a lack of the necessary and special provisions, which are necessary for us to be able to gain the kinds of successes that we need in this society, as it relates to small business development.

Mr. President, truthfully, we understand that the Government tries to facilitate the comfort of those who inject a lot of revenue into Government. Sir, even with the the Caribbean Single Market and Economy, a Regional Development Fund has been established, where the weaker economies would be propped up by the stronger ones and where there is access to available funding, to offset any deficits or inequalities in the economy. In this way, no unreasonable strain would be placed on the stronger economies, such as Barbados' economy versus a weaker economy in the region. Sir, I think that is admirable. What the Governments of the region have decided is that the stronger economies must bear the infirmities of the weaker ones and that the weaker ones should not be left behind because of the fact that they do not have the wherewithal to journey themselves along a continuum that would decide absolute success for them.

Mr. President, in this society, there are some big businesses, which, when an employee steps off and decides to start his or her own endeavour, which might not be in the same commodity as that big business, some big businesses would do whatever they can, to squeeze that little man out of existence. Sir, there are untold stories in the society, where that has happened but when small businesses seek help or when they cry out for assistance, we hear all kinds of rhetoric, not only from within the bosoms of Government but from within the bosoms of the private sector, saying that they cannot enable uncertainty.

Mr. President, no business idea starts at the point of certainty. It starts at the point that involves risk-taking, and there is a certain cost to risk. Therefore, part of the enabling environment has to be to facilitate the cost that would offset that risk, so that persons could feel a sense of freedom, to exploit their creativity and to mould the emergence of a successful small business that could achieve the status, which the Honourable Member talked about, which is reflected in this Bill.

2.30 p.m.

Mr. President, the seeding stage is the most vulnerable stage of small business development efforts because small businesses must endure reams of red tape. I do not know how many of us in here in recent times have sought to establish a small business. Sir, I am not sure, how many of us, even if we have not sought to do so, have been actually involved in assisting persons who have small business ideas that are credible and who would like to exploit their ideas. Again, let me say, that we are not claiming that they are no structures in place but there has to be some apparatus that put people at ease and comfort when it comes to pursuing contact with that apparatus.

Mr. President, I know for a fact, that the Government announced some time that the Oasis Programme was intended to reach the persons on 'the block'. Sir, I encountered a number of young men who became very excited about it and decided they would go, collect the necessary application form and that they would try to see whether or not they could take their idea and place it at the disposal of the funding people who would then evaluate and decide.

Mr. President, many of those young persons became discouraged because (1) they had never entered into the formal culture in terms of transacting business endeavours and (2) when they tried to enter, many persons who should have been better gatekeepers in walking them through the system failed them and their ideas crashed without one single cent from the Government.

Mr. President, I could go further. If you go into a bank to borrow $10 000 to start something, it is a good and credible idea, the bank refuses the proposal, tells you that you do not need $10 000, that you need $20 000 and you agree. Sir, because those persons have not had immediate contact with persons with technical assistance who could guide them along the disciplines of creating a business idea of setting up a business plan, they end up spending the money on other ideas and then end up having to pay back not only the loan but the bailiff whom the bank has hired and to whom they must pay.

Mr. President, they end up losing their credit, their ambition on the particular business idea and end up as frustrated young persons, who thought that they had a chance at extricating themselves from the walls of poverty but because, in their view, the system was not expeditious enough to give them the kind of bridging they needed to get from conceptualisation of the idea to seeding the development, they have failed. Now they are struck with bad credit and hiding from the bailiff. These are not make-believe stories but stories that I know, Sir.

Mr. President, I am saying to the Minister that since the systems are in place that perhaps we need to do a better job in putting those systems at the disposal of persons who need to make contact with them because the idea does not need to die with the red tape, it does not need to die with the monopoly of big business who wants to control everything in that domain nor it does not have to die with high cost of retail inputs.

Mr. President, we know there are many businesses in Barbados bringing in commodities and that some persons who are trying to start up their small businesses cannot afford to because of the high mark-ups on many of these commodities. I suppose we will debate that a little later when we get to another item.

Mr. President, we are fortunate in this Chamber to have two Honourable Members who are associated in some way or fashioned with those agencies. I believe that if we really want to give a transparent demonstration of what is happening in the small business arena that we should probably have access to some information about the nature, sizes and number of businesses which have been erected. At least that would allow the Government to plan better for the future as it relates to small business development. It would also allow the agencies of Government to give focus to those persons who are pursuing the development of small businesses so that they can be helped in terms of identifying the right markets, in terms of creating the right market research, in terms of product development and creating the right product that would allow their businesses to succeed in the marketplace. I think that whenever we are planning, as I have been taught, it is necessary to commit oneself to rigorous research that allows us to understand, from A to Z, for us to achieve our objectives.

2.40 p.m.

Sir, I think that many of us would benefit significantly, in terms of being able to give guidance and support, to persons who are struggling with the development of their small businesses with regard to where they need to go, and how they need to achieve. Many well-intentioned people have lost investments, and many of them have lost their spirit, in the pursuit of their businesses, because those gaps exist.

I believe that a functional enabling environment, must be constructed to ensure that there is constant monitoring of the growth and progress, of the small businesses. Sir, assistance with product soundness, product knowledge, market research, niche marketing, business planning, effective customer relations and services, and transparent financial management, are all critical in that regard.

Sir, we would not want to contribute to persons, I am not sure that the Government does not – becoming a statistic in this regard. We want people to be able to find their niche. We want people to be able to pursue their dream. We want persons in this society to be able to lift themselves up from where they are. I agree that small business development is an important bridge that can move persons from their own state of poverty into a different level of living in the society.

Mr. President, not only that, but if the small business environment is thriving, perhaps we could begin to invest in the development of commodities locally, and would not need to go abroad to find them. One of the problems we know in Barbados, is the high import cost.

Sir, if we help people, through research, to identify markets, we could export more. We can then create the kind of product that can satisfy the consumption needs of persons out of the island. I believe that I heard many times in this Chamber that the more we study niche marketing, and the more we enable persons to fit into that niche environment, the better the chances are that we will be able to create some of the things we consume, that are not domestic products.

Mr. President, farmers are small business persons and the small farmers in this country are in dire need of

critical support. I believe that it is important to save this community, because of the size of the food import bill. I strongly believe, and I am quite sure that the Honourable Members of this Chamber agree, that if we could eat at home we probably would eat healthier. If we could spend more time growing what we eat, we probably would alleviate a lot of the illnesses that we now are confronted with. Therefore, every effort must be made by Government to enable small farmers, wherever they are, to find the kind of support necessary for viable small business endeavours, where they can survive. Sir, where threats exist, I believe that the Government should be more in the forefront in assisting small farmers in alleviating those threats.

Mr. President, for example, when I speak of threats, I speak of the situation in Gibbons, Chancery Lane and those areas where there has been an oil spill for many years and where there has been no resolution to that situation, where farmers are becoming extinct, because they are unable to have the inputs into their farming crops, because the yield is so marginal at this stage, and Government knows that the situation exists. It violates any environmental policy that any country could have, and the Government has yet to open its mouth collectively to help these small farmers fight this case.

Mr. President, I hope that in our attempt to boost the small business development area in the country, we would focus on cases like these. We need to reduce our food import bill, one way of doing that is to increase the capacity of small farmers to produce more, in their own backyards.

Sir, we believe that as long as persons come into contact with this vital information, the small business culture in this country, could be a vital culture within the context of national development. I hope that what I said would be taken to heart by the Honourable Minister, as she wraps up her debate.

Mr. President, I thank you so very much.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Senator Dr. Chandler.

SENATOR Dr. F. L. CHANDLER: Mr. President, I rise to support the amendment to the Small Business Development Act. I am pleased to see that there would be an improved system of processing applications. This is important since small businesses cannot usually survive delays in any area. Sometimes, to use an agricultural term, it goes 'through the eddoes', before they can receive the assistance that they need. Time is of the essence with small businesses and more particularly with businesses. I am not always convinced that the people who actually deal with these things, act as swiftly as they could. I do not think that they recognise the urgency of the situation.

I am also pleased to note that under the amendment, only businesses which have revenue or assets exceeding $1 million, are now required to provide an audited statement. I have always felt that auditors' fees are too high for small businesses to afford, to make it worthwhile to pay out these high fees to receive the status. I think that probably you might pay out more than you save.

Sir, I totally agree with Senator Eastmond about the need for discipline in businesses, and definitely in small businesses. This is all part of good management as far as I am concerned. Sir, management together with money, are vital to the success of all businesses, especially small businesses. Mr. President, I think that the lack of this combination is responsible for the attrition of the businesses that Senator Lowe spoke about.

I would like Senator Eastmond, in wrapping up, to clarify whether the refund on the incorporation fee, is retroactive, if your business was incorporated for a few years, and then you apply for small business status, whether the claim would still be refunded.

I also ask if Senator Eastmond could clarify what is intended, the First Schedule Form 1, No. 16, Part 8. I was not quite clear what that statement meant.

I thank you, Mr. President.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Senator Dame Patricia Symmonds.

Her HONOUR SENATOR DAME Patricia SYMMONDS: Mr. President, since 1994, and with the legislation in 1999, this Government has paid attention to small business in a very serious way. I understand that one of the challenges facing the small business sector is that Barbadian culture is not entrepreneurial basically. This has resulted from an educational system geared mostly towards the creation of employable human resources rather than the development of a resource base, that is geared towards employment generation.

2.50 p.m.

Mr. President, this is changing and the expansion of the categories of business activities will result in a far greater number of small business entities benefitting from the concessions granted in this legislation, which we are presently considering.

Sir, in educational institutions, courses are still being taught in almost all of the secondary schools. CAPE has an Associates Degree in Business studies, and it does include entrepreneurship studies. Minister Eastmond mentioned the YES programme. I wish to elaborate more on that because, in addition to the seniors, we have YES juniors in the primary schools, and their activities are very encouraging.

Mr. President, there is a boy school, which is displaying great ingenuity. There are 25 boys who meet with their teachers after school and they plan businesses and they execute them. They have done feasibility studies and part of the activities is to see what the need is among their peers, and come up with a business. Sir, they are selling pencils with points, because they notice that the boys have pencils but, somehow, they never have them sharpened. They sell marbles. They notice how boys, very often, are not tying their shoe laces or they lose them, so they are selling laces. They are selling drinks and bags for lucky dips.

Therefore, children like these will grow up with a far greater understanding of business. They also are making sure that some of it is kept back, and put back into their business.

I also understand that young people are demanding business courses, and a significant number of young people want to run their own businesses. I think most people are aware that the Barbados Community College and the Samuel Jackman Prescod Polytechnic hold evening classes for working people to improve their skills. Many who take advantage of the classes are people who either are running their own businesses or seeking to run their own businesses, and to improve their skills.

I wish to emphasize here, Mr. President, that although the schools give children the foundation in knowledge, skills and attitudes, I think there is a need for post school career guidance, beyond what is being done in the schools. Sir, a great deal is being done but there is need for that post career guidance, which would include entrepreneurship.

It has been for a long time, deeply ingrained in the Barbadians psyche that self-employment can be a precarious adventure. Therefore, you find parents, even today, those of them who have influence over their children, some of them still try to discourage their children from embarking on their own, and this would include, of course, small business. This is understandable, albeit, not commendable.

Sir, there are children nowadays electing to pursue careers in music, singing, dance and things, which years ago, certainly in my day, parents would have considered dangerous and, in some instances, stupid.

I remember at one time, my father thought that I could have a career in music, and my mother, although she was teaching me the piano still said that it is foolishness and I was not going to get anywhere with it. Of course, today, things are changing. If we are to survive, we need to be more creative and, we know that there is great emphasis now on the cultural industries, with very good results.

The difference between the former and the present Government is that this Government is taking the small business forward and granting concessions to both big and small businesses, and we need both. I wish to emphasize that although the school gives the foundation in knowledge, skills and attitudes, there is need, as I have said before, for greater guidance.

When I was in Sixth Form, I remember up to this day, a quotation by my history teacher, which I think is relevant to those people who are afraid to venture into small businesses on their own. Sir, with your permission, I would like to quote it:

"He either fears his fate too much
Or his desserts are small,
That puts it not unto the touch
To win or lose it all."

In other words I am saying that for those who want to undertake a small business or for that matter a big business, beside management skills and all the other skills needed, I think perhaps, in addition to creativity, one of the great attributes needed, is courage, the ability to take risks. Sir, Senator Eastmond, in her usual able distinctive fashion, mentioned discipline. I think that next to discipline, or in tandem with it, that courage and the ability to take risks, are two of the essential ingredients.

Sir, I wish heartedly to support this legislation because it is very important, especially in these days of globalisation.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Senator Nicholls.

SENATOR G. P. B. NICHOLLS: Mr. President, the Amendment to the Small Business Development Act, Chapter 318C, comes at a very important time in the life of the Barbadian economy. It comes at a time, Sir, when several opportunities to take part in the development of the Barbadian economy, have resulted principally because of the sound policies, enunciated and put into practice by the Barbados Labour Party. Sir, I do not think that the Chamber needs to be reminded of the state of the Barbadian economy and the lack of opportunities that business people, of all sizes and descriptions had, at the time when we took office.

It is important to note, Sir, that the Amendment to the Act, which we consider today, has its genesis in the policy statement issued as an alternative by the Prime Minister of Barbados, when he was Leader of the Opposition, replying to a Budget Speech in 1994. Since then, the Barbados Labour Party's Manifesto has faithfully created the framework for the policy for the development for the Small Business Sector. We have done so consistently, and I do not

have to go through the details of the 1999 Barbados Labour Party Manifesto. Sir, the point needs to be made that, even up to 1999, the Democratic Labour Party Manifestoes never had any reference at all to the concept of small business development. Sir, it is on that basis that I would want to make my contribution to this debate.
3.00 p.m.

Mr. President, I also want to say at the outset that I am commending the Honourable Minister for her work as the Minister responsible for business development. Sir, she is a hands-on Minister. She goes and meets with the small business sector. She goes and she hears their concerns and she articulates Government's position to them very well and she also receives the comments and criticisms of the sector.

Sir, this amendment is intended to give effect to Government's overall development plan in relation to the development of the small business sector. Mr. President, a Government cannot create a small business sector. We can do like Senator Lowe and shout from the mountain top and get on the soapbox and make all the platitudes about what small businesses should be like, but we know that Government has a limited scope in relation to how we interface with the small businesses that are around the island.

Mr. President, if it is one good point that Senator Dr. Lowe made it is about the people who barbecue food on weekends or during the week and the 'red caps' at the airport.

Sir, the whole scope of small business activity in this country is very wide. Therefore, it is not possible for Government to create a policy that would facilitate all small businesses to develop to become medium-size businesses and then to be large businesses, that is not the intention of the legislation at all. What was absent from our legislative framework was an attempt to facilitate the development of the sector so that they could play a greater role in creating more economic opportunities for Barbadians.

Sir, I think that if the research is done, we would see that concomitant with the reduction in the levels of unemployment, that the development of small business ventures in Barbados – people on their own accord, people who do not rely on any of the funding institutions created by the Barbados Labour Party since we have been in power – have been doing very well.

Sir, I know that every Honourable Member of this Chamber would have in the past patronised a business that has been created principally because the economy in Barbados is doing well and we can afford for people to go out there and take the risk of setting up their own business. Sir, that is a feature of the good policies of the Barbados Labour Party.

Sir, it is interesting that in this debate Senator Dr. Lowe who normally likes to speak about the philosophical grounding of the Democratic Labour Party on several issues cannot relate or cannot refer to any such policy within the Democratic Labour Party.

Mr. President, I think it is important that we make the point on This Side because shortly after the 1986 election, in which the coalition of interest got together and elected the Democratic Labour Party into Government, historians suggest that there was a major international crisis in Barbados. Some people called it the mutual affair, in which the whole programme of economic enfranchisement was being championed from the Democratic Labour Party platform. Sir, civic-minded Barbadians like Professor Hilary Beckles, Canon Harcourt Blackett and other persons formed the Bussa Committee, approached the Government of the day, and by 1999 the Democratic Labour Party platform was one of economic enfranchisement for black people and for medium and small businesses in Barbados.

Mr. President, we have never seen these policies being created in any legislative form nor we have never seen a framework for small and medium size enterprises coming out of that discussion. What we know is that the Democratic Labour Party Government in its 1991–1994 era committed itself to creating a framework for the development of small businesses. Sir, what is not well-known, but the records of the State would show, is that the Sandiford administration committed the Minister of Commerce at the time, who is now the Leader of the Opposition, to develop a framework for the development of small businesses. Mr. President, people like Professor Stan Reid, Professor Beckles, and I believe Professor Frank Alleyne, were among the broad cross-section of people who presented positions to the Democratic Labour Party Government on small business. Sir, like the St. John Development Plan, it has not seen the light of day.

Sir, we can accept criticism but the criticism must be honest and it must be realistic. Sir, the Democratic Labour Party has never enunciated a position on small business and nobody can say that they remember when the Democratic Labour Party's leadership articulated a position on small business or the development of a framework on small business or supported a Resolution in either House at any time in this country's history to deal with funding entrepreneurship for young people, small or medium size businesses, to providing technical support, to helping people to write business plans or creating or facilitating an environment in the commercial lending sector so that small businesses can access capital. We have never heard in this country anything of that sort from the Democratic Labour Party.

Sir, we believe that economic management is the cornerstone for the social, political and economic

development of this country, and we will continue to ensure that Barbadians have greater opportunities to develop themselves.

Sir, we believe that in a small economy like Barbados, we have to manage our economic resources well and we have to balance the competing interests that are making demands on the State. The small business sector is but one of those sectors that make demands on the State.

We have heard the Honourable Minister responsible for business development say here at the time of the discussion of the Appropriation Bill, that she would like more resources to be placed at the disposal of the Ministry but we have to be realistic. We cannot all get up and say we are going to direct our attention on all of the resources of the State so that anybody who comes in the name of small business can get funding at concessional rates and all would be well. Sir, we do not believe in that. We believe that we must manage the economy in a balanced way, and if we manage our economy well we believe that everybody would be a winner.

We have been saying that only a Government that is focussed and disciplined can run a society like Barbados in the times that we operate in. We have been living in a society in which decisions taken at a distance continue to affect our economic livelihood.

Sir, over the last couple of days, we have seen how the market at the airport for persons in the small business sector who make things like jams, jellies and preservatives has been effectively taken away, hopefully for a short period of time, as a result of things that happened, not in our own country, but at a distance. Sir, this is an essential component of what people call globalisation. The ability of things and decisions taken at a distance affect how you survive and how you do business as a people. Sir, this is the environment in which we must operate.

Sir, I think that Barbadians generally accept that the country is well-run. We are not saying that we are perfect. The big and large countries that are endowed with several resources have problems like we do. Sir, I think that Barbadians can generally accept that this is a country that is well-run.

Sir, when we are able to have a discussion about maintaining our economic fortunes, about maintaining the quality of life and creating more opportunities for development and creating a framework in which enterprises are more competitive, not only in our domestic market but can stand on their own feet and become regional champions, then the discussion on small business, by Both Sides of the political divide, can get somewhere.

3.10 p.m.

Mr. President, that is the framework of development that I believe the small business sector, like all other sectors to which this Government is attending, must go forward in that way.

Mr. President, the Small Business Development Act of 1999, in my mind, is one of the finest pieces of the Barbados Labour Party's legislative architecture, that has enhanced the social, political and economic landscape of this country. Sir, before the small business sector being consolidated in the manner in which it has been done, by virtue of this legislation coming into place in 1999, we have seen the massive improvements in the efficiency and the competitiveness of small business enterprises, and what we need is a manner in which we could institutionalise their operations.

Mr. President, as I said before, governments cannot create a small business sector, and we could shout from the mountain tops, we could stay on political platforms, we could make all grand pronouncements, but we cannot create a small business sector. We could only facilitate and enhance that sector.

Mr. President, we know what the contours of the landscape that we inherited in Barbados, when we took over from 'Hurricane Dems' in 1994, was like. There was no framework for the development of small businesses and as Senator Lowe knows, he spoke to this at lunch time, he cannot point to any place in the Democratic Labour Party's recent history, where there was a framework for small business development.

Mr. President, this amendment to the Bill also gives effect to Government's proposal to effect an entrepreneurial culture in Barbados that is endemic, and Senator Dame Patricia spoke to this issue. Sir, I remember when I was going to school and having to make choices that I would do at the Caribbean Examination Council level, I was told that my academic performance was such that I should not go into a business form, that perhaps I should pursue either the sciences or languages and that I should leave subjects such as Accounts, Principles of Business and such like to persons, who were not as academically-inclined as I was. Sir, I do not know if I have done very badly but I know there are people, who have gone into businesses, who have done very well, but I have chosen the path that I have gone.

Mr. President, the point is that we do not have an entrepreneurial culture in Barbados that is endemic. We do not have a national entrepreneurial culture. Therefore, part and parcel of the Government economic programme is to get people in Barbados to become aware of their potential to exploit their environment and the resources that they have at their disposal, so that they could make a greater contribution to their own economic developments.

Mr. President, I believe that, as policy makers, we have to find more creative ways to get people interested in developing and exploiting the resources around them, so that they could become entrepreneurs in their own right. Therefore, what we have not done is to look around us, with greater alacrity... Sir, I am speaking to, for example, things such as rural tourism and creating more agro-businesses in Barbados, at the small level. The Government is already doing good work to support the institutional support that is there but it is not an endemic culture. There are too many young people, in the rural parts of Barbados, who are opting not to get involved in economic activities that relate to the land and to the resources around them.

Mr. President, what Government has to continue doing, is to create the opportunities by creating more educational programmes. Barbadians too must support and highlight the successes, rather than highlighting the failures. Sir, not all businesses are successful, large businesses fail too. Sometimes large businesses have the facility of merging with other businesses, so that they could become more competitive. What we need to start doing is to start creating the modules under which the Small Business Development framework could be widened and enhanced.

Mr. President, I think we have to go to our educational system to start promoting entrepreneurship as an essential tool, as to how the Barbadian of the future, would be able to develop themselves and their resources and be able to compete.

Mr. President, we have very few national champions in Barbados, who could stand up against the competition that is being unleashed, as a result of our commitments to trade liberalisation. Many of the so-called national economic champions in Barbados cry to the Government and say not to let other competitors come into Barbados because if Government were to let these competitors in, our local businesses would not be able to compete and, therefore, would have to dismiss Barbadian workers. Sir, I am, therefore, saying this is happening because there is an essential fear of being able to compete on even terms, not grounded in reality of economic misfortunes, as a result of competition. Sir, competition should be good but there is this fear amongst our local businesses.

Mr. President, one of the Objects and Reasons of this amendment, is to allow benefits on a wider range of activities, in which small businesses are involved, and I believe that we need to start promoting an entrepreneurial culture that is endemic. It is also important for us to create a large platform for the informal sector to become part of the formal economy in Barbados.

Mr. President, whenever there is an interfacing between the small business sector and Government, in its administrative and regulatory form, people start to say and to accuse the Government of not facilitating small businesses. Sir, as a small business, it does not mean that Government could allow it to operate or to develop, in circumstances that do not fit in with the general development plan of the country or that which would affect the right and interests of other people. What we had, in relation to the issue on vending, is a classic example, where people felt that as long as they were vendors, they could have set up any place in Bridgetown and that neither the Police Force nor Government should enforce the law because of the fact that they are small business people.

Mr. President, nobody on This Side, in this day and age, would be opposed to vending. We believe there must be an ordered and responsible approach to small businesses. If we do not have an ordered approach to small businesses, those businesses would never grow and would never move into the formal economy. Therefore, what we are doing, in relation to the development of small business – and I know that Senator Husbands would speak on this issue as well – is to educate small business persons that they do not have to stay in the back corners, in order to survive, neither do they have to depend upon the emotional issue that they are small businesses and, therefore, should be left alone.

Mr. President, the small business persons are of the view that there are laws and regulations that govern the conduct of businesses in Barbados but that Government should literally allow them to set up and to operate their businesses, for example, to sell barbeque pig tails on the corner. Sir, they would be of the view, notwithstanding the fact that they would be operating in breach of the Health Service Regulations. Small business persons might not want to be bothered about things relating to, for example, the Health Service Regulation, but when somebody becomes ill as a result of food that is not prepared properly, we would then hear that the Government is not doing its role in regulating people, who are selling food.

Mr. President, we have to be a responsible Government. We have to encourage people to respect the law, which is there to be applied by everybody in Barbados. Sir, this amendment to the Bill deals directly with being able to facilitate small businesses from coming from the informal sector, into the formal economies. Mr. President, the Small Business Sector must see itself as being able to facilitate Barbados' international competitiveness. Sir, I am not certain we have got it right, when we have been looking at how small businesses can compete in the international market.

Senator Dr. Lowe talked about niche markets. Sir, there is a niche market for the indigenous Barbadian pepper sauce. We know that. We probably might have to import the ingredients but if the cottage industry that makes the

pepper sauce in Barbados had an overseas market and we could get these products into North America or Europe because they have certain hidden barriers or tariffs that prevent easy movement and access into these international markets ... Sir, if perchance we were able to break into these markets, do we have the capacity to make pepper sauce in Barbados, that would satisfy both a North American as well as a domestic market? Do we have that capacity? It is all good and well to speak about niche markets. It is all well and good to speak about the small business sector, about the fact that Government should identify a particular niche area, so that they could make products or provide goods and services for the international markets but we have to be realistic.
3.20 p.m.

Therefore, they must be a gradual approach to the development of small businesses so that they can do what they are intended to do. I do not necessarily think that funding small businesses will necessarily enhance our international competitiveness because I do not believe they have the capacity to satisfy the market share of foreign markets, as well as our domestic markets. I believe it is important to have some level of import substitution.

Sir, in areas in which we import products, which can be made here as a result of the resources which we have, we can encourage the development of small businesses to get into those areas to reduce our food import bill and our import bill in that regard. Sir, at the level of making any assumption that a small business can tomorrow start exporting its goods and services to the export market is something we have to think more about.

Mr. President, the small business sector like the small black man has been the recipient of too many false tears particularly by the political class. Sir, we all know that there are a number of factors that operate within the context of our Barbadian society that frustrate the legitimate fortunes of small businesses. We have a culture in the banking sector which says that banks will only lend money to businesses if they provide security.

Mr. President, only recently in discussions with some friends from abroad over the Crop Over period, I discovered that, for example, in Trinidad that financial institutions do not lend money to businesses on the basis of providing any security. They feel that security is a secondary or tertiary level of protection. You present your financial statements, show your ability to earn money and it is upon this basis that capital and financing is provided.

Sir, we have a situation in this country where too many well-run small and medium businesses in this country have to go to the commercial bank and mortgage their homes and investment in property, in order to secure capital even though the Financial Statements of these businesses show that they are doing well and that they can make money. Sir, they are hampered because even if they get the financing, the financial institution tells them to bring 30 per cent or 40 per cent of what they require upfront in addition to a guarantee on their homes.

Mr. President, only this week, I was in the unfortunate and unenviable position of seeing a family member who only five to ten years ago had one of the biggest businesses in Barbados in reconditioned cars, lose everything as a result of how the forces and fortunes in the business environment in Barbados operate because the bank had title to every piece of property that they owned. Sir, despite the fact that they were doing well at some time, the reins were tight, security not only in terms of putting up capital to a certain percentage of the business investment but also security in the form of all the real estate which you own.

Mr. President, there are other institutions of the State that facilitate a cumbersome environment and, Sir, we know that. If small business development is going to be a process that we all facilitate and support, we must start to make demands on the financial system so that the norms which they apply to the small business sector facilitate the things which the Government is doing because the Government cannot be walking smartly down the street but the commercial banking sector in Barbados is not doing the same thing.

Mr. President, there are a number of initiatives which we welcome. In fact, I must take the opportunity to congratulate the Barbados National Bank because it is the only commercial bank in Barbados, which has created a small business facilitation desk.

Aside.

SENATOR G. P. B. NICHOLLS: Sir, if it is not the only bank, I am saying that to my knowledge, it is the first. I am not certain about the other commercial banks but they have been giving yeoman service to small business development. I think it is a credit that a bank in which Government still owns a considerable share holding, is being able to provide those opportunities to small businesses.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Honourable Member, you have two minutes left.

SENATOR G. P. B. NICHOLLS: Sir, I thank you.

Mr. President, in the remaining time you have granted to me, I would want to reiterate my support for this piece of legislation. I believe that we must have a culture of entrepreneurship in Barbados that is fostered and developed. I would like the call-in programmes and the civic organisations in Barbados to start speaking about creation

of wealth because if we use the concept of creation of wealth and inter-generational equity, businesses and generations earning, so that they could transfer wealth to other generations, we as a society would be the better for it.

We are a small society, well-governed, well-managed society and I believe that if we create more economic opportunity for all, small, medium and large size businesses that we could realise the fruits of development that our forefathers had intended.

Sir, with those few words, I am much obliged.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Senator Bynoe.

SENATOR A. A. BYNOE: Mr. President, I rise to support the amendment to the Small Business Act which is before this House today.

The creation of wealth is necessary for any society and this Government recognising that, has put in place a number of initiatives of which the Small Business Development Act is one. This Act is buttressed by other pieces of legislation which are there to support the development of the small businessman. I am thinking of the area of finance, for instance, the Urban Development Commission, an instrument through which small business people can access finance. I am thinking now of farmers. Sir, I heard Senator Lowe speak of farmers. I am sure that the Minister of Agriculture, might very well speak of the opportunity to which those pig farmers could avail themselves in relation to the upgrading of their pens and so on.
3.30 p.m.

Mr. President, I happened to be very close to pig farmers. I visit them practically on a weekly basis, so I know the state of the industry. I am using this opportunity to say that there is a need for the improvement within those farms. Again, I think that most of them can say that this Government has a plan in this matter, at this point in time.

Sir, I would like to think that we could widen the playing field, so to speak, when I say that we talk about small businesses. I believe I am on good ground when I say that come from Flat Rock to St. Philip. At Six Roads there is a need for the development within that area of services, to cater to the small business person. As a matter of fact, I can go beyond that, and say that there is need to cater to the ordinary requirements of the people, from the parish of St. Philip. Sir, Six Roads has the potential to develop even further. Therefore, I am sure that the representatives for that area would be looking to satisfy the needs of their constituents.

Mr. President, there are a lot of housing developments going up within that area, and those people would certainly want to benefit from such initiatives, as debated here today.

Sir, I wonder where the Bajans are, when we talk about small business, because we spend time to create the opportunities and I believe as we look around Bridgetown we are seeing less Barbadians taking advantage of the facilities being offered by our Government. I must send a message to Barbadians that they need to become more entrepreneurial when Government has gone to this extent, then they have to take advantage of the opportunities.

Mr. President, I am also aware of some of the restrictions that can be imposed on some areas of activity. For instance, we have farmers who are concerned that the country has become so built up that they, in their particular area, where they have been for many years, are now seen as the nuisance. Apart from concentrating on the matters within this current amendment before this House, I believe that we now have to take a further look to see what are the needs of the small businessman, farmers especially, in relation to the continuance of their business.

Sir, one of the things that we have to be concerned about, is that while we gear strict legislation as discussed in a positive manner, there are times when other parts of legislation found elsewhere within the laws of Barbados, virtually wreak havoc on the small businessman.

We have reduced the corporation tax to make business, in a sense, more profitable, but it seems that within our legislation we have other aspects that target the small businessman. Within our Income Tax Act, we still have legislation on our books, whereby if somebody is selling twenty-five sugar cakes and two dozen mangoes, they are required to report such income. Such persons can be taxed on that income.

Therefore, I would like us to be aware, that attention has to be paid to creating an environment that is not compromised by other aspects of legislation elsewhere within the laws of this country. Sir, sometimes we find that such laws in relation to taxation can become a disincentive to work, whereby some of the very entrepreneurs, might decide that it is better not to give it their best, and merely operate at what they consider to be a comfortable level.

Mr. President, this legislation before us deserves our commendation. It is at this point I would say that I recommend and support the legislation before this Honourable Chamber.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Senator Sir Stanley Goddard.

SENATOR Sir John Stanley GODDARD: Mr. President, I would like to begin my presentation by commending Senator Eastmond, who introduced the Small Business Development Act. She went to great pains into the

background of that Act, how it served Barbados well and the need for the amendment which is before us today. I will recommend anyone looking to take advantage of the Small Business Development Act, and pay particular attention to what she had to say. I hope that it would get the necessary publicity in the local media.
3.40 p.m.

Mr. President, for me this has been a very refreshing debate, because my experience in the business community goes back a long way. I remember when I was getting ready to go away in 1949, I was asked by the wife of a prominent Barbadian what was I going to study, was it medicine or law.

I said:

> "Madam, neither. I am going to study business management."

Her reply was:

> "You mean to tell me you have to go away to sell salt fish and rice?"

I said:

> "I do not know. I did not have enough experience in selling salt fish and rice. But, I know that the world that I would be operating in and living in, you would have to be educated in business management and business performance."

I was not pretending to be visionary. It just all seemed so obvious.

Why I say this debate has been refreshing is that every speaker, without exception, has commented on the importance of business development and what it means to this community, this economy, and this society. Everyone has emphasized the importance of people becoming more entrepreneurial. If we really believe that and I believe those in here do believe it, but you want a wider belief in the wider community.

Some people see business in terms of social status, when they want to compare it with the recognised professions. It has nothing to do with status. It has all to do with what you would like to do, what you are happy doing, what you can contribute to the society, and it goes beyond selling salt fish and rice.

In my business career, some 60 years now, I have sold salt fish and rice and other things, without an apology, without regret, but that training and experience gave me the means to become involved in many other things, within this society within this region. Sir, for me, it was a preparation for life after school.

I would like to see more young people look at business like just not getting a job. Of course, everybody has to get a job. People have to earn a living for themselves and to support their families but it is the contribution we can make. The society that we are moving into is very different, and changing rapidly from what it was. We hear about the Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA). We hear about CARICOM. We hear about CSME. All these will impact on how we perform individually and as a community.

Therefore, it is important that we pay particular attention to educating ourselves in business. As an example, I made reference to the Centre for Management Development, which recently changed its name to the Cave Hill School of Business, offering MBA courses, Diploma courses and the enrollment is growing every year. The young people in this area recognise the importance of business education.

Sir, management is not simply something you can pick off a tree. First of all you must have a liking for it, a liking for dealing with people, a liking in getting things done, in self-discipline, setting targets and studying, *et cetera*. I could go on for ages.

Sir, I am happy to see more and more young people, male and female, enrolling in business courses at the Cave Hill School of Business. I believe the Samuel Jackman Prescod Polytechnic is offering courses. The private sector organisations are offering courses and seminars.

Business is not something that you get a job and learn on the job only, as you go along. You have to get the experience, and the mentoring role of seniors in the business will always be important, because they are passing on to the younger person the benefit of their experience.

Mr. President, I could go on reminiscing but this is not the time for reminiscing. I want to compliment Senator Eastmond again and I hope that the attention it deserves, it would get.

Thank you very much, Mr. President, and I support the Resolution.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Senator Husbands.

SENATOR Miss S. C. V. HUSBANDS: Thank you, Mr. President.

I rise to give support to the Bill before the Chamber, the amendment to the Small Business Development Act. I am very pleased today to have the opportunity to speak, not

only to this Bill, but to the small business sector in general on what is happening.

The Small Business Development Act is part of a comprehensive policy framework, developed by the Barbados Labour Party to be able to create, within the Barbadian economic landscape, vibrant and strong small businesses.

Mr. President, when we look at the past, from where small businesses have come, one of the things we would realise is that over the years, small businesses have found themselves in a situation that has been unequal, and has not been supported enough to help them to develop and become what they wanted to be.

There were four main areas that tended to impact very negatively on small businesses in the past. One of the challenges was under-capitalisation. Unfortunately, part of this is cultural where a lot of small business people only start small businesses when the economy was bad and that was a feature of business in Barbados in the 60s, 70s and 80s.

Many families had no assets. The financial institutions were not supportive. You had aggression by other big businesses that would try to squeeze you out, and you had the additional internal capacity problems of low trust and not having enough assets to be able to finance your enterprise in the way that you would like. There was also an aversion to equity within the economic land space among small businesses.

Another problem that impacted on small businesses is internal capacity, the managerial skill. Senator Goddard spoke well just now about the importance of business training. Many small businesses found that they did not have the accounting, the administrative, the HR, the operational management and the marketing skills. Very often, they had difficulty in having resources to attract and retain those types of skills, because of financial and other reasons.

Another area that impacted on them is technical assistance. Sir, without the ability to attract internally your own professionals, it means that you have to rely on external technical assistance and that was not available within the Barbadian landscape in the 60s, 70s, 80s.

Sir, within the business environment, there was no regulation of how businesses operated against each other. There was no fair trading legislation to be able to regulate what was happening and to give businesses a fair chance to operate, then, you had an environment that was dominated by monopolies.

Mr. President, these situations obtained from as far back as we can remember. Successive Governments, as they came forward, sometimes some Governments sought to put certain things in place, to try to help. The truth is, the assistance never went far enough to truly change the fundamentals of what was impacting on the development of small businesses.

One of the particular mistakes that was made in the early years, was the assumption that the main problem with businesses – and many small businesses believed it – was that their main problem was access to capital. Little did they understand that they lacked internal capacity. They needed technical assistance. They needed a whole slew of other things, if they were going to be successful in the new environment.

Sir, over the years, throughout this period, it was often characterised by the Democratic Labour Party, talking about the poor small man, the black man, the small business, and putting forward and using for their political gain, the concept that the Barbados Labour Party was only interested in big businesses and did not help small businesses.

Sir, many Barbadians got carried away by that talk and rhetoric. A lot of Barbadians got carried away with this feeling that the Democratic Labour Party was for the small man and the Barbados Labour Party was for the big man. Many come along and still talk about it today, without truly examining the facts. This is what I want to talk about today, Mr. President.

3.50 p.m.

Mr. President, I am intimately involved in the small business sector, I have studied the small business sector. Mr. President, I can stand before you, before this Chamber and before this nation and say that I am proud of the record of the Barbados Labour Party when it comes to the movement of small business and in helping them to be able to gain a foothold in this economic space. The Barbados Labour Party has nothing to be ashamed of. No other Government in this country has done as much for the small business sector as has been done by this Administration.

Mr. President, I want to demonstrate to this Chamber and to Barbadians at large what has been done in the interest of small businesses across this country because sometimes we do not remember and sometimes we do not observe and we get caught up with the rhetoric about how we do not help the poor black man, *et cetera*.

This Barbados Labour Party Administration when it came to power in 1994, came ready with a comprehensive policy for moving small businesses forward because they recognise that small businesses were the key to two important things, economic growth of the country and a sustainable tool or weapon for the redistribution

of wealth. They recognise that if small businesses can grow and develop they are going to employ more people than a large business, there are going to be the means of being able to increase their exports and they are going to be able to increase their foreign exchange earnings if they can get them to grow and develop. More importantly, they recognise that small businesses were going to be a better and more sustainable tool or weapon when it comes to the redistribution of wealth.

Mr. President, despite all the talk that goes up and down this country about how you have these big businesses and people cannot get a 'look in' and they cannot get a chance and so on and so forth, we are going to ensure that there is a genuine and more permanent distribution of wealth in this country. Sir, the only way you can do that is through the development of small businesses and by encouraging your people to get involved. You cannot do it through taxation. You cannot tax your existing businesses into oblivion. If you are going to redistribute wealth, then you need a conduit through which wealth would flow, and it would only come through entrepreneurship.

Mr. President, this Government came to power with a policy already in place. Mr. President, let me explain what that policy was about. The Barbados Labour Party came into power in 1994 and by 1995, the Youth Entrepreneurship Scheme (YES) was already formed and ready to do business. The mandate of the YES is to help simulate small business development among young people because it was recognised that thousands of young people left school every year and found it difficult to enter the labour market and to find the kind of job that they wanted to do. This Government recognised that if these young people were going to find their space within Barbados and if they were going to be able to get a chance to eat some of the pie, they were going to need someone to create that space, and the Youth Entrepreneurship Scheme was that.

Mr. President, the Youth Entrepreneurship Scheme is probably one of the most comprehensive well-run institutions that Government has. The Youth Entrepreneurship Scheme has a complete programme that helps small business people, young people, from idea to enterprise. Mr. President, when they say from idea to enterprise, they mean that everything is provided for them free of charge. Mr. President, I have had the privilege to work with that programme and to look at the tremendous work that their officers have done and the businesses that they have helped over the years. These businesses are still functioning today, still employing people and are growing big and moving on. Mr. President, I am proud of the work that they have done. They have to be congratulated for the tremendous work that they have done.

Mr. President, in 1994, we were faced with a situation where the Barbados Development Bank was essentially bankrupt. It could not do anything more. The Barbados Labour Party had to put aside that institution and create new institutions for capitalisation, but the capitalisation had to go beyond the provision of loans. Mr. President, a business can only grow on loans in its early stages. If it wants to go from small to big, it has to attract share capital.

Mr. President, there is a difficulty in Barbados. The population of Barbados is risk-aversed. They do not want to take their savings and put it into some strange business they do not know anything about and they do not want to take their savings from the credit union and even put it in their own relatives business. Mr. President, how were we going to overcome that and encourage small businesses to get equity financing to make sure that they were not struggling with monthly payments of loans but that they had access to capital that they could turn over and make profits before they had to look at giving people returns should they want to cash in their shares.

Mr. President, this Government not only provided loan financing, it put in place venture capital for small businesses. This brought to the fore the formation of the Enterprise Growth Fund, Fund Access, the Rural Development Commission and the Urban Development Commission. Mr. President, before them, we had already on the landscape the Barbados National Bank and then in terms of venture capital, we also had the Small Business Venture Capital Inc. Mr. President, through the Enterprise Growth Fund and the SBA Venture Capital Inc. the Government made available millions of dollars for equity financing.

Mr. President, I am not saying that it was easy because the culture of Barbados did not support venture capital but the Government persisted in its efforts to help the private sector organisation, the SBA, to facilitate their own organisation with those funds and kept encouraging us to get the money out, to teach the people and to train the people, so that today we can now say that a lot of that money has gone out in venture capital and we are looking for more. Mr. President, the Government has given the SBA $1 million more to help with its equity programme.

Mr. President, this is part of changing the mind-set because an economic framework with all the legislation and all the assistance in the world is no guarantee of success unless the business has within itself the internal capacity to win. Mr. President, part of that has to do with how they manage and deal with financing.

Mr. President, this Government has made available to the people of Barbados $150 million. Mr. President, that is not all. Out of that programme, close to 2 000 small

businesses have been able to access loans. Mr. President, every single person who went for a loan was not able to get it because some were not ready. Sir, it is more than just having an idea, it is also having a plan that will allow you to make a success of that business.

Mr. President, the Government does not just sit and look at you and say that if you do not have a plan, you do not have a chance. They go further than that and they moved on to provide the necessary technical assistance through the Barbados Investment and Development Corporation free of cost.

Mr. President, I heard Senator Dr. Lowe talking about the necessity for technical assistance and I want to reassure him that technical assistance is available to any small business that wants it today, not just through the Small Business Development Act but through the Barbados Investment and Development Corporation. The Urban Development Commission will be starting a programme shortly and it will have a technical assistance programme attached to it.

Mr. President, these loans have benefited businesses from a wide range of activities. We are talking about agriculture, people want to get into pig farming. Our good Senator, Senator Bynoe, is a pig farmer. Other agricultural farmers, vendors, hairdressers, retailers, fishermen, auto-mechanics, taximen and people interested in producing pepper sauce, *et cetera*, and services of all kinds have been able to step forward and access those loans that they need to help make their dream a reality.

Mr. President, not only have they been able to put the capitalisation and the technical assistance in place, they also provide support in other ways, especially the Barbados Investment and Development Corporation, and I want to commend them.

Mr. President, the Barbados Investment and Development Corporation has a small business, Island Craft. Mr. President, there are many craft people who are busy producing craft, they know how to produce beautiful things, and we see them at BMEX, but one of the challenges they have is how to market it effectively to the tourists and to the local market.

Sir, that little entity of the Barbados Investment and Development Corporation takes the craft from the craft people and sells it through their shops, and it does a thriving business. It has an excellent manager who is in charge. She knows her business when it comes to retail management. She has been able to see to it that many small craftsmen have been able to more effectively market their products and make money from their businesses as a result of what the Barbados Investment and Development Corporation has been able to put in place. They are also able to sell at the airport shops and at the Pelican outlet.

4.00 p.m.

Mr. President, it goes further. Government has taken the extra step of making sure they put together a programme for bulk purchasing, so that the unit cost for people doing craft could go down, so that they could be more competitive. That is a Government, which has a comprehensive policy for helping and assisting small people, in seeking to change the landscape within which they operate.

Mr. President, the other area this Government has introduced, which it could put a feather in its cap for, is that of entrepreneurial training. Prior to the advent of this Government, there was very little, in term of entrepreneurial training. Everybody felt that the only thing they would have needed, to be able to do well in business, would have been to have a product, open a shop, open the door, put up a sign, and people would have come in. That is why we would have heard such remarks about whether there is the need for persons to have a degree, to sell saltfish and rice.

Sir, people do not understand there is the need to have managerial training, in order to manage an enterprise well. Many small business persons, who do not understand that, treat their businesses as though it is a job they have created for themselves, that all they have to do, would be to work from 8.00 a.m. to 4.00 p.m., and that all they would have to do is to open the doors, put the product to be sold and things would happen. When they do this, without any results, they become frustrated. They think they are unable to make the sale or to run the business effectively, not understanding that they would need to build their managerial capacity.

Mr. President, this Government has recognised that weakness. This Government has recognised that in order to build strong, small businesses, it could not simply leave it to chance that people would know how to run those small businesses. If Government were to do that, business after business would fail. Sir, because of its comprehensive policy and its commitment to small business, this Government has put in place the necessary training to ensure that small businesses could get the type of information required, to run an effective business and, therefore has made this training available to persons, free of cost.

Mr. President, we have to congratulate the Ministry of Agriculture. Their Rural Development Commission programme was one of the most effective programmes, in relation to training entrepreneurs in this country. Every year, more than 300 small businesses are exposed to such training as business start-up, business management, accounting, marketing, computer technology, even including

the legal side of business. Therefore, as a result, we have begun to see the difference in how entrepreneurs are operating.

Mr. President, it is not only the Youth Entrepreneurship Scheme or FundAccess which provide training, the Rural Development Commission also does a comprehensive programme. Sir, this year the Urban Development Commission is going to join with the Rural Development Commission, in providing entrepreneurial training, across the length and breadth of this country, so that every small business person, who wants to get the training, could get the support they would need, to run an effective business. Sir, for this, Government must be congratulated.

Mr. President, the Government did not stop there. The Barbados Institute of Management and Productivity (BIMAP) receives funding from the Barbados Investment and Development Corporation. Sir, BIMAP has for years been providing significant training in business management for people in this country, and has been changing the landscape of how managers behave. It is not only people who want to start their own business but people who are working for others, in other business activities. Therefore, as a result, it is changing the culture of management in this country.

Mr. President, another such training programme is that of the TVET Council, where the Community Development Division is putting training programmes in place. Sir, this is the kind of thing that needs to be put in place, if we are going to see a change in the culture of business in this country.

Sir, one of the things we have observed in the Rural Development Commission's programme, which is run by the Small Business Association, is the change in the composition of the students. There was a time when some people would have only seen it as a training programme for persons who would not have had any money or who were in unfortunate circumstances. Sir, that is not the case. We are now getting people, from all walks of life, who are interested in becoming entrepreneurs. They are now recognising the value of that programme and are seeking to be a part of it.

Mr. President, I mentioned these things because it is important for Barbadians to know the facts. I want people to know what the impact of this comprehensive policy has been. Sir, this Government has put the Small Business Sector and the nurturing of an entrepreneurial culture at the centre of its business thrust, where, over the years, we have seen a tremendous increase in the number of small businesses started in this country.

Mr. President, in 1990, the number of small businesses started were in the vicinity of 600, and from the time the Barbados Labour Party took over, in 1994, the number of small businesses that were started, reached to more than 1 000 new businesses, from what it was in 2004, to more than 2 000 businesses. Sir, a total of 21 000 businesses were registered in this country. If you subtract from it the ones that are offshore companies, approximately 7 000 to 8 000, you would have approximately 11 000 businesses, that would have been started by Barbadians in this country. This shows that the policy of Government to encourage entrepreneurship has begun to bear fruit.

Mr. President, here is one of the fundamental changes. Barbadians traditionally only start businesses when the economy is bad. Now, because of the training, the support and the efforts to change the landscape, Barbadians are now choosing entrepreneurship as an activity of choice. There are Barbadians who are leaving what we call 'good' jobs and are becoming involved in other enterprises. Why are they getting involved? They are becoming involved because the environment is more favourable.

Sir, when I hear people talking as though the Barbados Labour Party is not for small people, I believe that it is a joke. Mr. President, the same Party who is talking about how the Barbados Labour Party is not for small people, have done nothing to change the landscape. They have only talked about it, bellyached about it, used the name of the small man to get political points but has done nothing to change the landscape.

Mr. President, are you telling me that they could not have put in Fair Trading legislation or Fair Competition legislation, to help break the back of the strongholds of those, who seek to control this economy, against other small people? Are you trying to tell me that they could not have put in bankruptcy legislation, to stop small businesses from experiencing the stigma of failure or to stop people from losing the very houses and land that they have talked about? Sir, despite all this talk, they have put nothing in place. Sir, it has been all talk and no action. They mean well but cannot do well. They have no policy, no framework nor any worth. Mr. President, the Bible tells us very clearly, faith without works is dead. Therefore, talk without works means nothing. It does not help the 'small man'.

Mr. President, let me tell you that Barbados has a very hostile environment, in relation to small business. I am telling you, the small business people used to cry out all the time. I have heard it and have tried to talk through how we could deal with it and what are some of the things that could be done.

Mr. President, there were situations where big businesses would have gotten together and colluded on prices, which would have knocked the small businesses

out. There were situations where large businesses would have traded information with each other, where they would have planned together, in circumstances where that would have worked against the small businesses that were trying to get in. Sir, now that we have legislation, we are able to get the protection that we need from that legislation. The consumer is able to get protection from that legislation.

Mr. President, the Democratic Labour Party talked about the monopolies in the country but what did they do about them. Did they have the courage to bite the bullet?

Asides.

SENATOR Miss S. C. V. HUSBANDS: Mr. President, we had Mobile Refinery Ltd., in this country, yet the Democratic Labour Party did nothing about breaking that monopoly. They have allowed the Barbadian public to get squeezed. They did not have the courage to rise up and dismantle that because every time that the contract ended, they would have renewed it. Sir, it was the same thing with Cable and Wireless.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Senator, perhaps you could bring us back to the subject of small business. You are mentioning some fairly large organisations.

SENATOR Miss S. C. V. HUSBANDS: Mr. President, we are discussing the economic framework, which the Small Business Development Act was seeking to enhance further but I would come a little closer home. Mr. President, my point is that it is not enough to talk. We cannot just mean well, we have to do well, and this Barbados Labour Party has done very well.
4.10 p.m.

Sir, one of the things it has done in order to support small businesses is to mandate that at least 60 per cent of what Government departments purchase must come from local sources. They have tried to ensure that much of that business goes to the small business sector. Sir, you could set a Small Business Development Act or Bankruptcy Act and seek to encourage or talk about helping small business but if you do not open the marketplace so that they could get in and get some of the contracts, the talk is no good. This Government went further and did something about it so that small businesses can get Government contracts. If you look at Urban Development Commission and Rural Development Commission, small business people get those contracts. While we are encouraging them with legislation, we have to do something by making sure they can get access to business.

Mr. President, the Small Business Association has been able to get contracts from Government for our farmers. We have been able to get contracts for our furniture manufacturers, landscapers, consultants and contractors and all this because the Barbados Labour Party has an active commitment to the small business sector.

Mr. President, since 1994, the Barbados Labour Party has started to support small business. They started off with the venture capital of $2 million and did something significant in the way we have been able to operate. Mr. President, at the time we were only getting $75 000 a year to help support the Secretariat. We could not hire sufficient staff, pay rent, pay electricity and all the operating expenses to ensure we could get out there and help small businesses to do their work and the Prime Minister made available to the Small Business Association $175 000 just to run the Secretariat and on top of that an additional $175 000 for specific projects and also funds to help people suffering with HIV/AIDS start businesses as well as money to decentralise the operation of the Small Business Association. Sir, for the benefit of our goodly Senator, Senator Dr. Lowe, I want to let him know that we started working with people in Speightstown, who had already started their own work, then we will send out people who will work in the community with the small business sector.

Mr. President, let me tell you something. There are so many small businesses in this country, Sir, in St. Michael Central, every street has three or four small businesses. There are close to 100 businesses in that community which employ people and give them an opportunity to earn a living. These people need upliftment and help and this is what the Small Business Association and the Government of Barbados will be doing to assist people to move up.

Mr. President, so many things have come out of that initiative which Government has put in place. Not only have we been able to start new businesses and get them trained but we have seen in the Small Business Association that our businesses are now developing confidence to move into exports and I have been pleased and proud of it. First of all, you cannot hold our service professionals because they are busy moving the length and breadth of our region. Sir, they did not work for the Caribbean Single Market and Economy because they were moving through the Caribbean for a long time but now they are taking advantage of the Caribbean Single Market and Economy to earn revenue and bring foreign exchange back into this country.

Mr. President, some people are still struggling but there are small business people making money who do not let anybody know this because they keep it quiet. Sir, they do not want anybody to know, they stay under the radar. I keep telling them that they cannot keep under the radar, that it will eventually come to light, that they should let us help them put formal structures in place so that they can move from the informal structure to the formal structure.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Senator, could you conclude in the next two minutes.

SENATOR Miss S. C. V. HUSBANDS: Yes, Sir. Mr. President, I want to use these two minutes just to share what are some of the things I think are needed to be done. When I hear them talk about how our Prime Minister will move heaven and earth, I want them to know that we have already moved heaven and that we will soon complete moving earth. Sir, they need to know that we have been working, that we have not been waiting for them to come to do anything for us.

Mr. President, as a result of this, under our stewardship, a lot of new sectors have emerged. Sir, the cultural industry has emerged, the information technology sector has emerged and the financial services have grown. What sector has the Democratic Labour Party grown in the time they were running this economy? Sir, I cannot think of any.

Mr. President, one of things which has happened as a result of what Government has put in place is that there has been a change in attitude by banks towards small business. They are now actively seeking to work with small businesses in a way that they never did before because the landscape of entrepreneurship in this country has changed.

Mr. President, I have three things on my wish list. We now need access to more affordable commercial space because it is getting more and more expensive for us and we want to discuss with Government how we could come up with a programme to deal with it. We are going to need to strengthen the culture of risk and investment. I have an idea to put to them so that we can help strengthen that culture of risk and investment and to bring a balanced approach to enforcement of regulations.

Mr. President, I am pleased and happy with work done and I look forward to doing more work with these things to make the small business sector a reality. Sir, I thank you.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Senator Dean Crichlow.

SENATOR the Very Reverend H. E. CRICHLOW: We have to be careful when we talk about small businesses because we are at the mercy of the big industrial countries. If in 10 or 20 years, China floods the markets of the Caribbean with inexpensive goods, I am sorry to say that a lot of what we are now debating will go under. We have to be careful how we tell the people of this country and the region that our only hope is in small business. Sir, for example, think of the introduction of supermarkets. More and more people are shopping at the supermarkets and when they run out of money they go back to the small village shop, which is dying, where they can credit, but as soon as they get money again, they go back to the supermarkets. This is part of development. We have copied these ways from the big countries, and they are doing a lot of damage to small businesses in our region.
4.20 p.m.

Mr. President, there is then the lack of trust among poor people. I think that all of us would agree that you cannot get small people to come together. The big businesses combine, sometimes the bigger the business the bigger the combination. How can small business people come together, they do not trust each other. This is something that we have to correct in our culture. We have to learn to trust each other. Sir, unity is strength and if we want to be strong we have to combine.

Mr. President, we have to remember that it takes years to build a business. Sometimes as soon as the profits begin to come in, they think that they are now successful and they spend a lot of the money on themselves and family. They buy a lot of expensive clothing, jewelry, *et cetera*, try to get a bigger house and a number of cars. They do not understand that those profits should have been put back into the business to make it stronger. They should look at the big business people and see their lifestyle, which is very simple.

Sir, of course, some people believe that you cannot be poor and show poor, so they have to buy the most expensive material to wear and the most expensive house, *et cetera*. I do not think that they have learnt from how the wealthy business people live.

I want to say that you do not have to be a brilliant person academically, to be a successful business person. Sir, secondary education is universal in the island, not only secondary education, but we are doing something that none of the big countries can do, we are offering free university education to all those who are qualified to receive it. We are supposed to be in a better position than the people, thirty or forty years ago.

I remember taking Confirmation Class for adults, and a man asked me not to ask him any questions because he was unable to read or write. I told him that does not matter. He was operating a very successful business. One afternoon, after a class he said when he says the Lord's Prayer he could not say, "Lead us not into temptation" because he found it very difficult to say. I told him that I have been wrestling with that problem for thirty years and scholars have been working on it for far longer than that and they have not found an answer to it yet.

Asides.

SENATOR the Very Reverend H. E. CRICHLOW: Sir, the first thing I do when there is a new translation available, I always read the Lord's Prayer to see how it translates,

"Lead us not into temptation." That is why we have translations like, "Save us from the time of trial" and "Do not bring us to the test." It does not mean what people think. In any case, if you think about it, you would see that it could not mean that, because not even a good earthly father would lead a child into temptation, so, how could a heavenly father do that. This is a very big problem. I am asking you to solve it this afternoon, but if you could tell me what it means, I would be very happy.

Asides.

SENATOR the Very Reverend H. E. CRICHLOW: We must not try to put down those, who in the past, worked very hard in small businesses, to see that their children and grandchildren did not have to work in the fields. I like to help the small man and I have been doing that all my life. I find that you pay out more to the small man, than to the big businessman.

Sir, if you want your car repaired, house repaired or some work done to your surroundings, *et cetera*, you will get an estimate from a big business and one from a small business, and the small man is charging you over ten times what the big business would. I think that the small business people need to learn how to price things.

Mr. President, if you ask someone to do a job for you at home and you ask him the price, he looks at the size of the house, the number of rooms it has, he looks at the cars that are parked around the house or in the garage, all of them may not be yours, but he is charging you to do a simple job, on the basis of what he thinks you are able to pay. You may not have a bank account at all but you are living in a house that he considers very big and expensive, and you are driving a car, which may not be yours. I think that it would be good if small business people could learn how to price their jobs.

Sir, I support all the help that can be given to small business people and a lot of work has been done. Over the years, although it has not taken the form which it now takes, I think that over the years Barbados has benefitted from small businesses.

Thank you very much, Mr. President.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Senator Barker.

SENATOR T. E. BARKER: Sir, I rise to give my wholehearted support to this amendment of the Small Business Development Act, an Act which, we will recall, was passed in 1999.
4.30 p.m.

Sir, it would be good if we could go back to the purpose of the Act. It was determined at that time that if we wanted small business to grow and develop and to start producing the goods, as it were, we needed to have the framework for its development set out in the law.

Sir, the Tourism Development was set out under the Special Tourism Development Act. We have the Fiscal Incentives Act. We have the Special Development Act, where development within certain prescribed areas can take place. They knew, even before they set out what they were entitled to.

At that time, it was determined that if small businesses are to develop, they need to know upfront what they are entitled to, what the requirements are, and what the definition of a small business really is, so that is why in 1999, this BLP Government brought this Small Business Development Act into place. I was pleased where a former speaker was highlighting the growth in businesses that has taken place. I want to suggest that a lot of it is a direct result of the fact that the Act is now in place and people knew, *ab origine*, the benefits to which they are entitled.

Sir, we are now six and a half years later, and we have now had a chance to look at the performance of the Act. It is one thing, Sir, to draft a piece of legislation but it is only when you are actually working with it, that you realise that it may have a shortcoming here or there. It does not reflect on the drafters of the legislation but it reflects the fact that the environment is changing. Certain nuances have developed since the Act came into place so very often, we have to go to these Acts and make amendments.

Sir, there are a few amendments to the Act, which I want to highlight now, which show that this Government is thinking and that it is doing all in its power to provide the impetus for small businesses to develop. One relates to the fact that for the first time, small businesses can get their raw materials free of import duty. This is very important.

Previously, they were allowed to have the plant and equipment free of tax. It was recognised that is good, but at the same time, a lot of them are having trouble with the raw material. Sir, it is okay to have the machinery but you must have something to put through the machinery.

Therefore, it was decided that we are going to have to amend the Act to allow these businesses to get their raw material free of import duty, which is tantamount to lowering the cost of producing the final product. This Act itself, will help the small businessman to lower his cost. Sir, in a very competitive environment, when the challenges are so numerous, this piece of legislation would go a long way to ensuring that the small business sector is in a position to compete, more effectively, in the marketplace.

I personally want to commend Government on this aspect of the legislation. Any time you do something

that is going to impact positively on the cost of doing business, then I am all for it, for in the final analysis, we are in a competitive world and the small businessman has to compete with the rest of the world as regards to his output.

Therefore, the removal of the import duty on the raw material is a giant step forward, which would enable the small business sector to compete more effectively. Then, the taxes have been lowered from 25 per cent to 20 per cent. This is in keeping with the trend that this Government has started, that is, of lowering taxes across-the-board.

The Corporation Tax has been lowered. Sir, personal income has seen a tremendous reduction in the rate of tax. Land Tax has been affected positively also. Sir, under the changing legislation, once the value of a chattel house is less than $125 000, the owner pays no tax.

Therefore, this Government of which I am proud to be a part, has made some serious moves in the fiscal sector, which has enabled people to keep more money. Now, we see in this Act, Sir, that the small business sector now is allowed to keep some more of their profits, which would help them to reinvest and to make their businesses even bigger and better. Therefore, with the lowering of the Import Duty and the lowering of the Corporation Tax on small businesses, we are sending not only the message, but we are sending real help to this all-important sector.

The fact, Sir, that you must have reached a certain status for three consecutive years before you are disqualified under the Act, is also important. In the past, a fellow may be frightened that one year, for some reason, he falls foul with just one aspect of the requirement, and then he is no longer a small business, and all the benefits that were accruing to him, are no longer in vogue. Now, he has to wait for three consecutive years and by then, it means that he should be doing much better, and then he would be in a better position to graduate. I feel that in the final analysis, we want small businesses to graduate. It then means that they are growing and developing and are employing more people.

These three aspects of the amendment that we are discussing are very important, and they ought to be supported by everyone in this Chamber, and by extension, the people of Barbados. They ought to recognise that this Government is seeking to make life better, not only for big businesses but, more especially, for the small business sector. I hope that the small business sector would realise that things are being put in place to help them develop. They ought to make full use of all the opportunities, and concessions that have been made, in order to aid their development.

Sir, small businesses have been key to our development and Dean Harold made the point in his speech. We always had a cadre of small businessmen over the years, who have done some tremendous work in developing this country. We are where we are today, not only as a result of big business, but especially some of these small entrepreneurs, who saw to it over the years to develop themselves.

A lot of them educated their children out of these small businesses and did marvelous things out of these small businesses. We have a culture of entrepreneurship that we ought to build on and expand.

Sir, I remember those dark days, in 1993, when a quarter of our workforce were unemployed, the fact that today, the unemployment rate is less than 9 per cent is, in my view due, in large measure, to the effect that small businesses are having on our economy.

I believe that the fact that we have been able to significantly reduce unemployment, the fact that we have been able to add 32 000 jobs, since 1994, a lot of it could be traced to the developments within the small business sector. 4.40 p.m.

Mr. President, I believe that if we are to have full employment in this country, a lot of it is going to come as a result of the small business sector taking advantage of the concessions and of the provisions of this Bill and doing some more investing and using their entrepreneurial spirit some more in order to get even bigger. Mr. President, I believe that a small business must seek, as its goal, to get out of that definitional relationship of smallness and get larger.

Mr. President, I want to thank the small business sector for helping us to create 32 000 jobs over the last 12 years in this country of ours. Sir, we hear a lot of vacuous talk from the Democratic Labour Party about this Government is not for the small man and all sort of things. They have the gall to mention vendors, when this Government has done more for vending than any other government in the history of this country. I am sure that Senator Griffith spoke on this on many occasions.

Mr. President, they can look around this country and see the development and the amount of money that we spent to ensure that vending takes place in Barbados in a modern environment.

Mr. President, let us look at the improvements to the Cheapside Market. Sir, it would be good if some of us would wake up on a Saturday morning and see what is going on in these markets and see the hundreds and thousands of Barbadians who go down to them and see the number of farmers who, having grown the crops during the week, bring them down to market on Saturday mornings and satisfy a large demand for their goods and services.

Mr. President, we have upgraded the Cheapside Market. The butchers there are operating in much healthier and much more sanitary conditions. Mr. President, we can also think in terms of the Vendors Mall just across the road. We can think in terms of the improvements to the old Griffith Reliance Pharmacy building, of the planned developments we are about to start in the Fairchild Street Market and in terms of the developments at the Glebe. Mr. President, when we look around, we can see that this Government is making life better for the small traders. We believe that in a modern Barbados there is a place for vending and we are ensuring that vending takes place in the best environment, which is important.

Mr. President, when I hear the Other Side harping on these various things, it just shows that they are just opposing for opposing sake, they have nothing of substance to contribute.

Mr. President, this Government can take pride in the fact that we not only talked about small businesses, but we have put measures in place, not only legislative measures but physical measures, to enhance the status of the small business sector in Barbados. Mr. President, there is more to be done and we will do more. We will ensure that we are always cognisant of the needs of the small business sector because we do not think that everything is going to end with this legislation. Sir, that is why we have a ministry and a minister who is there looking after the needs of the small business sector. We made sure that we built a special incubator for them at Fontabelle. We have made sure that every year the Small Business Association will get a 'piece of change' to help them run the Secretariat.

Mr. President, we have done all of this, yet the Democratic Labour Party is going to talk about us not doing anything for the small man, that is foolishness. Mr. President, we recognise that the small man is vital if this country is to realise its economic potential.

Sir, we still have a way to go. I do not think that we have achieved any where near what we can achieve. There is more to be done. This is but yet another step and we will be continually looking for measures and ways to improve this small business sector. Sir, we do not believe that you could only improve the small business sector by harming big businesses. We believe that both of them must be allowed to grow and develop because both of them have a tremendous role to play within the economic landscape. We do not believe in trading off one against the other, that is foolishness.

Mr. President, there are some aspects of business that the small businessman cannot do and there are some aspects that the large businesses cannot do. There is a place in our economy for both. Sir, this nonsense about trading off one against the other will get us nowhere. We have to be big enough to realise that Barbados is big enough that everybody in it can get a piece of the action. Mr. President, this Bill will ensure that the small business sector continues to get a piece of the action.

Mr. President, I want them to be proactive. The Government is doing its bit, and they must get out there and take advantage of the opportunities that are opened to them and make use of the loan facilities, whether they are through the Urban Development Commission, the Rural Development Commission, FundAccess or whatever, and try to develop their businesses. Sir, they can do that with the knowledge that this Barbados Labour Party Government will be there backing them to the hilt, removing all the rough rocks and all the potholes in the roads and so on to ensure that their riding is a bit smoother.

Mr. President, in spite of all the heckling I get from the Other Side, and the heckling is testimony to the fact that they are...

Mr. PRESIDENT: I have not heard any heckling, Senator, in this Chamber.

SENATOR T. E. BARKER: I felt it, Sir.

Asides.

SENATOR T. E. BARKER: Sir, I support this Bill and I am sure that all of us in here believe that the small business sector has a vital role to play. I can give them the assurance that this Government will continue to look for ways to improve their lot because we all want to see this country develop to its fullest.

I thank you very much, Sir.

SENATOR R. W. GRANT: Mr. President, I rise to give my support to this Bill, which I think is a very important piece of legislation as we seek to ensure that we can better meet the needs of the small business sector and that as a Government we can better prepare for the economic growth and development of our country.

Mr. President, this afternoon I heard some remarks from Senator Dr. Lowe which suggested – and this is what he said – that we live in a big business society. He said that when you speak of big business you reflect on incentives and when you speak of small business assistance you are speaking about welfarism. Mr. President, I was a little shocked to hear Senator Dr. Lowe come in this Chamber and say those types of things.

Mr. President, I have two documents here, both of which are documents of this House. One document

is the 2003 Manifesto of the Democratic Labour Party and the other document is the 2003 Manifesto of the Barbados Labour Party. Mr. President, I want to remind this Chamber that the Democratic Labour Party communicated to this country that a Manifesto is not a social contract.

Mr. President, if you go through the aspects of this Manifesto, which deals with small business development, you would recognise that already this Government is pursuing the path highlighted in this Manifesto in order to ensure that we are able to better meet the needs of small business and that we are able to ensure our economic success.
4.50 p.m.

Mr. President, I put aside the comments that came from Senator Lowe, that is all about politicking, as I understand it.

Mr. President, the economic success of Barbados will not be facilitated by any preferential arrangements for our goods by the developed countries. The economic success of Barbados will not be achieved by any concessionary rates for loans provided by international financial institutions. The economic success of Barbados will not be dependent on an abundance of technical assistance being provided by the developed countries. Mr. President, our economic success is inextricably linked to our ability to be innovative, to effectively and efficiently utilise our resources and our abilities to enhance our export earning potential.

Mr. President, 30 years ago, countries engaged in protectionist methods, to safeguard their domestic sectors. In the mid-1990s, most countries had moved away from protectionism. Sir, international institutions, such as the World Trade Organisation, the North America Free Trade Area (NAFTA) and the World Bank, all necessitate that within our domestic domain, we, as a Government, must create the type of environment that is conducive for our being able to determine our own economic success.

Mr. President, I make those comments because and I believe the comments, which would have been made by most Honourable Senators, would have reflected the fact that we are of the opinion that small business has a critical role to play in the development of the Barbados economy and that it has a critical role to play in relation to economic growth of the Barbadian economy.

Mr. President, other Honourable Senators have spoken to this issue but it is an undisputed and undeniable fact that no Government has done more for the development of small business than this Barbados Labour Party Administration. Sir, whether it relates to issues of accessing capital, training, incentives or providing technology, there has been no other administration that has done as much for the development of small business, as this Barbados Labour Party Administration. Sir, we know the elements, which are critical to the success of the sector, have been addressed by this Government.

Mr. President, these amendments to this Act are being formulated with the objective of ensuring that small businesses can contribute to the economic viability of the country. It is important for us to note that the amendments were not formulated by the Ministry of Commerce, Consumer Affairs and Business Development, simply making a determination that this is the path along which we should travel.

Mr. President, this Government is one which believes in consultation and, therefore, we listen to the people. Sir, these amendments were prepared in consultation with the small business partners, whether it is the Small Business Association, the Small Business Centre within the Barbados Investment and Development Corporation, the institutions, which provide the financing like that of FundAccess or the other institutions that provide training, the point has to be made.

Sir, I think the Ministry of Commerce, Consumer Affairs and Business Development, particularly the Minister and her staff, must be complimented for coming to this Honourable Chamber with amendments that had been formulated by discussion with their stakeholders/partners.

Mr. President, in this new economic environment, we have to develop new methodologies, new mechanisms and new approaches to better meet the needs of small businesses. That could only be done through consultation and in this regard, the Honourable Minister and her staff have done well.

Mr. President, when we speak of small business, we speak of diversified operations. Sir, the Minister would have indicated, at Clause 4 of this document, which would replace Clause 3 of the principal Act, the definition that is guiding this Bill with respect to what is a small business. Sir, the elements would be that a small business is an enterprise, incorporated under the Companies Act, and has satisfied any two of the following criteria:

(e) that the small business has no more than $1 million of paid-up capital; it has not more than $2 million in annual sales and;

(b) that small business has no more than 25 employees.

Mr. President, small businesses are diverse. There could be a small business, which essentially is a sole

proprietorship. They could be a small business, with one or two employees selling hot dogs. They could be a small business within the definition of the Bill, with as much as 25 employees but Sir, the diversity in terms of the small business, means that there are different needs and varying expectations of those small businesses.

Mr. President, I would want to reiterate a point which the Minister made, which is that this piece of legislation seeks to deal specifically with a particular segment of small business. Sir, I made reference to Clause 4 because I want to spend only a few minutes, to speak to the issue of incorporation. There are a number of small businesses operating, which are vulnerable. Sir, if, for one reason or the other, there is a law suit that takes place because it functions as a sole proprietorship... I am making a call to persons engaged in small business, to pursue the avenue of incorporation. Having a corporation does not necessarily mean that the business has to be big but that there are certain benefits of incorporation, such as the aspect of limited liability, the unlimited life of the business entity and the tax benefits to be had. Sir, the level of taxation is higher, at the personal tax level than it is, as it relates to the corporate tax.

Mr. President, the point would have been before that in the early 1990s, corporation tax was 40 per cent. It is now down to 25 per cent, and this Bill provides for the tax to small businesses, to be reduced to 20 per cent. Therefore, I am making a call for small businesses to pursue the option of incorporation because I believe that would be to their advantage.

5.00 p.m.

Sir, many countries focus on small business and the small business sector as their impetus for growth. Senator Barker would have communicated the reason why the Small Business Development Act was formulated which was essentially to provide the legislative framework for the further development, sustainability and international competition of the small business sector. Sir, these amendments also seek to ensure that the small business sector is more relevant.

Mr. President, we live in a world where technological advances and the technological revolution provides the opportunity for businesses of all sizes to invest in technology. Sir, I am sure that you would recall that 30 years ago if you were going to utilise technology in the business place that you had to invest significant sums of money and the computer systems were costly but in this time, you can utilise technology for a mere fraction of the cost it was then. Again, I am encouraging small businesses to invest in the use of technology.

Mr. President, we recognise that not every small business would have the necessary monies to use this technology so Government has taken the responsibility to provide these small businesses with the technology through agencies like FundAccess. Sir, FundAccess has a centre where it facilitates the use of technology.

Mr. President, earlier today, the Senator said that small businesses were not getting any assistance but, Sir, FundAccess provides capital and training which has to be completed before any loans are disbursed. They also have training in courses such as cash management, record-keeping, costing and pricing, marketing and motivation for success. Sir, you cannot simply go out there and have an idea about a small business and then not have the right structures in place to ensure that the small business is a success.

Mr. President, with the amendments to the Small Business Development Act, we are seeking to ensure that persons who have the competence, the skills, the knowledge, the determination and the commitment to set up a small business, that there is the environment in which they can exist and that their businesses can become successful. Sir, one of the things we are seeking to do as a Government would be to encourage more persons to pursue the idea of having a small business and to move to the next level which is actually to have that small business operating.

Mr. President, you know that we have ideas but that we have to take those ideas which have the potential of facilitating the small business to the actual small business. Sir, that is the kind of environment that we are creating with the Small Business Development Act and the amendments that we provide to the Small Business Development Act.

Mr. President, when individuals believe that the cost of starting a small business outweighs the benefits provided by regular employment, they will tend to stay in regular employment. These amendments are charting the course towards the society recognising that small business is a career option, in the same way that persons pursue career options whether it be in dentistry, to be an Attorney-at-Law or an accountant, we have to create the environment where persons recognise, particularly our young persons, that small business is a career option.

Mr. President, I am very happy with the amendments which have come here today. I believe that these amendments would result in more small businesses participating and it will increase the number of jobs. I believe that small businesses are innovative, that in the challenging economic global environment, that small businesses can better respond to the changes than can large businesses. I believe that we are on the right path of ensuring the economic success of Barbados by properly facilitating the development and growth of our small business sector which will ensure our long-term sustainablity.

Mr. President, I am obliged to you.

SENATOR THE HON. E. R. GRIFFITH: Mr. President, I wish to add my support to this Small Business Development Bill which is before us. I have to agree with Senator Sir John that the Minister responsible for the subject in introducing the Bill did an excellent job in providing us with the background information which established beyond any doubt that there has been significant progress in small business development, largely through the various incentives and tax breaks which this Barbados Labour Party Administration has put in place since 1994. It is true that small businesses were always with us but it is equally true that if you study the history of those businesses that there was always some degree of stagnation within that particular area of activity and that only after 1994, with the various incentives and tax breaks which were put in place, that we saw a significant increase in the area of business activity.

Mr. President, this is true in all aspects of business. It is true in agriculture, manufacturing and tourism and there are programmes in place regardless of where the activity takes place. Sir, in agriculture, there are several facilities and in manufacturing there are several as well. Sir, some of them were mentioned here today, not only the tax break in terms of the reduction in the corporation tax but the fact that the raw materials are granted with duty-free concessions in addition to other incentives. There are also the loans schemes and these are very significant.

Mr. President, the training is important, the various tax incentives are also important but, in the final analysis, access to capital is important. I have to agree with Senator Nicholls that the banking sector has not been kind to the development of small businesses in this country. I have said before in this Chamber and will say it again. A number of the international banks that operate in Barbados, in their own countries, provide a measure of support for small businesses that is denied small businesses in Barbados. I can tell you of schemes that they have in their home countries for businesses, where as soon as individuals visit the bank there are people to work with them throughout the life of their projects as a means, of course, that they recover their funds, but also in the process making sure that the businesses are successful. Sir, here in Barbados they are quick to close their doors, if they hear that a small businessman is coming down the street. Mr. President, I encountered that experience on one occasion with a bank. I will not go into it now. I know what the position is.
5.10 p.m.

Sir, the banks are willing to lend people money to purchase motor cars, and items that are imported, which would not last long, with very little contribution to the economic development of the country, but when it comes to business opportunities, they turn their backs on those individuals.

It is therefore to credit the Government, that it has established in areas of activities, appropriate schemes that will allow persons to have access to funds to support their businesses. In agriculture, through the Rural Development Commission and the Agricultural Fund, there are numerous opportunities for small business development. I certainly expect the recently appointed Board of the Rural Development Commission, to carry that process further than it has gone. The Enterprise Development Fund is the surest way for us to beat poverty in this country. Therefore, I expect the new Board of the Rural Development Commission, to stop waiting until individuals come to them to borrow money, but to go out into the communities, identify opportunities and encourage the persons there to get involved.

It is not for them to wait until individuals come to them. Mr. President, they have done a great job by waiting, but I think that they can do a better job by taking my advice and going out into the communities.

I also expect the new Board of the Rural Development Commission, to remove all the encumbrances that now exist in the way of individuals, in rural communities, who want to make use of the funds, which the Government has provided for them to develop their businesses. I hear of too many complaints and the humbug that individuals have to go through.

Sir, people may have good ideas and we must stop putting obstacles in the way of people, who want to make progress, simply because they are small and unknown. We must accept that it is our responsibility to help them to make decisions. I challenge the new Board to undertake that responsibility.

Mr. President, I am sorry that Senator Bynoe is not here, but I am sure he will hear. The project to which he referred, is one where we in the Ministry of Agriculture, with his assistance in some areas, are about to start a programme for forty pig farmers, who want to move from where they are to a higher level. We are going to be working with them to attain a certain standard. We will also, through the same facility at the Rural Development Commission, the Livestock Development Fund, assist them by providing the appropriate finance to help them to establish their farms, in such a manner that they can meet all of the food safety requirements, and can then produce, within the environment, that will help them to sell their produce in a safe environment. That is a project which I think is going to make a significant difference to those forty persons and others in the community. Sir, I assure him that it will not be long before that project is on the way.

Mr. President, while speaking about assistance to rural communities and the facilities which the Government is continuing to provide, it is important to note that the Government continues to offer new measures. This Bill before us is evidence to that. As circumstances change, Government make changes to the proposals to assist those persons. It does the same thing in other areas. Sir, every year, for the last five years at least, the Minister of Finance, has come to Parliament with new incentives for agriculture. As circumstances change, we do not wait. We come with new proposals.

Mr. President, we in the Ministry of Agriculture regard vending, agricultural production or whatever as a business. If you studied the history of vending in Barbados and the provision of facilities, you would discover that it is the Barbados Labour Party Administration, that built 95 per cent of the markets across Barbados. I can tell you this because I have checked it.

Sir, when it comes to the issue with small farmers, I listened carefully to what Senator Lowe said. I know that Senator Lowe knows the facts, but he wants me to make the public aware of them, so I will make the public aware of them. I did so not so long ago elsewhere, but maybe there are persons who do not know the facts.

Mr. President, there is a particular individual that continues to misrepresent the situation at Gibbons. Therefore, I have to put the record straight from the point of view of the Government.

Sir, when I came to the Ministry in 2003, a number of individuals from Gibbons called me and asked if they could meet with me and I said yes, and they came. I want you to note carefully. In 2003, they told me that there was an incident in 1995, with an oil spill, which had created some problems for them, and they had engaged, up to that point, three lawyers. They also told me that at that point in time, there was no success with the matter. They dismissed the first lawyer, because they felt he had not made any progress on their behalf. They engaged the services of another lawyer, that is well-known to Senator Lowe and to this Chamber. They felt that progress was not being made, and they took the brief from him or he had given it up, I am not sure which one, and they have engaged a third lawyer to negotiate with Shell on their behalf.

Mr. President, I want you to note clearly that in 2003, when they were speaking with me, at that time they had engaged three lawyers to negotiate with Shell on their behalf. Sir, if they had three lawyers to negotiate on their behalf, poor me, I am not a lawyer and could not get into the picture. I asked them if they wanted me to negotiate on their behalf. Some of them said yes and I told them to give me the information. Show me what information they have to establish that they have had damages to their crops, to support their claim for whatever sum of money they were asking for. They told me that they had none. I asked them how much compensation they required. They looked at each other and then I discovered that neither one wanted the other to know what he had asked for.

I told them that if there was no evidence to show how they have benefitted over the years from cultivating these plots, I could not understand how they would be able to support a claim for damages, even though I believe that they had damages.

5.20 p.m.

A gentleman, who keeps coming on the radio misrepresenting the situation, became very angry, and started to tell me about all the information he had in his head, and how he knew what he lost and so on. I said to him, I do not doubt you have it in our head, but I am sure you are not going to be able to get a court to accept what you are saying, based on what you have in your head. He became even more angry. This was the issue at that point in time.

However, I met with the representative of Shell, who acknowledged that Shell had created a problem for the farmers through the leak, and that Shell was willing to settle the issue. The lawyer for Shell was negotiating with the lawyer for the farmers. If they have a lawyer working for them, it is not then for the Government to get involved in that process.

However, I told them that I would help them with other aspects, which are not part of that negotiation. They told me that the issue was not only the contamination of the water. The BADMC was already dealing with that and Shell, up to this day, continues on a daily basis to carry out a number of tasks, aimed at getting the oil from the well.

The BADMC got access to other wells that were not contaminated and brought them into production, so that they could continue to get water. Therefore, that has been done and they know that then, they told me that they felt the soil was contaminated, and that had to be dealt with.

I got a representative from the Town Planning Department, the Environment Unit of the Ministry of the Environment, the Government Analytical Lab, the BADMC and others to go there with them, so that they could see the areas they were speaking about. That meeting was held with them in January.

I got the BADMC to bring in a team from a lab in Florida, but they did that after first engaging a geologist locally, who went to the area, identified the areas where

the samples were supposed to be taken from, so that we could get a large enough area to establish if there was contamination of the soil as well.

The team from the University of Florida came and they took samples of water, plant, material and of soil. In the meanwhile, Shell has prepared and submitted to the Chief Town Planner, a cleanup plan. The plan was made available to the Environment and other places and they have all made comments on it, and it is with the Town Planner.

The team from Florida did the analysis and sent back the results. The results came back and all of you know how people do scientific work. They now have to be interpreted. The BADMC approached me to get someone, through the FAO to do the interpretation for them.

While they were raising that with me, I discovered that there was a Barbadian by the name Dr. Anderson Ward, who had come to give a lecture, on matters to do with soil and related issues at the University of the West Indies. I sent word and asked him to come and see me and he came. He works at the University of Seattle and does this type of work throughout the United States of America and outside of the United States of America. I thought that there could be no better person than Dr. Ward, to do it for us. I spoke to Dr. Ward and got him to go up to the BADMC. The Permanent Secretary took him there and he took all the information, including the samples, back to Seattle. We are awaiting his analysis.

The farmers know all of that, so to come on the radio every day and say that the Government is not doing anything for them, is not correct. If they say they have not got any money from Shell, yes, that is true, but they need to go further. They need to tell the public that they have a lawyer working for them, who is negotiating with Shell, and it is not the Government that is negotiating on the Fund.

The Government is dealing with the issues that it can deal with, in terms of making sure that Shell is cleaning up the wells and that if it is established that the soil has been contaminated, that will be done as well. Shell has accepted that it will do that, and that is why they have prepared, what they think should be an adequate cleanup plan. We do not want to support or reject that plan, until we can get the results of the recent tests, which were done by the University of Florida, so that we are satisfied that what Shell is putting forward is adequate.

Mr. President, those are the facts and therefore it is not correct for anybody to say that the Government is not doing anything, or has not done anything to assist the farmers in Gibbons. What I would do however is advise those farmers and other farmers, and this goes back to the whole issue of keeping their business, they must keep records. It is not good enough, even if you have no problems similar to the one which they now have, you ought to still keep records.

I get that same problem. We have created in the Ministry, through the ADF, an Emergency Fund to assist farmers when they suffer setbacks because of bad weather or whatever. Invariably, you have the same problem that they say they have lost all of the amounts, and they have no evidence. They do not even have the bills to show the amount of pesticide or fertilizer they have bought. It is in their interest, if they are running a business to keep proper records.

There are schemes available to assist them with setting up their businesses. The SBA does it. The RDC will provide financial resources to enable them to get it done. The ADF will do it as well. Sir, for some reason, people believe that they should continue to hide the facts about their business, even from themselves. It is only when they run into a problem that they now expect a miracle to be worked on their behalf.

We will help wherever we can but we prefer to help them establish their businesses the right way, so that we can then provide support for them. There is no doubt in my mind that the programmes, which the Government has in place and will continue to provide for the development of small businesses, are good programmes and they will help all those persons who want to engage in business, to do so in a successful way.

On that basis, Mr. President, I add my support to this Bill.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Senator Eastmond.

SENATOR THE HON. Miss L. V. EASTMOND: Thank you, Mr. President.

First, I would like to thank all Honourable Senators for their contributions to this debate. I believe that all of the contributions were outstanding and extremely useful to the substance of what we have been discussing.

There are some specific issues that have been raised. Dr. Chandler raised the issue the meaning of a paragraph in one of the schedules to the Act. I believe it is repeated in more than one place. The specific one that is being referred to is on page 17, paragraph 16.1. It refers to the fact that the applicant must agree that the company has not entered into any agreement with another enterprise to provide services and that these services are not a normal part of the business. This particular provision is another one of those anti-avoidance provisions. You see evidence of this from

the fact that it refers to the notion that the company which is offering the service does not usually provide this service. This is a company that would be going about its normal business, but this small business has been set up and all of a sudden there is this agreement to provide services, acting as a service company or a management company to the small business. Therefore, an artificial arrangement would be set up between the two of them.
5.30 p.m.

Mr. President, if such an artificial arrangement is established and the small business then finds itself in a position where it is owing money to the service company, obviously then the service company can exercise some degree of control over the small business. As we had discussed previously, the issue of control is an important one in terms of making sure that the benefits of the Small Business Development Act are geared directly toward the small businesses that we are targeting and not to other types of businesses.

Mr. President, within the context of looking at avoidance and evasion mechanisms, while initially one would tend to look directly at share ownership, obviously individuals are clever and they tend to set up other arrangements other than strict share ownership, so they can also be through agreements that are artificial. This is what this seeks to address. Therefore, the provision requires that the individual has to swear that they have not entered into such an arrangement.

Mr. President, the other issue had to do with the refund for businesses that have been incorporated and then approach the Ministry for approved small business status. I made the point earlier about the fact that whenever a concession is being granted to an individual, it means that the rest of us have to compensate for that concession that is granted. The $1 700 is discretionary. Mr. President, if a person established a business ten years ago and they incorporated it ten years ago or five years ago and live happily with the incorporation, then to come to us five years subsequently to say they would like a refund, our instincts would tell us that they were not really in need of our assistance when they incorporated the business five or six years ago.

Mr. President, we would use our discretion to determine if this is really a clear case that the refund would actually assist in the development of the business and that it is not just an individual who says they can get back $1 700 in their pocket, so let them go to the Ministry and get it back. Mr. President, we are trying to avoid situations like that where people can well afford the incorporation but simply want to come to the Ministry to get that $1 700 refund.

Mr. President, in any case, this particular project came out of the 2001-2002 financial initiatives taken by the Government, therefore, we would not really expect it to go beyond that period of time.

Mr. President, as I said, the objective is never to put anyone who can afford to set up a business in a position where they are in receipt of a windfall, it is not for those people. It is for people who really need the assistance of Government in setting up a business and not for people who have the wherewithal to do it. As I said before, if you get the additional benefit, it means that there are taxpayers on the other side that have to compensate for it.

Mr. President, some issues were raised by Senator Dr. Lowe, which were not as straightforward as those raised by Senator Dr. Chandler. Always in Dr. Lowe's presentations, I can see that there is a conflict between what he believes in his heart and the script that he has been given to read because many of the expressions that I have heard, I have seen those expressions elsewhere. That speech was part of the script to address the Small Business Development Act in this Chamber.

Mr. President, I do not know how many Honourable Senators know, but I am actually Gemini and we do not take these things too seriously. Therefore, on the one hand, part of me is saying that I should ignore the statements made by Senator Dr. Lowe and just move on, but on the other hand there is this other person saying to me that if he is man enough to read the script, he is...

Mr. PRESIDENT: Do you wish to make a point, Senator. The Chair might have been willing to assist you, but please proceed, Senator Eastmond.

SENATOR THE HON. Miss L. V. EASTMOND: Mr. President, Senator Dr. Lowe made a statement which I actually agreed with. He said that in terms of looking at the development of the Barbados economy and looking at small business development and wealth creation that it was not simply an economic issue, that there was a social issue as well. He spoke about the socio-economic issue of enfranchisement. Mr. President, this is one of the reasons that I often find it difficult to respond because we have been making the point for a very long time that the economic development of the country will also inure to the social benefit of the country as well.

Mr. President, I do not know if it is that our colleagues on the Other Side have finally been persuaded by what we have said or if they understood it all along and never represented it to the public. Mr. President, when you assist individuals in developing their economic circumstances, they can use those economic circumstances to better

themselves socially as well. That is the point that we have always made. You cannot separate the two. We have finally heard the Senators on the Other Side agree to this because this is the point that we have been making for a very long time.

Mr. President, there was another point which was made about the fact that you just cannot have a list of services. In fact, I have heard individuals who are either interested in representing constituencies or who are representing constituencies say that Government has all of these incentives and nobody knows anything about them. I find this absolutely remarkable. I think this is a reflection on the type of representation that is being given to the people because certainly within the constituency of St. Philip West, we do not hesitate to bring to the people issues such as small business development. Some people seem to believe that when you hold branch meetings that you hold them to curse the Opposition instead of bringing enlightening topics to their constituents and to their branch members. It is not simply about that. It must also be about educating the people that you come into contact with.

Mr. President, if I could hear individuals who represent constituencies or that are interested in representing constituencies simply saying there is all of this information which comes before both Houses and these individuals cannot take the time sometimes when they are having their branch meetings to share this information or have some kind of community outreach to share the information with their constituents, well then we have a problem. It means then that somehow we have moved away from what the original notion of representing people is about. Why is it that you would have access to all of this information and keep it from the people that you seek to represent? It is not only about the Ministry of Commerce disseminating the information or the Barbados Investment and Development Corporation, certainly, it is about the representatives disseminating the information as well.
5.40 p.m.

Mr. President, Senator Lowe made some reference to victimisation, and I would like to think that reference was not to my Ministry. Mr. President, if anybody were to call the Ministry of Commerce, Consumer Affairs and Business Development, to speak to the Permanent Secretary or to any of my officials, I can say for a fact that none of the officers in my Ministry would ask that caller which Party he or she supports, and neither would assistance be withheld from persons who do not support a particular Party. That has never happened. Therefore, I do know where the issue of victimisation would have arisen.

Mr. President, I would have to speak in defence of the Ministry of Commerce, Consumer Affairs and Business Development. We are discussing the Small Business Development Act, which has been developed by my Ministry. We are responsible for promoting small businesses and dealing with small business applicants. Therefore, if there is going to be allegation of victimisation for individuals, who apply to my Ministry for help, I would have to say very clearly that this does not happen there. We do not engage in that type of activity. We do not ask people what religion they belong to. We do not ask them what colour they are. We do not ask them which Party they support, before we provide help to them. Mr. President, we provide help to the entire Barbadian community because they are our constituents. We are there for the people of Barbados, and I want to make that point very clear.

Mr. President, there are a few points that have been raised throughout this discussion, and some of them are issues that I do not know if we would ever settle on. There are some individuals, who seem to be of the view that there is no entrepreneurial spirit in Barbados. I have said, over and over again, this is not my view and I was very happy to hear that Senator Crichlow and Senator Barker are of the view that there is an entrepreneurial spirit in Barbados.

Mr. President, I would like to say that after entrepreneurs have come up with the idea, after they have developed their businesses and after having set their businesses in motion, that there has been a problem with growing those businesses. It is my view that this issue has a number of related elements. We have found that the society, as a whole, has been trying to squeeze them out unnecessarily. There are a number of issues, which have coalesced, in order to ensure that many entrepreneurs in Barbados would have never succeeded.

Mr. President, Senator Dame Patricia spoke about education. It is true that our educational system is geared towards employment, but I do not believe that stops entrepreneurs from rising to the fore because of the fact that most of our education systems are like that. Another issue is the inability to access capital. There are also a number of other issues, for example, a critical lack of support in the community, as a whole. I do not mean the banking society but the society, as a whole, does not support entrepreneurs or business. Everyone knows that if someone goes to secondary school and does well in getting certification and decide they want to go into a business, the entire community, starting from that person's own family, to the village, to the wider community, would ask why that person would not go and get a decent job, for instance, working in a bank, where they could be wearing a tie and driving a nice car, instead of scurrying about in an old van.

We know this society, as a whole, does not support individuals who seek to go into the area of business because it takes a number of years, maybe five or six, before

that person would ever turn a profit. We know that the community tends not to be able to wait for that period of time to come around. We know that there is incredible pressure from the family and society, as a whole, that this 'bright' boy or girl, who went to school and who got this number of certificates, is not doing anything worthwhile. Sir, nobody hangs around to find out what that person is doing, so we know that the society, as a whole, has not really supported our entrepreneurs, and I think this is one of the critical issues.

Mr. President, we are now seeing a turnaround, where I believe there is more support, where families and the society are now prepared to say that if someone wants to do a particular business for five years, they could go ahead to see if they could make it work, or they might tell that person to do his or her degree first, and then that person could get involved in that entrepreneurial exercise.

Mr. President, I would like to make the point that there is an entrepreneurial spirit in Barbados. Sir, individuals say that Barbadians are averse to risks. I do not believe this is anything peculiar to Barbadians. The majority of people in the world, trudging along on their daily existence, do not like risk either. Most people want a secure job, so that they can support themselves and their families, buy a decent house, a decent car, go on vacation every now and again, and send their children to school. Most people do not want to take any risks, that is why the entrepreneur is a special person. That is why too the society has to be one that allows all of the entrepreneurs, who might be in existence in Barbados, to come to the fore and for us to support them because they are special people.

Mr. President, one does not find an entire society being made up of entrepreneurs only. In fact, my view is that the society would be unstable, if all of us were entrepreneurs. There are just a few special people in society, who will be entrepreneurs, who would do something very special in the community. That is separate from individuals having their own businesses, which they might very well copy from elsewhere.

Mr. President, the final point I would wish to make, is in relation to an issue that would always seem to be raised by the Other Side, which Senator Barker has alluded to as well. Sir, there used to be a feeling that if Government were to facilitate big business only, that it would have been to the detriment of the small business. We do not seem to have what is called an abundance mentality, where we believe that there is enough in Barbados or that enough could be created for all the people in Barbados. Barbados does not really have a lot of people. There is enough here for all of us. Therefore, the more economic activity a country has, being generated by different groups, classes and sizes of people, the better it is for all of us, both small and big businesses.

Mr. President, I am not going to apologise. This Government supports big businesses, as well as small businesses. Small businesses cannot employ hundreds and thousands of people. Sir, we need the big businesses for the large economies of scale, so that we would be able to generate, in a society such as Barbados, even though our economy is a relatively small one.

Mr. President, I know it might not be politically correct to say that we support all types of businesses but I am going to say it because I am never going to be in a position where I would mislead anybody, and not for cheap political points. There seems to be a view that when we speak of enfranchisement of people, that somehow we would wish to disenfranchise some other class. That is also incorrect. There is no need to disenfranchise anybody, in order to enfranchise others. More wealth can be created. There is not a finite creation of wealth in Barbados. We now have an environment within the international economy, where wealth can be created, not necessarily out of natural resources but out of skills and out of intellectual property. The limit of our wealth is infinite but when persons come from a thinking and a philosophy, which I find is coming from the Other Side, there is a feeling that there is a finite amount of wealth and a finite amount of resources that there is, even though intellectual property, we understand, is the key now, they seem to think it is finite.

5.50 p.m.

Therefore, there seems to be this view that if one speaks of enfranchising any class that you are going to disenfranchise someone else but, Sir, that is clearly not true.

Mr. President, in seeking to ensure that small business development and business development is a mechanism by which a larger number of Barbadians can create wealth and that they can pass this wealth on from generation to generation, does not mean that the class of persons who now have this wealth, that we are somehow going to take that wealth away from those persons.

Mr. President, this goes back to the point which I made previously. It is not a concept within my mind nor in this Administration that there is some limitation to wealth for us. As far as we are concerned, we are able on a daily basis to continue to create wealth, so it is not going to be our mandate to say that our philosophy is only to create opportunities for small business and not for big business. Sir, everyone can live together in this society.

Mr. President, some individuals will start a small business and it will always be a small business. There are some who will start a small business with the intention of it growing to be a large business and that is good for them. Sir, we have to have circumstances where individuals

are able to choose and this is what this piece of legislation is about. It is one of the tools which Government is using to assist small business development in Barbados and there are other tools as well.

Mr. President, there is a point which I am not sure whether it came across clearly and I want to apologise if it did not come across correctly. I get the impression that individuals might feel that in terms of the criteria that have been set out with respect to small business, that you actually have to reach 25 employees in order to qualify. Sir, if you have a company, you should have at least one employee so if from one employee to 25 employees and it can be as low as $100 up to $1 million, it does not mean that the startup businesses do not qualify because they qualify for the fund as well. Sir, I got the impression that there was the feeling that you had to reach the level of 25 employees or $1 million in order to qualify but, Sir, that is not correct. Mr. President, this particular piece of legislation is also for startup business.

Mr. President, I wish to commend this Bill to this Chamber and beg to move that this Bill be read a second time.

The question was put and agreed to.

On the motion of SENATOR THE HON. Miss L. V. EASTMOND, the Senate resolved itself into Committee on the Bill, Madam DEPUTY PRESIDENT in the Chair.

COMMITTEE

MADAM DEPUTY PRESIDENT: The Senate is in Committee.

Clauses 1 – 5 were called and passed.

Clauses 6 – 10 were called and passed.

Clauses 11 – 15 were called and passed.

The Schedule became the Schedule to the Bill.

On the motion of SENATOR THE HON. E. R. GRIFFITH, Madam DEPUTY PRESIDENT reported the passing of one Bill in Committee and Mr. 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 Small Business Development (Amendment) Act, 2006.
6.00 p.m.

ORDER NO. 10 – SECOND READING OF THE FINAL APPROPRIATION BILL, 2006

Mr. PRESIDENT: Senator Griffith.

SENATOR THE HON. E. R. GRIFFITH: Mr. President, as you are aware, the Final Appropriation Bill is a money Bill and it is not debated in the Senate. However, it has to be passed. The Objects and Reasons indicate that the Bill is for $192 179 915 for the appropriation of that sum for the services and purposes specified in the Schedule.

I, therefore, beg to move that that Bill be read a second time.

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

On the motion of SENATOR THE HON. E. R. GRIFFITH, the Bill was certified as a Money Bill and was read a third time and passed and cited as the Final Appropriation (2005-2006) Act, 2006.

SUSPENSION

SENATOR THE HON. E. R. GRIFFITH: Mr. President, that brings us to the end of our business for the day. I beg to move that the Sitting be now suspended until Wednesday, August 16, 2006 at 11.00 a.m. I would remind Honourable Senators that since it is a Suspension there will be no prayers, so we would meet promptly at 11.00 o'clock.

The question that the Honourable Senate be now suspended until Wednesday, August 16, 2006 was put to the Senate and agreed to and Mr. PRESIDENT suspended the Senate accordingly.
6.03 p.m.

RESUMPTION

Mr. PRESIDENT: This Sitting is resumed.

RECOMMITAL

ANNOUNCEMENTS BY HIS HONOUR THE PRESIDENT

Mr. PRESIDENT: I have received the following Message from the Honourable The House of Assembly dated 11th August, 2006.

"Message from the Honourable House to the Honourable the Senate.

The Honourable the House of Assembly has the honour to inform the Honourable the Senate that on 11th August, 2006, the Honourable the House of Assembly committed the following Bill, Road Traffic Amendment Bill, 2006 to a Joint Select Committee of the Two Houses, comprising six Members of the

Honourable the House of Assembly and five Members of the Honourable the Senate and invites the Honourable the Senate to nominate Members to the said Committee.

The Deputy Speaker."

I expect that during the course of the day, the Leader of the Senate will present a list of nominees for the Senate's approval.

OBITUARIES

Mr. PRESIDENT: Prior to Public Business, the Leader of the Senate wishes to speak.

SENATOR THE HON. E. R. GRIFFITH: Mr. President, I crave the indulgence of the Senate to pay a short tribute on behalf of the mother of Senator Patricia Parris and to the wife of Senator Dean Crichlow, who both passed away within recent months. I think it is appropriate that we should do so, since today is likely to be the last Sitting for a while.

I did not have the good fortune of meeting the late Marjorie Downes-Parris before her departure from this earth, but when I heard the various tributes that were paid to her on the occasion of her burial, it did not take me long to acknowledge the type of person that she was. Sir, from all the reports given there, she was the kind of person who paid a very significant and outstanding role in her community, as an individual and, particularly, as a small business person who ran a shop in the village.

Those of us who grew up in the rural parts of Barbados know only too well, the significant part that has been played by village shopkeepers, in the early development of this country. We owe all of them a debt of gratitude for their outstanding contribution in their respective villages. The late Marjorie Downes-Parris was one of those persons.

Sir, on behalf of myself and my family and, certainly, the Senators on This Side and no doubt, on the other side as well, I wish to extend my deepest condolences to Senator Parris and the other members of her family. I want to assure them of our prayers, in this their moment of difficulty and trial.

Thank you, Sir.

Mr. President, I think it would be better if I, before I take my seat, make similar remarks about the late Bernice Crichlow. In this case though, I can say that I knew the late Bernice Crichlow. I remember well those early days, when Senator Dean Crichlow was attached to the Christ Church Parish Church, which then had responsibility for St. Patrick's Church, of which I have been a member for some time.

On many occasions, Senator Dean Crichlow, accompanied by his wife, took charge of that particular parish. The late Bernice Crichlow always conducted herself in such a manner that all of us in the congregation really were happy to see her there. I do not think that I would be talking out any secrets if I say that in those early days the people at St. Patrick's would have done anything to keep both Senator Dean Crichlow and his wife at that parish. However, Mr. President, that was not to be because some time after that they went off to Jamaica, where again I came into contact with the late Bernice Crichlow when I was a student at Mona and Senator Dean Crichlow was the Chaplin there. I do not know if he remembers my face from those days but he was the Anglican Chaplin there, and as a member of the Anglican Young People's Association on Campus, there were many occasions when we visited the residence of Senator Dean Crichlow and his dear wife.
11.10 a.m.

Mr. President, whenever we had the privilege to go there, I must say that she always received us with great love and was very accommodating to all of us. The last time I had the privilege of talking with her was in 2000, when I attended service at the St. Patrick's Church, the last day before I left to take on a diplomatic assignment in Geneva. In the congregation were Senator Dean Crichlow and his wife. At the end of the service I remember the late Bernice Crichlow coming over to me and sharing with me her knowledge of Geneva and Europe generally, having spent a lot of time in Brussels, and wishing me well and assuring me that even though I was moving into the unknown, as it were, that I had no reason to fear with the guidance and support of the Almighty. That is the kind of person Bernice Crichlow was. She was always willing to make a difference in the lives of those persons with whom she came into contact. She was very steadfast in her support to her husband and shared in his ministry in the church.

Mr. President, I therefore take this opportunity, on my behalf and that of my family and all of us on This Side and the Senate generally, to extend to Senator Dean Crichlow and his family our deepest condolences.

SENATOR F. J. STUART: Mr. President, I rise to associate myself with the comments made by the Honourable Leader of Government Business, Senator Griffith, in respect of the passing of both the late Marjorie Downes-Parris and the late Bernice Crichlow.

Mr. President, I did not know Marjorie Downes-Parris except by reputation. I am aware that she was a shopkeeper at Mayers Corner in the parish of St. Joseph. I knew of her reputation because a well-run shop is a veritable social centre. Mr. President, all the information available to me suggests that she was able to attract to her shop people

of all political stripes and she was able to receive them with a charm of manner that always claimed their admiration.

It is not surprising, therefore, that some time, I believe it was in 1996, that I heard her on the Mark Williams' "Looking Back" Programme, reminiscing on the fact that she was able to attract people like the late Right Excellent Sir Grantley Adams, the late Right Excellent Errol Barrow and others to that social centre at Mayers Corner, St. Joseph where young and old alike benefited from interaction.

Mr. President, it must be as a result of her activities in that area and the comings and goings of public figures to and from that shop that we have with us today her daughter Senator Parris, whose contributions to the deliberations of this Chamber have up to now commanded the respect of all of us.

Mr. President, if there is one defining feature of Senator Parris, it is that I would say that she does not speak because she has to say something but she speaks when she has something to say. That is always a plus for a good public figure.

Mr. President, she does not know this, but I use her as a barometer sometimes for the effectiveness of what I am saying because she is so emotionally and spiritually attached to the Barbados Labour Party that when it is under attack she shows the pain on her face and that is when I know that I can drive home the advantage.

Her mother obviously influenced her profoundly, and like Senator Griffith, I think we are all the poorer for her passing. I am sure that sense of bereavement felt by Senator Parris and her siblings and other relatives must be very profound. Therefore, on behalf of my family and myself and certainly on behalf of the Opposition, I should like to extend heartfelt condolences to Senator Parris and to the other bereaved of her family.

Mr. President, if I may go on to the late Bernice Crichlow, I did not know her personally either. I have known Senator Crichlow for many, many years dating back to my school days at the Boys' Foundation School when he came over to the Christ Church High School as Headmaster. I do not think there were any principals in those days, there were headmasters and headmistresses. Mr. President, if the career of Senator Crichlow is put under the microscope, one immediately has some appreciation of the kind of person that the late Bernice Crichlow must have been.

Of course, I had the privilege of attending her funeral and of listening to a variety of tributes paid to her, most exceptionally that paid by her daughter Grace-Ann, who reinforced my faith, on that afternoon, in the currency of the English language. I do not know when last I sat and listened to a funeral oration delivered with such unhurried elegance and with such charm of language. From all that Grace-Ann said, it is clear that her mother was a generous and very dainty individual. Of course she would have to have been a very strong individual because in the many areas of activity in which Senator Crichlow has been involved, he has never been afraid to attract controversy to himself – perhaps controversy is a very strong word, but I am looking for an alternative and I cannot find it – and to face the world courageously when he has come under criticism, whether those criticisms were coming from within the Anglican Church or from without. That she stood by him and dutifully sustained him in all of his endeavours, is a tribute to her and of course a tribute to the very fine judgement which he would have exercised many years ago when he espoused and pursued and claimed her.

Mr. President, her passing, I am sure, leaves a void in the life of Senator Crichlow. They were married for many years, but Christian as he is, a former Dean Emeritus as he is, and a Preacher as he is, I know that he is aware that, according to Christian theology and Christian belief, he is likely to see her again. That is what we Christians believe will happen when our Lord returns to earth and when he will, of necessity, bring her with him.
11.20 a.m.

Mr. President, until then, the best we can do is to extend to Senator Crichlow and his family the condolences of this Honourable Chamber. Sir, of course, I speak for my family and myself and for the compassionate family of the Democratic Labour Party, when I extend heartfelt condolences to Senator Crichlow.

Mr. President, I am obliged to you.

Her HONOUR SENATOR Dame Patricia SYMMONDS: Mr. President, Marjorie Dora Downes-Parris, J.P., was an astute businesswoman, as Senator Griffith has mentioned. In addition, she was also a model parent and family person. She adored her children. I can vouch for that from conversations I have had with her on occasions, and she lived for her children. They, in return, loved her very much. She never spoilt them but saw that they grew up disciplined, well-mannered, hardworking and God-fearing, above all else.

Mr. President, something I have always admired about her was the fact that she was always stylishly-dressed and exhibited good taste. She was a good hostess and very friendly, and her children's friends were always welcome.

Mr. President, she also showered love on her immediate and extended families, especially her nephew Courtney. Her kindness and understanding endeared her to everyone, and particularly the older members of the community.

I know she will be greatly missed but that their strong religious faith, especially that of Senator Miss Patricia Parris and Charles, will give them the solace which they need.

Mr. President, on the behalf of my family and I, I wish to extend sincere condolences. May she rest peacefully.

Mr. President, one of Bernice Crichlow's children's friends, who is also my god-daughter, commented to me on Bernice's open mind and straightforward nature. She was attuned to the mores, thoughts and outlook of her daughters' contemporaries, and this gave her an insight which made her understanding and approachable. Mr. President, to use a common French term, she was completely *bieu daus sa peau*; that is, fully at ease in any circumstances.

Mr. President, because I had taught her at St. Michael's Girls' School, there was always an element of deference and fondness in her greeting of me but over the years, whenever we would have met as adults then, we were able to converse comfortably on that basis of mutual fondness and respect.

Mr. President, both Grace-Ann, whom I know quite well and who taught for a short while at St. Michael's and Gloria, are a credit to two wonderful parents, who instilled in them Christian virtues, social skills and the love of learning.

To Senator the Very Reverend Dean Crichlow, to Grace-Ann and Gloria, as well as to her son-in-law and her darling grandchild, I extend deep and sincere condolences. Bernice will always be remembered, with great affection, by all who knew her.

Mr. President, as Thornton Wilder so poignantly puts it:

"There is a land of the living;
And a land of the dead;
And the bridge is love".

Mr. President, may she rest in peace.

SENATOR A. A. BYNOE: Mr. President, this Honourable Chamber is paying tribute to the lives of two persons, who were connected to us in this Honourable Senate, one of whom I know very well. There is also a connection with Marjorie Downes-Parris because as a shopkeeper, we do have something in common.

Mr. President, I would like as well to join my voice in paying tribute to the life of Marjorie Downes-Parris, who certainly would have gone through the ups and downs in that particular industry. She has also produced a wonderful daughter, who is now a Member of this Honourable Senate, Senator Miss Patricia Parris.

Mr. President, before I speak of Bernice Crichlow, whom I knew very well, I would also like to pay tribute to Wilma Dixon, the wife of a former Dean of the St. Michael's Cathedral, to say that she, indeed, was also a very outstanding and loving mother and wife.

Mr. President, in speaking of Bernice Crichlow, I have known her for a long time, since my childhood, so to speak, and as Senator Griffith spoke of being a member of the Anglican Young People's Association (AYPA), in his days in Jamaica, I, too, would have met her in that connection, through my association with the various churches. I remember Dean Harold, when he was at All Souls Anglican Church and the St. Michael's Cathedral, in particular.

Mr. President, Bernice took a liking to me and I must say this was particularly important to me because when I was involved in a business in Wildey, I closed that business and went elsewhere to Black Rock, she followed me and she said to me, wherever I go, she would follow. Therefore, there is a particular reason why, in this Honourable Chamber, I must take the opportunity to pay tribute to Bernice. I was happy that I saw her shopping a week before, her last shopping day at Carlton Supermarket, and as usual we hugged.

Mr. President, that was very important to me. Therefore, though with sadness, it is with pleasure that I give these few remarks on her behalf. Sir, in so doing, I would like to commend the words of a certain poet to this Honourable Chamber:

"Life is an ecdysis;
An everlasting moment that has gone forever;
And always here to stay;
Until the body exhales the last farewell".

Mr. President, I would like, therefore, to say farewell to all persons, to whom we dedicate these speeches.

Mr. President, I thank you.

SENATOR G. P. I. GOODING-EDGHILL: Mr. President, I too would like to join with other Honourable Senators in celebrating the lives of Marjorie Downes-Parris and Bernice Crichlow.
11.30 a.m.

I must say that Marjorie Downes-Parris was a woman of great compassion who cared for all in the community. She was peaceful and humble. One thing I can say about her was that whether you met her for the first time or known her for a long time, she would display that warmth and welcome. Sir, had she been alive, she would have celebrated her 80th birthday last Monday. I know it was an event that she was looking forward to celebrating with her friends and family but that was not meant to be, because of her illness.

Mr. President, she accepted her fate and carried on courageously. Those who had the opportunity to meet with her before she passed, would attest to the courage that she carried with the fight before her. It was also fitting that on the day she passed, she had all her children at her bedside.

Mr. President, I am not familiar with Bernice Crichlow, but certainly, all that has been said about her, there can be no doubt that she too was a woman of great compassion. I would like, therefore, in joining with other Senators to offer my deepest sympathy to the families and to say that in strength you will always find the Lord and to those who have great compassion, great things will come to them.

Mr. President, I am much obliged.

Mr. PRESIDENT: I would like to associate the Chair with the tributes paid to the late Mrs. Marjorie Downes-Parris and Mrs. Bernice Crichlow, in one case the mother and in the other, the wife of two distinguished members of this Chamber. I did not have the pleasure of meeting Mrs. Downes-Parris but from all that I have heard, she made an outstanding contribution to the community in which she lived and, of course, Senator Parris is perhaps an example of the kind of person her mother was. Senator Stuart has already said some rather nice things about Senator Parris with which the Chair wholeheartedly agrees.

The district of Mayers Corner is very well-known in the political life of this country, from all I have read and heard and, no doubt, the influence of Mrs. Downes-Parris expanded far beyond that area.

I had the pleasure of meeting and conversing with the late Mrs. Crichlow on many occasions over the years and have always been greatly impressed by her charm and dignity. Senator Crichlow often spoke of her and I have no doubt that they enjoyed a very long and happy marriage.

The funeral service which I had the privilege of attending some days ago was, in fact, a celebration of her life, with tributes paid by, among others, her son-in-law and the retired Bishop of Trinidad & Tobago but, perhaps, the most outstanding statement of her life and work came from the Crichlow's daughter, Grace-Ann. Only on Monday, I spoke to Senator Dean Crichlow about how impressive her presentation was. Senator Stuart spoke of the unhurried elegance of her prose and I do believe that it is one of the finest eulogies that it has been my privilege to hear.

I extend sincerest condolences to Senator Parris and Senator Dean Crichlow. We are all the poorer for their passing and may they rest in peace.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Senator Parris.

SENATOR Miss P. E. PARRIS: Thank you, Mr. President. I would like to thank Honourable Senators for their sentiments and the support they have given to my family during the past week. My mother was thoughtful and dear; she showed us love from day to day and has touched the lives of several persons.

Mummy will be greatly missed by her family and friends but we will all take comfort in knowing that she would be lovingly embraced in the kingdom of God.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Senator Crichlow.

SENATOR the Very Reverend H. E. CRICHLOW: Thank you, Mr. President.

Mr. President, and Honourable Members of the Senate, on behalf of my family, I should like to thank you very much for the kind tributes you have paid to my wife of forty-five years standing but of over 60 years friendship because we started courting about age 10 when we went to private lessons together at her brother. I should like to thank you for all the telephone calls, sympathy cards, floral arrangements which were sent on your behalf and to say that the kind of tributes paid here this morning do reflect the kind of person she was.

I should try to convey what was said about Grace-Ann's tribute, many people have said the same thing. I had to be strong for the family but her tribute almost brought me to tears. It was good to see that Government Senators and the Senators of the Opposition were at one in paying tribute. This is one of the rare occasions in the Senate where we can have that type of unanimity which we would all like to have in our society.

Mr. President, I certainly think that we have it among the politicians and would wish that members of the Barbadian community would understand that despite the contentious behaviour sometimes and adversarial speeches, that it is the nature of democracy and that their representatives are fond of each other and wish the best for Barbados.

Mr. President, before I close I should add to those Senators who paid tribute to Senator Parris' mother. I am sure the persons who produced Senator Parris would have to be parents of great stature.

Thank you very much, Mr. President.

11.40 a.m.

Mr. PRESIDENT: I would now ask all Honourable Members to stand for two minutes in silent tribute to the memories of the late Mrs. Downes-Parris and Mrs. Crichlow.

The Senate stood in silence for two minutes.

ORDER NO. 5 – SECOND READING OF THE EXPORT PROMOTION AND MARKETING FUND (AMENDMENT AND VALIDATION) BILL, 2006

Mr. PRESIDENT: Senator Griffith.

SENATOR THE HON. E. R. GRIFFITH: Mr. President, you will recall that in 2005 the Prime Minister, in his capacity of Minister of Finance, introduced a Cess tax on extra regional imports, with two goals of assisting with the restraint of imports, and at the same time providing funds to support exports. Both objectives are aimed at dealing with the imbalance, which currently exists, in our external accounts. Sir, by January 2006, it became clear that while there was some success, it was necessary to move a further step. At that time the Minister announced that the Cess would be increased from 3 per cent to 6 per cent on imports, from extra-regional sources. It is because of that decision, in January 2006, that this Bill is before us.

Mr. President, as you are aware, while the Provision Collections of Taxes Act, covered the increased for four months, it is necessary to have legislation in place for the continuation of that measure. Therefore, the Bill before us is seeking to make an amendment to the Export Promotion and Marketing Fund Act, to include a provision for the continuation of that Cess. At the same time, to validate the collection of the Cess during the month of May. Subsequent to that, the four months would have expired by May 15, 2006. That is why this Bill is before us.

It is a measure which is necessary for us to continue and to keep in place, particularly because we need to continue to control our external account, and to ensure that the gap between imports and exports is gradually closed.

Mr. President, with those few remarks, I beg to move that this Bill be read a second time.

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

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

COMMITTEE

Madam DEPUTY PRESIDENT: The Senate is in Committee.

Clauses 1 to 5 inclusive were called and passed.

On the motion of SENATOR THE HON. E. R. GRIFFITH, Madam DEPUTY PRESIDENT reported to HIS HONOUR the PRESIDENT, the passing of one Bill in Committee and Mr. 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 Export Promotion and Marketing Fund (Amendment and Validation) Act, 2006.

ORDER NO. 6 – SECOND READING OF THE LIAT (1974) LIMITED GUARANTEE (AMENDMENT) BILL, 2006

Mr. PRESIDENT: Senator Griffith.

SENATOR THE HON. E. R. GRIFFITH: Mr. President, this matter before us deals with two aspects. One is the LIAT (1974) Limited Guarantee (Amendment) Bill. The other is the Resolution for guarantee for the maintenance and return condition obligations, under the lease agreement between LIAT (1974) Limited and Bombardier Services Corporation.
11.50 a.m

LIAT (1974), Mr. President, has been with us in the region for a very long time. Over the years, LIAT has continued to make a significant contribution to the movement from persons throughout the region, and by extension, to the development of our tourist industry in Barbados and the region, in general.

The airline industry, as you know, Mr. President, is one which operates in an environment that can be destabilised quite easily. One only has to look at what took place in the United Kingdom, during the past week to discover that. Sir, only yesterday, I heard that one of the major airlines operating out of the United Kingdom is calling on the airport authority to provide some measure of compensation for it, because as a result of the new security measures, it has had to cancel in excess of 100 flights. Already, you can see that this particular airline, though it is a major one, is going to be hit quite significantly, financially. Sir, that tells you the fickleness of the environment in which airlines operate, both big and small airlines. If the big ones have those difficulties, very often, as a result of occurrences, that are beyond their control, you can imagine what would be the plight of the smaller ones.

LIAT falls in the category of small airlines, but is performing a role to Barbados and the region that is of great significance. It is a role that the larger airlines are unlikely to undertake, because to them, it may just be a humbug, in the sense that in many instances, as soon as the plane gets up in the air, it has to land. The distances between the

respective countries are so short and would be unsuitable, in many cases, to the larger equipment, which is used by those big airlines but, it is a role that is of great significance and benefit to the region.

Therefore, in spite of all of the arguments that have been used over the years, against the Governments in the region continuing to provide support to LIAT, we have to be realistic and to acknowledge that we have a great deal to lose, if the services are not available. It is nice to say that there are others who are willing to provide those services.

We have said that in many instances, in other areas of economic activity and we have paid the penalty. When the going became rough, those persons who are from outside of the region, have made the decisions that affected their bottom lines, without any due concern for the interest or otherwise of the region. While it is nice to say there are others, meaning from external sources, who are willing and able to provide the service, we always have to be careful.

Mr. President, in a sense, it is somewhat like a topic, which we now discuss with great passion, regarding food security. I remember very well many years ago, whenever that topic came up, there were those among us who would argue that there was no need for us to produce any food. You could import it at cheaper prices. I always said to them, that you have to earn what you need to pay for the importation so, at least, you must be able to do so. You can only procure those cheaper imports when you earn the money to pay for them.

Now, today, because of the stark realities that have presented themselves to us across the world, I listened attentively to some of those same persons who now argue, with great passion, for food security, meaning that we should produce a certain amount of the food we eat. If they had acquired that knowledge before, no doubt, we would have been better off.

We have done it also when it comes to shipping. One of the great and big problems, which we now have in the region is to transport goods from country to country. It is amazing that sometimes in order to get products from one country to another within the region, we have to go out of the region. They have to leave the region, then to come back into the region, because of the arrangements that have been made by the large shipping companies. We have no shipping arrangements among ourselves, at a time when we are promoting deeper integration. One of the big problems we will have, is how to get the products from country A to country B, without going out of the region to get them back into the region.

Therefore, my advice is that when it comes to air transport, we do not make the mistakes that we have made in relation to sea transport. This is why I fully support the position of the Barbados Labour Party Administration to provide support to LIAT.

The issue before us has resulted from the fact that LIAT, like most other airlines, particularly small ones, has to lease planes from people who make their daily living out of leases. As a small airline, the restrictions that the lessors will put on LIAT, would be different from restrictions which it would put on bigger airlines, particularly, if they are airlines that are owned by persons in their particular countries.

Therefore, in this particular case, Bombardier, which is leasing aircraft to LIAT, would normally expect LIAT, on a monthly basis, to put into an escrow account, the sum of US$49 600, as a guarantee, so that when the leases expire and the planes are to be returned, Bombardier will have funds, which it can use to repair the aircraft, in the event that they suffered any damages during the term of the lease. Sir, that is an extraordinary burden to a small company like LIAT. In fact, it is some US$1.2 million a year.

Sir, LIAT, because of the nature of its operations and the difficulties that it has experienced over the years, is not in a position to carry that expense, while trying to implement the restructuring plan that was approved a while ago, by the shareholders. This restructuring plan is taking shape. Even though the airline at the moment is still in the red, in terms of its operations, there are signs that there are gradual improvements.
12.00 noon

Sir, over time with the support of the shareholders and others, the airline would gradually make its ways out of that particular situation.

Mr. President, an approach was made to Bombardier Services Corporation for an alternative arrangement so as to facilitate the continuation of LIAT. Mr. President, the alternative arrangement is that a Guarantee would be given by the shareholders. Mr. President, in this particular case, Barbados happens to be the largest shareholder, and Antigua is the next in line, although my understanding is that within recent times they have put measures in place to increase their shareholding.

Sir, Bombardier Services Corporation has indicated that it would be willing to take a Guarantee from Barbados and Antigua and Barbuda through which LIAT would be assured that it would have access to funds to maintain the aircraft and to return them in good condition to Bombardier at the end of the lease. Sir, those conditions are set out in the agreement between Bombardier Services Corporation and LIAT.

Mr. President, what is before us is simply asking the Government of Barbados to enter into an arrangement that would permit LIAT to assure Bombardier Services Corporation that without putting this money on a monthly basis into the escrow account, the aircrafts will be maintained and will be returned in good condition at the end of the lease.

Mr. President, legal advice is that under the existing legislation, there is no authority for the Government to sign such an agreement. That is why it is proposed here that there be an amendment to Section 4 of the Act. Mr. President, if you look at the terms in the agreement and the provisions of the existing Section 4 and Part II, of the Schedule, you would notice that there are some limitations to what can be permitted and so on. Therefore, the Bill before us is seeking to delete section 4 and Part II so as to facilitate the terms in the contract so that the new Schedule would accommodate that.

Mr. President, I know that from elsewhere there has been a lot of discussions about the availability or otherwise of the financial statements of LIAT. My information is that the statements for 2004 and 2005, are with their auditors and will be dealt with shortly. The issue here is whether the region can allow LIAT to come to a halt, and if they allow that to happen, who would fill the void, and whether the arrangements that would be put in place by others would adequately cover their interest. Mr. President, based on all of the information before us, that answer at this present moment, in my view, is no.

Therefore, I am in full support of the proposals before us for the amendment of the Act and for provision to be made for the Government to provide the appropriate guarantee to Bombardier Services Corporation, so that LIAT could continue to perform the role which it is performing at the moment and which is absolutely necessary if we are to continue to move around the region for whatever purposes, particularly at this time when we are talking about the movement of persons and encouraging Barbadians who have various skills to travel through the region to provide their services on a regular basis.

Mr. President, I am sure that Senator Dr. Lowe recognises the importance of the role that LIAT plays from that point of view because he is able to move around the region quite easily. Sir, there would be others who would be able to take advantage of those opportunities.

I therefore beg to move that this Bill be read a second time.

SENATOR F. J. STUART: Mr. President, the question of LIAT has come before this Chamber, I believe on three or four previous occasions since the 2003 General Elections. Mr. President, whenever the issue comes before this Chamber, we hear the same stories about LIAT (1974) Limited and its role in this region and its role in transporting people across this region, a necessary role may I say.

Mr. President, the Democratic Labour Party does not need any persuasion on this issue since it was the Party in Government in 1974, when the original owners of LIAT were pulling out of the Caribbean, which decided that Government should get involved and preserve the airline precisely for that purpose.

Mr. President, the Party's commitment to LIAT and to the continued survival of LIAT does not extend to asking Barbadians to close their eyes and to support LIAT whatever its shortcomings and whatever may be the shortcomings of the information available to Parliament when Barbadians are being asked to support the airline.

Mr. President, it is true that travel across the region is facilitated by LIAT. It is true that Barbados is in the nature of a hub between the North Atlantic and other parts of the Caribbean and that LIAT performs a role in facilitating the movement of people from the North Atlantic across the Caribbean through the Grantley Adams International Airport. Mr. President, it is true, as Senator Griffith just said, that we might be taking a very big chance if we allow LIAT to die and for private profit-oriented interest to become responsible for so critical a link between Barbados and other parts of the Caribbean.

Mr. President, these are the familiar refrains one hears whenever issues relating to LIAT come before this Chamber. I dare say that there is not much fault one can find with the lines, they do communicate a kind of melody, though that is doleful, if I may use that word. There is no hint of optimism about LIAT when we come before this Chamber to discuss it because the information provided to Parliament does not allow parliamentarians to evaluate what the Government is really doing and to determine whether continued support for LIAT on the terms and conditions outlined by the Government can be justified.
12.10 p.m.

Mr. President, that is where the Opposition's problems lie. Sir, we frequently have to rely on the *ipse dixit* of this or that Minister of Government but we do not know what are the plans for LIAT. We heard about a restructuring plan and how it is taking shape. Where is the restructuring plan? What are the elements contained in that restructuring plan that would lead the Government to say today, that the plan is taking shape? Sir, this would be a plan, to which not many Honourable Senators would have been privy. I certainly am not privy to this restructuring plan the Government is talking about.

Mr. President, I have heard broad statements being made by the Honourable Minister, in relation to LIAT, justifying the Government of Barbados increasing its shareholding, along with the fact that the Chairman of the Board is now a Barbadian and we have a majority of members on the Board. Sir, in terms of a plan to revive LIAT, to make it viable, both in Caribbean term and in financial terms... That does not necessarily mean that it has to be making a profit, although that is highly desirable. Mr. President, if the taxpayers of Barbados are being asked to stand by LIAT, then I would believe that some serious attempt would have to be made, to ensure that the extent of their obligations would be controlled and that the obligations of the taxpayers of Barbados would not turn out to be unlimited obligations.

Mr. President, I think Government has been a little dodgy on the issue of LIAT. We have discussed it in this Honourable Chamber about three or four times, since the 2003 election. This maybe the fifth, I am not sure I have lost count but we hear the same story all the time. Sir, what is consistent about that story, is the fact that the taxpayers of Barbados do not know what they are getting into, neither do they know what is the full extent of their obligations to this airline.

Mr. President, as I said, the Democratic Labour Party believes, as a matter of policy, that we need LIAT or some such airline, to perform the services being performed by LIAT and that it deserves the support of Governments across the region. We are aware that not all Governments across the region have lived up to popular expectations, in terms of their loyalty and in terms of meeting their obligations to the airline. It is still a matter of concern, for all practical purposes, that LIAT is headquartered away from Barbados, while Barbados is bearing the brunt of the obligations to that airline.

Mr. President, it is true that we are talking about the Caribbean Single Market and Economy, about deeper integration movement and so on but the Caribbean Single Market and Economy and deeper integration movement cannot, by any elasticity of meaning, be extended to denote or to connote that the taxpayers of Barbados should be beast of burden, as it were, for other people across this region.

Mr. President, therefore, I would hope that when Senator Griffith is winding up this debate, that the country might have the benefit of hearing from him that which I have not had the benefit of hearing. I would hope that the Honourable Member would give us more specifics on the state of LIAT today, as to what this restructuring plan is about and as to what time frame the Government is looking at, in terms of pulling LIAT out of its present hole.

Mr. President, as I listened to the Government on the issue of LIAT, on every occasion that the Government has come here with a Bill or Resolution, one gets the impression that one is just discussing a 'life sore' and that we are going to bandage it, from time to time, but that we all know it will never heal. Sir, that is totally unsatisfactory for the taxpayers of Barbados.

Mr. President, I would expect to hear from Senator Griffith and Senator Grant, the Parliamentary Secretary in the Ministry of International Transport, the specifics, in relation to the state of, and the future of LIAT.

Mr. President, since LIAT is an intra-regional carrier, it must necessarily have a lot to do with the Grantley Adams International Airport. It relies substantially on the Grantley Adams International Airport, since that airport, we are told, from time to time, is a kind of hub to facilitate movement from the North Atlantic, into the Eastern Caribbean.

Mr. President, how the Grantley Adams International Airport functions, therefore, must necessarily be linked to how LIAT is able to function. Sir, therefore, concerns have been expressed in Barbados about what is going on at the Grantley Adams International Airport.

Mr. President, the point at issue, if I may use a highly popular term in media circle, has to do with how passengers coming into the Grantley Adams International Airport, travelling by LIAT or passing through the airport, to go to LIAT, would have their luggage being taken care of. Mr. President, indications are, from all reports one is hearing, that there is a kind of an Ayatollah Khomeini at the Grantley Adams International Airport, who overrides decisions of the Cabinet, decisions of Ministers and decisions of the Government, who sets out to ensure that the airport is run along certain lines. Sir, the most recent issues has to do with the fate of the Red Caps at the airport.

Mr. President, for as long as we have known the Grantley Adams International Airport and its predecessor, Seawell International Airport, there has been a critical role carved out for the jobs performed by Red Caps. Of course, these Red Caps are some of the humblest people to be found anywhere in this country. Mr. President, what we are now hearing suggests that with the passage of time – and we do not know how much time – these Red Caps might be no more.

Mr. President, for very good reasons, I have raised this point in relation to LIAT (1974) Limited and its connection to the Grantley Adams International Airport, that airport being a hub between the North Atlantic and other parts of the Caribbean. Sir, the Democratic Labour Party wants to make it very clear that the Government will not have its support, if the policy at the Grantley Adams International Airport is to render Red Caps a category of the past. We

stand firmly behind the continued functioning of Red Caps at the airport.
12.20 p.m.

We are not at all suggesting there should be no organisational changes at the airport to facilitate passengers and to ensure that the service quality is optimal but we are seeing that the Red Cap fraternity and, to the extent that there are women, the Red Cap sorority, has made its own contribution to the development and culture of the airport and we stand firmly behind them.

Mr. President, making that point alone does not mean that Senator Grant and Senator Griffith are relieved of any obligations in here today to tell the people of Barbados, specifically, what the position of the Government is on the future of LIAT, what is the nature of this restructuring plan, how is the plan taking shape, as Senator Griffith has said, and what kind of time frame the Government is looking at in terms of this plan being determined a success in terms of the objectives of the Government and what level of performance does the Government expect from LIAT that would satisfy it that the taxpayers continued faith in the airline is justified. These are simply questions and any Government on top of policy and information which know what it is doing should be able to answer these questions.

We cannot come in here every three, four or five months with an amendment to the LIAT Act or bring another Resolution on LIAT and have to listen to the same information at every Sitting. We need some light shed because all we have experienced so far is heat and it is time to bring the transition from heat to light as people want to be able to understand what is happening with LIAT and what they can expect from the airline in terms of optimal performance, not only performance in terms of transporting people across the region but in terms of its financial state.

Mr. President, I await the explanation of the Government. With those few words, I am obliged to you.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Senator Marville.

SENATOR R. O. MARVILLE: Mr. President, there are two small African countries located in the Indian Ocean, the Seychelles and Mauritius, which have their own airlines. The point about this is that it was a stated policy. They recognised that even if the airlines cost them, it was necessary to be sure that their tourism product was sold. In case we are wondering what this has to do with LIAT, the answer is very simple. We have obviously looked at LIAT as an airline that is necessary for our regional survival in terms of movement across the region, transport of goods and people, *et cetera.* What worries me is that we do not seem to be totally sure of this commitment. At least, Barbados seems to be hanging on to the commitment but I am not sure what is happening in the rest of the region. This is a serious issue because there are at present four or five regional airlines. The problem is that Caribbean Star is extremely well-capitalised. It is capitalised by a businessman who uses his business savvy in a very specific way to run the airline on top of which, it insisted that it would be within half hour of any time given. The point being that somebody is concerned about the bottom line and, the bottom line is very important in any business if it is going to function, let me assure you of that.

Mr. President, we do not have the sort of working within the region that we need to have on these things. If we are in any way committed to a single Caribbean, whether a single market or single economy, we have to look at these fundamentals seriously. Clearly, Barbados cannot carry this on its own but the only answer for LIAT is proper capitalisation. I do not believe that it is too small to own airlines if there is a system that has been worked out for LIAT in purchasing aircraft. We cannot rely on an outsider totally, there needs to be elements of competition.

If we look at BWIA, it has always had its problems with management, staff, financing, *et cetera*. If we are going to be in the business, we have seriously to be in the business. We cannot just put a little bit here and hope that somebody else would put a little bit. There needs to be a regional conference on LIAT which says that we want LIAT and that we are going to make it run. Otherwise, the effort of Barbados, Mr. President, is a waste of time, a declining effort. We cannot go on like this, we need to do something more fundamental.

I thank you.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Senator Chandler.

SENATOR Dr. F. L. CHANDLER: Mr. President, I support the Bill and the Resolution before us. I think that LIAT is necessary although all of us would like to see it run more efficiency and without undue political interference, for example, in the choice of the headquarters.

I would like to support the statement of the Minister about difficulties with shipping in the region. It is much easier to get on the phone and order something from Miami – in my case, I am thinking mainly of agriculture produce – whereas, it is almost impossible to get anything from next door in the other islands. Sir, LIAT has not seemed enthusiastic in the past about operating an air cargo service and I trust that they would look at this again. I feel that if we combine the fresh produce with manufactured items that the operation of an air cargo service could be feasible and would certainly assist the agricultural sectors of all the islands in the region.

Mr. President, again, I would like to reiterate my support for the Bill and the Resolution. I thank you.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Senator Linton.

SENATOR I. St. C. LINTON: Mr. President, I rise to give support to this Resolution before Parliament. I want to go beyond partisan politics in relation to air travel in the Caribbean. We have struggled with the problems of airlines like BWIA, LIAT, and there are perennial problems and it is my concern, that some Governments in the Caribbean in spite of the fact that they know that they do not have the capacity to manage the airlines in the Caribbean, but that there are purposeful for us.

Mr. President, without LIAT, where would we go or what would we do? The question and problem of LIAT, in my view, is that when any country in the Caribbean could seek to use an airline as an employment agency, it will have serious problems. Mr. President, seeking to move LIAT from one place to another adds to the problem.
12.30 p.m.

Sir, Governments of the Caribbean, including Barbados, must recognise that LIAT and BWIA are necessary for the Caribbean to develop and to manage its business, especially on the advent of the Caribbean Single Market and Economy. Therefore, that is why I said, we must go beyond the politics and party politics.

Sir, if LIAT is out of the air tomorrow, Barbados and all the other countries in the Caribbean would have problems, because it is important for airlines like LIAT to be able to move people from the north and elsewhere throughout the Caribbean, for the Governments and Caribbean people to benefit.

In addition, all of us as Barbadians and business people must be able to travel in the archipelago. Sir, with the lack of adequate shipping, it is necessary. Sir, not only for Governments, but those who are Opposition Parliamentarians in the Caribbean to have a policy. You cannot just come here and ask questions about a policy, especially when you are a Government in waiting, like the Opposition Party.

Sir, what is the Democratic Labour Party's policy on LIAT, now, and in the future? We do not have to tell you. You want a Government. You have to tell the people of Barbados, what you will do about LIAT if you come to Government. You cannot just come to Parliament asking questions. You have to bring a policy of your own. Sir, you can challenge the Government on their policy but bring one to the table.

Mr. President, it is time that the people of the Caribbean, become wary of the kinds of criticisms that come from the Opposition, especially when they are not putting one measure on the table for the people of Barbados. Sir, as Barbadians we cannot accept this.

Mr. President, the time has come when Barbados must have serious political Parties. The Government must have a policy of what is best for Barbados, and an ability to solve problems with LIAT, BWIA and other businesses in the Caribbean, but the Opposition has to bring matters to the table also.

Sir, when we look at the issue of the Red Caps, as referred to by Senator Stuart, will there always be a need for red caps at the airport? I travel too. Mr. President, when several people arrive at the airport in Barbados, they need to get out of the airport as soon as possible. They cannot sit around and wait for a 20, 80 or 100 people to clear their baggage with the Red Caps. If it is possible, we should come up with a policy to integrate the Red Caps into the new Grantley Adams International Airport.

Sir, there are times when people arrive in Barbados and there are no Red Caps available. We should stop criticising, but rather integrate a proper system where the Red Caps will be part of the new policy at the airport.

Mr. President, these are the things that we should talk about. The truth is, certain jobs in the world have disappeared. You cannot keep people in jobs because you want them in a job. Sir, you have to look at a system where we can make sure that these individuals are employed. They do not have to be red caps. I heard talk of a hundred, but I understand that is not true. Mr. President, we need a policy where they can be integrated into the system so that their families can survive. That is the kind of thing that we should be talking about.

Sir, do not politicise the issue as though these individuals must wear red caps, and push trolleys all the time. Mr. President, I am told that when you engage their services, they ask for X dollars, and if refused, throw your luggage off, that kind of behaviour.

Asides.

SENATOR I. St. C. LINTON: I listened yesterday evening to experiences of persons who called the evening programme to talk about some of the treatment they received. If you do not tip them £5 or a few more dollars, you do not get good treatment. I am not criticising them on this matter. I am simply saying that you want a proper integrated system, for these persons to be able to work for their living, at a new organised international airport. A system has to be put in place in order for these people to earn a living, and better condition of employment. They need to be employed, but we need to have a better system including the Red Caps in the business.

Sir, I return to the point that there is no sense coming to this Parliament asking questions, with no policy of your own, but longing to be the Government.

Mr. President, we have a distinct position with all of the questions raised by the Opposition. Do you know what is the latest? Sir, important matters that concern the electorate of Barbados, members of the Opposition of the various constituencies voted not to bring a policy or anything on board. Sir, at a future date, I will speak to this particular matter. I am simply saying that the people of Barbados are tired of the Democratic Labour Party asking questions, but failing to declare a policy.

Mr. President, I support this measure before us, because LIAT is important to us, the airline industry in the Caribbean must find a system in which it provides the opportunity for us, as Caribbean people, to move around in our area. Sir, Governments, Opposition, and political Parties must find themselves with policies that are important and successful, rather than being critical with just questions. You must have a policy.

Sir, I support this Resolution.

12.40 p.m.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Senator Bynoe.

SENATOR A. A. BYNOE: Mr. President, I rise to support the Resolution before this Honourable Chamber. I would like to bring the Chamber back to the Resolution, before I stray, like former speakers.

Mr. PRESIDENT: It is, in fact, the Bill we are debating.

SENATOR A. A. BYNOE: Well then, I have strayed, Mr. President.

Asides.

SENATOR A. A. BYNOE: But not too far away, because I can change Resolution to Bill.

Mr. President, then, in support of the Bill, I think that a reasonable person would have no objection to what it is that we are supporting because, we are giving an assurance to the public that when they travel on LIAT, all such planes would have met the international standard for maintenance. The Government of Barbados has given Bombardier, a number of obligations to be met, to ensure that LIAT is safe in the skies. I think that no reasonable person in Barbados or anywhere in the Caribbean, can object to that.

Mr. President, as a business venture, LIAT suffers no different disposition as other airlines, within the Caribbean and within the world. As a matter of fact, we have been fortunate that LIAT – as other airlines – has not gone into liquidation. It is still flying and that is because the Government of Barbados and other Governments recognise the importance of LIAT, as a carrier within this region.

Sadly, I would say that we have not yet fulfilled the promise, in relation to movement within the Caribbean. One hopes that with the full implementation of CSME, we will then begin to see the full benefit from LIAT on other carriers, in relation to movement within the Caribbean.

Mr. President, I do believe though, that LIAT needs to look beyond the current routes. I do recall a delegation from Brazil coming to Barbados last year, which included the CEO, if not the owner of a Brazilian airline. They were interested, and still are, in creating a link between Manaus and Barbados.

I say that because every day, I hear and, at some time suffer the comment that prices in Barbados are too high. While that has been said, we do not recognise that the British Government has recognised that Brazil is the next looming economy after China and India. Sir, Brazil is next door to us.

The point I am making is that I am in an industry where I hear the cries of the Barbadians, in relation to the cost of goods in this country, in particular, food. I listened as we just past the enactment, in relation to the increase of Cess, from 3 per cent to 6 per cent. The Government knows that it cannot function without a certain level of revenue. Duties have been removed in certain instances and, therefore, I do support that measure.

The point is, in relation to the cost of food, I believe that greater emphasis should be given to the importation of food and other materials from Brazil. Sir, you might very well find that by so doing, we can reduce the cost of living significantly in this country.

I say that knowing, that right now, there are certain types of merchandise in this country, out of China, which, if bought next year, will be about 50 per cent more in price, than sold today. This is because in China, the cost of merchandise has increased by 30 per cent between last year and this year. Senator Sir Allan Fields is the Ambassador to China and, perhaps, he is aware of this.

Mr. President, we have to understand that in order for LIAT to remain in the skies, it has to be subsidised. While that is the case, I would say that LIAT has also to look for other opportunities, in respect of cargo, perhaps from Brazil, as I have just alluded to.

Mr. President, I would really like to address a remark made in this Senate, with respect to the Chairman of the Grantley Adams International Airport.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Senator, no mention was made in this Chamber about Grantley Adams International Airport, as far as I am aware.

SENATOR A. A. BYNOE: Sorry, Sir, I withdraw that. However, there was the remark that referred to someone as an Ayatollah.

Asides.

SENATOR A. A. BYNOE: Mr. President, you cannot choose a weak person as your CEO, or as your Chairman. Sir, a Chairman or a CEO has to be somebody who has some sort of mettle, who has guts, who can stand up and say, no, when it is no and, yes, when it is yes.

Mr. President, within the business environment, there is a boardroom where the policy is set and one would expect that the policy is carried out.

Mr. President, I would like to come to the matter of the Red Caps. This is a situation where, I believe, that we ought to be looking for a win-win out of this. The way that international transport in relation to air traffic is these days, we therefore have to address certain matters. I am sure that when you come to security matters and so on, it may be better that we have less people interacting within that kind of environment. However, we have men and women who depend on conveying passengers for their daily living. I am sure it is not the intention of this Government, and I am positive about it, to dispossess anyone who presently works at the airport as a Red Cap.
12.50 p.m.

However, we have a business decision to make. Mr. President, we can have a situation where the passenger still takes care of his own luggage for security and other reasons and we could still accommodate those persons who have been working in that position. We must find a way of accommodating them. I am therefore saying that there has to be a win-win situation.

Mr. President, the Grantley Adams International Airport is a business entity. It is results oriented. Therefore, we should support the actions of members of the Board and the Chairman of that Board because when all is said and done, with clear intentions...

Mr. PRESIDENT: Senator, I hate to interrupt you, I have allowed some latitude in this debate and I wish to remind you that we are still dealing with the LIAT matter.

SENATOR A. A. BYNOE: Mr. President, I will come back from the Safari. I think I have said enough that the message is clear enough that I fully support this Bill in relation to LIAT.

I thank you.

SUSPENSION OF SITTING

SENATOR THE HON. E. R. GRIFFITH: Mr. President, I beg to move that this Sitting be suspended until 2.00 p.m. today.

The question that the Sitting do now suspend until 2.00 p.m. today was put and resolved in the affirmative without division and Mr. PRESIDENT suspended the Sitting accordingly.
1.00 p.m.

RESUMPTION

Mr. PRESIDENT: This Sitting is resumed. Senator Nicholls.

SENATOR G. P. B. NICHOLLS: Mr. President, I want to be very brief in my contribution to this debate on the LIAT (1974) Guarantee (Amendment) Bill, 2006. I think it is safe to say that the Government support for LIAT, in recent times, has not come about as a result of any nostalgic feelings about Barbados' role, to lead or to drive any movement towards regional unity.

Mr. President, the acquisition of greater shares in the company called LIAT (1974) Limited, by the Government of Barbados, has been done as a result of a carefully analysed manoeuvre, to secure the future of the Barbados economy and the people of this country, in a way in which Government's programmes are intended to give effect to bring about greater opportunities for people to develop.

Mr. President, all Honourable Senators have acknowledged that LIAT is important because it carries the role or has the role to transport people throughout the region, that inter-regional transport is important and that LIAT operates as a means of getting people from the North Atlantic to the Eastern Caribbean. Sir, we have not explained that sufficiently for people and that is why some of the questions that have been raised in this debate, have come about.

Sir, to my mind, as a tourism destination, Barbados has to market itself, on the basis of access of our gateways into Barbados. Sir, the truth is that a lot of the people, who get on the airlines and come to Barbados, are not coming only to Barbados. They come to Barbados, get on other carriers and go to other parts of the Eastern Caribbean.

Mr. President, the truth is that if those carriers were not available to take people from Barbados, to other destinations, there would be less people coming on international carriers. If less people come on international carriers, it would mean that international carriers would reduce the number of flights and visits they make to Barbados on a weekly basis. If that is done, it would mean that our ability to market Barbados as a destination, through which every international gateway leads to Barbados, would now be somewhat fettered. As a result, our tourism product, which is the backbone of the Barbadian economy, would be fettered as well.

Mr. President, the strategic response of the Government is a sensible one. If the Government is going to give more and more guarantees, we are going to have those guarantees manifested in a corporate environment, in which we get more shareholding in the company. If we have more shareholding in the company, the Government will, therefore, have a greater role, in leading the direction in which LIAT has gone and will go in the future.

Mr. President, the natural concern of the Opposition is that the Government has not articulated sufficiently what is the strategic plan, to bring LIAT out of the rocky road on which it has been but Sir, we must recognise that LIAT is a commercial entity, operating in a highly-competitive environment that is subject to change, almost on a daily basis.

Mr. President, earlier this week, there were several restrictions on air travel. A number of days ago, these restrictions were relaxed. Therefore, as a result of a situation taking place today, in which a United Airlines flight had to be grounded, as a result of a possible or allegedly terrorist link, those restrictions, most likely, would be imposed again, in the space of a week.

Mr. President, the turmoil that is being generated, as a result of these security crises, have, therefore, meant that the airline industry is not one in which predictions and making statements about how an airline would perform... That is not as easy as the Opposition is making it out to be. Therefore, Government cannot come and publicly say what are its strategic plans for a corporate entity, such as LIAT, so that every stakeholder and taxpayer in Barbados could say that he or she understands the specific areas in which LIAT would target for the future.

Mr. President, LIAT operates in a competitive environment and, therefore, Government cannot say publicly what are its strategic plans. Furthermore, if Government were to do that, LIAT's competitors would not tell themselves that this information is only intended for the taxpayers of Barbados and that they would not look at the strategic plans of LIAT. Sir, instead, those competitors would look at those strategic plans and would try to use them to their advantage.

Mr. President, we had a situation in which it was being said that LIAT was under-capitalised, when the corporate structure that it now presently has, had been put in place about four or five years ago. Sir, the truth is that, for many years, LIAT has been funded, as a result of subventions from Government. Therefore, in return for subventions, the Governments of the Caribbean have asked LIAT to perform the role of taking flights into routes, which were not commercially viable.

Mr. President, unfortunately LIAT could not have met a number of its commitments, in terms of its landing fees. When the company was restructured and reorganised, instead of the Governments paying up – and I know that the Barbados Government is not one of them – they wrote-off the arrears that were owed to LIAT, in relation to the landing fees, and the net profit was given to LIAT.

Sir, as a result, LIAT went into a corporate environment, in which it was initially under-capitalised. It had to function in an environment in which another competitor was facilitated, despite the fact that there is a Government of the Caribbean that had a significant shareholding in LIAT, to set up in the same country.

Mr. President, for example, LIAT would love to increase its cargo portfolio but there is no room at the VC Bird International Airport, neither is there any land space available around that airport, for LIAT to extend its cargo facilities. Sir, there was a decision of that Government, to allow the owner of the competitor to purchase all of the real estate around the airport.

Mr. President, these are the hard facts that BWIA must tell the people, and it is not an easy situation that we have to manage. Sir, despite that, LIAT has had to operate in a difficult environment, therefore, the Government has taken the strategic decision that for the viability of the Barbadian to produce and the sustenance of the Barbadian economy and maintaining the fortunes of the thousands of Barbadians, who depend on their living from the good policies and management of this Government, we have had to make an investment in LIAT.

Mr. President, what the Government is doing, is to make sure that within its means, LIAT is properly capitalised and has available, at its disposal, the appropriate resources, so that it would continue to play an important and integral role, both in the international transport industry, as well as the civil aviation industry in Barbados.

Mr. President, I have no difficulty in supporting this Bill and like the Honourable Senators who spoke, I too would like to see more information but Sir, unless we are going to develop a system in which this Parliament, as the

representative of the people, must manage information in relation to LIAT in a sensitive way, we cannot, as a Government, agree that every strategic proposal in relation to LIAT could be brought to the public domain, so that John Public could see it. Sir, this makes no sense.
2.10 p.m.

Nobody is saying that LIAT would continue to operate in a shroud of secrecy but before us today is a Resolution that would accompany this Bill, which we have not gotten to as yet but, to my mind, that Resolution is very detailed in relation to the commitments that would be given by the Government in relation to some of the issues that were raised by the Honourable Leader of Government Business today.

Mr. President, it cannot be said that a 22-page Schedule to a Resolution, which would replace the Schedule to the existing Act, which we would deliberate on later does not comprise sufficient information to deal with the extent of the obligations of Government.

Mr. President, it is all good and well to say that we want to see the bottom line. Sir, what happens when you are presented with a situation with a bottom line? Does the Government make the commercial decision like the Government of Trinidad & Tobago, that they were not putting any more funding in BWIA or LIAT? Do we make that decision? Do we have that luxury in terms of how the economy of Barbados is comprised? Do we have the capacity to say that we are not putting any more resources into LIAT and to let the chips fall where they may? Are we interested in allowing the market mechanisms to determine the future of the airline industry in the Caribbean and the future of our tourism product?

Mr. President, the Government must take a responsible role and this amendment to the Bill, all of the construct support for LIAT (1974) Limited brought to this Parliament has been in the best interest of this country. Sir, nobody is going to tell you that we feel that LIAT is going to turn the corner and become the best airline in the world because there are challenges. It has been badly capitalised from the beginning, some Governments have gotten away scotch-free in relation to backing away from the commitments to LIAT because of its present structure and we now have to make sure that this important and viable entity survives in the context of a different international environment. We are not going to renege on our promises to support LIAT and we are not going to bring any Resolution before this Honourable Parliament which does not make sense.

Mr. President, the Honourable Leader of Government Business was very clear in the reasons this Bill is before us. The Honourable Leader of Government Business was very clear to show what the Government has had to do to negotiate and renegotiate with Bombardier in relation to the leasing arrangements so that the financial burden of paying that money into the escrow account does not hurt the financial position of LIAT.

Sir, if Government is going to guarantee that position, it is better that Government does it this way than for LIAT to take cash which it has to meet its other recurring expenditure over the course of the financial year to meet those commitments with Bombardier. Sir, these are the things that everybody would recognise who read the Schedule to the Bills which we bring here. There is no need for any Draft Strategic Plan as requested by Senator Stuart to be brought here so that everybody can debate the viability of LIAT in the future. Mr. President, as I said, that would not make sense and we would only be selling the guns to the Indian.

Sir, with those few words, I am much obliged and I thank you for the time allowed to me.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Senator Grant.

SENATOR R. W. GRANT: Mr. President, I rise to give my support to this Bill before this Honourable Chamber. Sir, if I appear at the outset to be a bit cautious in what I say, it is because I sat with some amusement and listened to Senator Stuart speak about LIAT, its history and the fact that we have now discussed this four or five times. What was most interesting for me was to hear Senator Stuart speak of the Red Caps at the airport and the concerns which the Democratic Labour Party has in relation to the Red Caps.

Sir, I will get back to that particular issue a little later only to reflect on what I consider the political hypocrisy of the Democratic Labour Party as it relates to workers in this country. Sir, continuously, spokespersons in this Chamber for the Democratic Labour Party always seek to convey the impression that this political Party always has the interest of the workers at heart and that this Party in Government does not. Yet the Democratic Labour Party is the Party which inflicted the most pain and hurt on the workers of this country.

Mr. President, before I deal with that particular issue, I want first to deal with some specific aspects of LIAT. Sir, the issue of aircraft maintenance reserves. Prior to September 11, as the Leader of Government Business pointed out, the issue of aircraft maintenance reserves were dealt with simply by a financial provision made in the accounts of airlines. Mr. President, it did not require any immediate expenditure prior to September 11, 2001.

Mr. President, after September 11, 2001, there was a requirement of small, medium-size and some high-risk airlines that money should be put into an escrow account.

Sir, the facts have to be put to this Chamber, the Honourable Leader of Government Business has made reference to them but I want simply to re-emphasise them. Sir, Bombardier Services Corporation required LIAT to pay US49,600 per month for each plane. LIAT has on lease from Bombardier two aircraft which approximately amounts US$1.2 million per year.

Mr. President, I also wish this Chamber to note that LIAT, as part of its restructuring plan, has sought to renegotiate with its creditors of which Bombardier is one. I believe on a previous occasion that I would have communicated with this Chamber and I will say it again that on June 3, 2005, Bombardier communicated with LIAT that with a Government guarantee, LIAT would be required to pay US$247 186 for a period of 12 months. Sir, this takes into account the issue in relation to the restructuring of the debt which LIAT has with Bombardier. It would also require for a further 24 months the payment of US$172 186 to assist in the settling of the account that LIAT has with Bombardier.

Mr. President, in the absence of a Government guarantee, the monthly payment for the first 12 months would increase to US$445 762 and for the next 24 months to US$370 762. Sir, the point that I am stressing is that LIAT's cashflow position is certainly assisted by the guarantee which the Government of Barbados provides. I think that the point must also be made that the Government's guarantee, does not require any outlay of funds by the Government of Barbados.

2.20 p.m.

Mr. President, we need to ask ourselves some questions, as it relates to air transportation in the region. We have to ask whether as a Government we should provide support for an intra-regional carrier such as LIAT or allow market forces to determine what would happen.

Sir, we are aware that there are some people who believe, that if you allow the market forces to determine what will happen, any void in air transportation would be filled by the private sector. I am not sure that it is as simple and straightforward, as that. I think that there are some things that we have to remember. I know that Senator Stuart may not necessarily want me to repeat these things, but I will.

I have to remind this Honourable Chamber, and remind this Chamber, that Barbados' tourism is dependent on an efficient and effective air transportation system. Air transport is a critical success factor, for our tourism sector.

Mr. President, the CARICOM region is responsible for 15 per cent of arrivals to Barbados. We in the Ministry of Tourism recognise that there is potential for increasing the arrival numbers out of the region. In the same way there is focus on thegrowing the US market, which accounts for about 25 per cent, the Canadian market 15 per cent and the United Kingdom 40 per cent, we can also increase the Caribbean market.

Sir, 15.1 per cent of the arrivals into Barbados is facilitated by LIAT. This is between January and December 2005; 18.8 per cent by BWIA; 16.3 per cent by American Airlines and American Eagle and 14.3 per cent by Caribbean Star. For the period January to June, 2006, 15.24 per cent was facilitated by LIAT; 16.73 per cent by American Airlines and American Eagle; 15.17 per cent by Caribbean Star and 13.86 per cent by BWIA.

In addition to LIAT being a significant intra-regional carrier and of arrivals into Barbados, the point also has to be made that LIAT has the most landings in Barbados, approximately 15 LIAT aircraft land at the Grantley Adams International Airport a day.

Mr. President, LIAT has served this region for over fifty years. It has financial difficulties, which has been spoken to before. LIAT has been under-capitalised. It has service routes that have been unprofitable, but if regional air transport is left to market forces, it would have a significant impact, not only on Barbados but the region.

Sir, with market forces operating, the profit motive is what will be at the forefront and this would negatively impact on Barbados' ability to expand its tourism numbers, certainly it would have a significant impact as it relates to the Caribbean Single Market and Economy. It would have an impact on investment, intra-regional trade and the ability of Barbadians with skills, professionals like Senator Dr. Lowe, to be able to travel throughout the CARICOM region.

Sir, we would wish to ensure that individuals in Barbados are able to earn to their maximum capacity, by having a reliable, an efficient and effective intra-regional carrier.

Mr. President, what would happen if market forces determine the future of air transportation? Those routes that are not profitable will go, and that has an impact, not only on our tourism numbers, but our ability to sell our services in the region, and obviously on our overall economic growth.

Sir, let me spend a few minutes speaking about the profitability of airlines. There is continued talk about financial support and guarantees provided to LIAT and why should we be always putting money into LIAT, as though airlines throughout the globe are making money. Sir, I told this Chamber before that in the first half of 2005, the ten largest airlines in the United States of America lost US$5 billion. The International Air Transport Association (IATA)

in its projection for 2006, has projected that global air transport would suffer a loss of US$2.2 billion. It is going to be more than that. They projected in 2007 a global profit of US$7.2 million. It will not be recognised, because of IATA assumptions of a barrel of crude oil priced at US$56 in 2006 and US$52 in 2007. Sir, we know where the price of crude oil is going, to US$80 a barrel, so it will not be achievable.

Mr. President, let me just comment on air carriers, that fly out of countries with more resources than we have in Barbados. Sir, US Airways, filed for bankruptcy twice and UAL, the parent company of United Airlines, also filed for bankruptcy. Sir, I could stop there but I will go on. Delta airlines filed for bankruptcy. Northwest airlines filed for bankruptcy. BWIA in 2003 lost US$28 million, and in 2004 loss US$140 million. Air Jamaica in 2003 loss US$55 million, and in 2004 loss US$99 million. Sir, I do not know if I should stop yet. I can go on. The Government of the Bahamas pumps money, continuously, into Bahamas Air.
2.30 p.m.

Sir, LIAT, as an intra-regional carrier, and a carrier that was under-capitalised from the beginning, is on a course of recovery. When I heard Senator Stuart speaking, based on the comments coming from the Honourable Senator, one would have thought that nothing is happening with LIAT, and that the Government is simply taxing up the taxpayers' money continuously and giving to LIAT. Sir, that is not the case.

Mr. President, there are significant restructuring initiatives that are taking place at LIAT. I remember, earlier, I believe it was January 1, this year, there was a meeting Chaired by the Prime Minister of Barbados and the Prime Minister of St. Vincent and the Grenadines. Sir, coming out of that meeting, there was a clear statement that it would not be business as usual at LIAT.

Sir, as part of LIAT's overall restructuring programme, there is a Phase 1, which is to bring LIAT to an operational break even point. We are getting there. The anticipation is that later, in the second half of this year, that will be achieved.

Mr. President, let us be conscious that continually in this environment, in the air transport environment, there are constantly challenges. Senator Nicholls spoke of one, today. Mr. President, we know what happened earlier this week. Continuously, there are challenges, in relation to air transport.

Sir, the Democratic Labour Party continues to speak in such a way, as if to suggest that this Government is not dealing seriously with the challenges that exist, and seeking to ensure that we restructure LIAT in such a way that it becomes, not only efficient and effective, but it is also profitable.

Sir, what are some of the actions that have been taken? There was a time when LIAT had in excess of 700 employees. LIAT made a determination to restructure and reform. There was a reduction in the number of staff members. There was the development of a new business plan to improve the performance and the productivity, rationalising the routes, utilising technologies and developing new marketing strategies.

LIAT has had a major sales campaign, targeting the corporate sector, and that is bearing some success. They have launched a new advertising campaign. They are seeking to ensure that they carry out a culture change within the organisation.

Sir, we can talk about the financial aspects, but in order to ensure that we are able to reform LIAT, we have to take people along, a need for a culture change and they are focusing on that. They are engaging in technical training. There is an agreement with BWIA, for the utilisation of stations in places like, Grenada, St. Vincent, St. Lucia, Dominica and St. Kitts. They are improving on their punctuality. At one stage they were 69 per cent and now they are averaging 80 per cent in terms of punctuality. They are not the best and, there is still room for improvement.

Sir, they introduced a new low-cost ticketing system, which had some problems, like most things, when you introduce them for the first time. They introduced ticket-less travel. Sir, all of those measures were in the effort to make LIAT a budget airline.

Mr. President, there can be no question as to the importance of LIAT to the region. I think I dealt with that, effectively. I know in another place, the Minister made a statement on LIAT, as to where we are in terms of the funding that the Government had provided and where, as a country, we wanted to see LIAT go.

Mr. President, I am not going to finish today, without making some reference to the issue of the Red Caps at the Airport, and what Senator Stuart is seeking to communicate as the concerns of the Democratic Labour Party. Sir, I believe that one of the things we need to do is not simply to score political points. I believe that the Democratic Labour Party spokesperson should go to the airport and speak to the Red Caps.

Sir, let me make the point here. The Government of Barbados, through the Ministry of International Transport, and the Grantley Adams International Airport, Inc., will look after the welfare and well-being of the Red Caps at the Grantley Adams International Airport, and make sure that they are not disadvantaged.

Sir, I made the point that Senator Stuart and his colleague Senator, should go and speak to the Red Caps. Mr. President, I went up to the airport and I was speaking to them last night.

Asides.

SENATOR R. W. GRANT: Mr. President, I believe that you do not simply go out there and talk. You listen to the people who matter, and hear what are the issues that affect them. Last night I went to the Grantley Adams International Airport and I was speaking to the Red Caps, they told me that under a former Democratic Labour Party Administration, there was an intention to remove the Red Caps from the Grantley Adams International Airport.

Sir, Senator Stuart should seek to find out why would the Democratic Labour Party, in the mid-1980s, make a determination by its leader at the time, that the Red Caps should be removed from the Grantley Adams International Airport. Sir, that is what they said to me.

SENATOR F. J. STUART: Mr. President, on a point of order. The Honourable Senator is misleading the Chamber. Sir, the mid-1980s would be 1985 when the Barbados Labour Party was in office.

Asides.

SENATOR F. J. STUART: He should say what he means.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Senator, would you during the next two minutes conclude your contribution to the debate on LIAT.

Thank you.

SENATOR R.W. GRANT: Yes, Sir.

Sir, I speak of 1986 and beyond. I know this, when Senator Stuart rose, he could not say that what the Red Caps told me last night, was not true.
2.40 p.m.

Sir, I say to this Chamber and to the people of Barbados that it must be political hypocrisy when you convey an impression of being interested in the Red Caps at the airport essentially only for political gains.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Honourable Senator, you cannot accuse an Honourable Member of hypocrisy. I am asking you to withdraw that word, it is unparliamentary.

SENATOR R. W. GRANT: Sir, I withdraw it with haste.

Mr. President, the Government of Barbados recognises the importance of LIAT to the continued economic growth and development of our country. We are fully in support of this Bill, and I give it my full support.

I thank you, Sir.

SENATOR Dr. D. S. LOWE: Mr. President, I am very pleased to have the opportunity to make my contribution to the debate as well. I really understand Senator Grant's fervour because he speaks as one who has truly been indoctrinated by the Democratic Labour Party, and I am not sure if he now speaks as a member of the Barbados Labour Party or one who in the past has been a tyrant against the Barbados Labour Party.

Mr. President, the truth is that the Democratic Labour Party has never indicated that it does not understand the significance of the continuance of LIAT because we understand that the direction of the region dictates that there is a viable regional carrier that would provide the essential air transport services that would give life to the region's attempt to integrate and to become a single market. We understand that. The Democratic Labour Party does not deny the fact that LIAT is important to the region.

Mr. President, all we have been asking for is that if the taxpayers of Barbados are asked to 'cough up' the kind of money that we have been asked to do consistently to LIAT, that the Government gives a report card as to whether or not these funds are achieving the objectives.

Mr. President, in any kind of management of business, one understands that when you have to place an investment in that business that accountability requires that you continue to inform those persons who are contributing to the investment as to whether or not the investment is meeting its burden.

Sir, the Democratic Labour Party will continue to be vigilant in its request that if the taxpayers of Barbados are asked consistently to support LIAT, that LIAT comes up with a report card to tell us whether or not the objectives that we are funding are being met.

Mr. President, I heard Senator Grant talking about the fact that a significant restructuring programme is on the way. Mr. President, we have not said there is not, but there has been no quantitative or qualitative data presented to this Chamber as to whether or not that restructuring programme is succeeding. Mr. President, if you are a traveller on LIAT from time to time you ask yourself whether or not the investment is succeeding. Mr. President, a lot of what

Senator Grant called the teething problems are not being played out in the quality of service that you meet at LIAT from time to time.

Mr. President, all airlines have a difficulty and all airlines carriers have their moments where they lose your baggage and where you have difficulties in making connection*, et cetera*. Sir, the only point that the Democratic Labour Party wishes to make is that it would be considered irresponsible on our part if we do not continue to ensure that these millions of dollars being invested into LIAT are realising the objectives that they are intended.

Mr. President, LIAT has an institutional problem that is rooted in its administration. LIAT has a problem that is contributing to organisational dysfunction. I would have wished that the Honourable Senator Grant would have articulated what kind of diagnosis and what kind of road map that this airline intends to pursue.

Mr. President, there are issues, and you know that even now in spite of all of the restructuring that is happening, that there are still a number of industrial issues to be worked out with LIAT, there are still a number of issues as to whether or not the new airline doctor is going to be able to prescribe the medication that would solve the problem. Mr. President, we will not sit in this Chamber and allow anyone to discourage us from asking the Government to bring the report card on the progress of LIAT relative to the alleviation of some of the problems that have been contributing to its dysfunction.

Mr. President, when you look at institutions and you begin to examine institutional dysfunction, you have to look at leadership, at the deployment of human resources, the overall strategy of the institution, and you have to look at the objectives and the goals of the institutions and see whether or not the strategies are commensurate with those goals.

Mr. President, you have to take a very detailed look at the various spheres of operation within an institution to be able to detect where the real institutional maladies are. I would have hoped, Mr. President, that the Honourable Senator Grant in all of his fervour, in all of his enthusiasm, in the expending of his perspiration...

Mr. PRESIDENT: I am not sure you want to say that, Senator.

SENATOR Dr. D. S. LOWE:...well, in his sweating, Mr. President, would have been able to tell us in the best way that here are the issues that we have been able to catalogue as the problems in the airline and here is how our money, the taxpayers of Barbados, would be able to alleviate the problems. I understand the restlessness, but that is okay.

Mr. President, it is important to the man out there on the street who is contributing to this $22 million, who might never be able to walk into this Chamber and make a presentation, that those of us who are the Members of this Honourable Chamber do everything within our power to satisfy their queries about whether or not the Government of Barbados is just throwing good money behind a bad project. We have decided that what is necessary is that we continue to be able to ensure that this airline, which is essential to the region, has an opportunity to recover.

Mr. President, my colleague, Senator Stuart, made an outstanding presentation. Mr. President, we are going to continue to keep vigilance as it relates to the business of Government because we know that this Government believes that the Opposition should bring proposals but when the Government is asked essential questions on transparency and accountability, the Government does not feel responsible to give us the answers. Mr. President, I make the plea that Government gives us the answers that we are asking for, and then we would be able to do what we have to do to ensure that we are allowing the people of Barbados to know what is important to them.

Mr. President, the issue of the Red Caps is a niggling issue. I am very happy that Senator Grant was able to go to the airport last night to see the Red Caps. Mr. President, I heard in this Chamber today from Senator Linton that when the Red Caps are not paid what they asked for, that they throw your baggage.
2.50 p.m.

Mr. President, I think that is really the cannibalisation of the Red Caps in the worst kind of way. Sir, in my experiences of travel, coming through the airport or going out of the airport, whether on LIAT or otherwise, I have never, ever, had a problem in the handling of my bags. The problem with LIAT was that very often, persons would have reached their destinations and their bags would have been somewhere else.

Mr. President, the Red Caps at the airport are working-class individuals, who seek to help make the LIAT service a positive experience, from beginning to end. Sir, therefore, for anyone to stand up and to try to vilify the Red Caps, by suggesting that if they are not given what they ask for, they would throw people's bag, is perhaps the reason why they are being treated with such contempt in their profession, at this time.

Mr. President, when we look at how people are treated, whether they are persons using the airline service or persons who provide the services as airline hostesses, it all comes back to the way people are led. It is, therefore, important that when you would want to straighten out an institution,

that you would look at the leadership of that institution. You cannot escape the fact that in trying to clean up LIAT and in setting it on a path of continuous productivity and good operational management, that you have to look at leadership.

Mr. President, when one looks at the airport situation, when one looks at the situation with the Red Caps one would have to understand why one person has one version of what should obtain and another person has another version of what should be obtained. Therefore, you have to ask yourself, who is really in charge of the Grantley Adams International Airport. Sir, as long as we intend to address the LIAT issue, as long as we intend to ensure that Barbados sets the best example of management and leadership, we have to address the issue of the Red Caps and the leadership of the airport.

Mr. President, it does not matter what the Other Side might say, the role of this Opposition is not to reinforce this Government's position that they may stay in office. The role of this Opposition is to make sure that, at the end of the day, every Barbadian should feel satisfied that he or she has been given a fair chance to know what is happening with their money, as it is spent in this country.

Mr. President, it does not matter what others might think the Opposition should or should not do. The fact is that the Opposition is very satisfied that its job is to ensure that what happens in this Parliament of Barbados, that as long as we have a role to play, we will play our role. The Government needs to understand that even if the Red Caps service is becoming obsolete, it cannot just dismiss and dump the Red Caps, in place of bringing carts and displacing them.

Sir, for all and sundry, they must know this is 2006, and that if a reference to justify the Government's action has to be drawn from the middle of the 1980s, it is a sad story of where this Government is, relative to the way it is treating the people in this country. Sir, at the end of the day, the people of Barbados would tell their story.

Mr. President, LIAT will always be supported, as long as it is producing the returns. Sir, anybody who wants to invest, without ensuring that the returns are commensurate with the effort and input, anyone who fails to take that level of insight into the management of any company, any organisation or institution, is a person, perhaps, not worthy of being considered in a position of leadership.

Mr. President, as the Honourable Member would have a chance to come back and wrap up this debate, my final question to the Government would be this: Is the Government prepared to come back in a year from now and ask us for another $22 million, to inject into LIAT, without telling the country whether or not its investment is yielding returns that would improve the quality of service of LIAT and make flying in the Caribbean skies a lot more enjoyable than it tends to be at times now?" Mr. President, I want the Government to tell us about that.

Therefore, in spite of the fact that other people might want to keep noise, that is okay but the fact is that we are the taxpayers of this country and Government has to account for every cent that it spends. In addition, every effort which the Government puts forth, is put forth on the behalf of the people and not just the Cabinet of Barbados or the people who make up the Barbados Labour Party supporters. It is for every man and woman in this country, regardless of his or her political affiliation or station in life. Therefore, we have the right to question the Government, even at the discomfort of the Government supporters. Mr. President, Government must produce the evidence.

Mr. President, there are too many times when Bills and Resolutions come to this Honourable Chamber, and the Government does not provide supportive evidence to show whether or not what it is doing is working, according to the plan. Sir, in these circumstances, we would have to be an irresponsible Opposition not to question the Government. Therefore, I believe we have made our case. I believe the Red Caps have the right to survive, the right to earn and the right to be integrated in a system, if it is perceived that what they are now doing is becoming obsolete in the new world of international transport.

Mr. President, if the Government chooses to say that, then I believe we would be on a good road and that perhaps, rather than contributing to learned helplessness on the part of LIAT, we would be contributing to empowering the airline, to be able to do its business better, to do it more efficiently and to do it more productively, where it could achieve the outcomes that are required.

Mr. President, I thank you.

SENATOR THE HON. E. R. GRIFFITH: Mr. President, there is no one on This Side, who has a problem with any Opposition Senators questioning Government about how it proposes to spend the taxpayers money. What we have a problem with, is the fact that during his statement, Senator Lowe continued to make reference to $22 million. Sir, there is no amount in this Bill or Resolution before us. Therefore, it is clear to me that Senator Lowe is a little mixed up in what he is saying, and this does not surprise me.

Mr. President, the matter before us is simply an effort to assist LIAT in its restructuring programme, to enable it to carry on its business, without undue burden. It is now strange that persons who say they are supportive of LIAT, who want to know how the taxpayers money is being

spent, do not recognise they have before them the opportunity to assist LIAT in implementing that restructuring programme and in rising above its present financial circumstances.

Mr. President, as I indicated in my introductory speech, Bombardier was requesting that LIAT should put into an escrow account, on a monthly basis, US$49 600, so that they could have it at the end of the lease arrangement, to repair the aircraft, in the event that they would have suffered any damage. Mr. President, based on the fact that LIAT now leases two aircraft from Bombardier, this approach would mean that LIAT would have to put that money, US$1.2 million, into an account on an annual basis, for the life of the lease. Sir, in a situation where LIAT is trying to improve its financial obligations, that was considered to be an enormous burden.

Mr. President, what Government is seeking to do, is to provide a guarantee, so that during its cash flow difficulties, LIAT would not have to be putting aside that money. This is an effort to assist in the restructuring programme. Therefore, I cannot imagine how persons on the Other Side, could have failed to see the matter before us and who would have spent their time talking about matters that we have already spoken about, at the time when Government was increasing its shareholding in the airline, that was the time when the Opposition should be raising the issues which they are raising today. Clearly, they have missed the boat and have also missed the plane as well.
3.00 p.m.

Asides.

SENATOR THE HON. E. R. GRIFFITH: Sir, that does not surprise me because, Mr. President, when the restructuring programme for LIAT was announced some two years ago, it was known to everybody, there was no secret about it. The airline is now nearing the completion of Phase I of the restructuring so it is not new. I am surprised that persons, who want to speak with such authority on these matters, do not follow what is taking place on the issue. The airline is reaching the end of Phase I and there are a number of measures which have been put in place between 2004 and now as part of the implementation of the restructuring programme.

Mr. President, the first issue which was dealt with relates to the issue before us today, that is, that LIAT sets about renegotiating its arrangements with its major creditors, Bombardier is one. Senator Grant spoke at length about the enormous and extraordinary payments which Bombardier was asking LIAT to make. He pointed out that through efforts like this one before us, LIAT would be saved those burdens.

The implementation and restructuring programme for the benefit of Senator Stuart is reflected in the proposed action before us today, that is, that by providing the guarantee, LIAT would be saved the trouble of having to put aside US$49 600 per month, and that instead the Government would give Bombardier a guarantee that when the lease is out that LIAT would be allowed to return the aircraft in the agreed state because they would have been maintained over the period of the lease.

Mr. President, the first thing which LIAT set about doing was rearranging and rescheduling its debt and other arrangements with its major creditors. I do not expect that every time an issue comes before this Chamber about LIAT that you have to go back and say that. It was said before, and we will say it now but I will bet you that the next time an issue comes up about LIAT that persons would claim that they do not know what is the restructuring programme. Sir, Senator Grant spoke about a number of them.

Mr. President, during the last year, I traveled by LIAT numerous times through the region and I can tell anyone without any fear of contradiction that there has been a significant increase in LIAT's timekeeping.

Asides.

SENATOR THE HON. E. R. GRIFFITH: Mr. President, that is because of the decision of LIAT that it would try to make sure that its flight can take off within 15 minutes after the scheduled time at the latest and this is what they are waiting for. The competitors are talking about half hour but LIAT is striving for 15 minutes. Sir, to date, LIAT has improved its records significantly, where on occasions, it is achieving 85 per cent. There is a marked improvement and it is not fair for anyone in 2006 to be judging LIAT and any support for it on 1974. Sir, the problem with us is that we tend to dwell in the past and refuse to acknowledge that the past is not reflected in the present and will surely not be reflected in the future.

Mr. President, there are other issues. LIAT, as part of its restructuring programme, reviewed its entire travel arrangements and identified the journeys which were considered profitable and those which were considered unprofitable and took the decision that certain routes that are not profitable would have to be brought to an end, unless the persons who wanted those routes serviced would provide the funds to cover the losses. This is another effort being made by LIAT to rearrange its business and there are several others.

Mr. President, the point is that the restructuring programme is not about to start but nearing the completion of Phase I and then there is Phase II. Sir, all of us who say that we support LIAT and that we recognise the

importance of LIAT continuing its operations in the region, that they want to know about the restructuring programme, do not have any reason not to support this matter before us.

Mr. President, I was amazed to hear Senator Dr. Lowe expecting someone to produce concrete evidence now of how the airline doctor was going to succeed in the future but, Sir, that is an impossible task, even for a genius and not even a soothsayer can get it done.

Mr. President, one would have to give the gentleman time because if I have just conveyed to the Honourable Chamber a number of the aspects of the road map to show that the airline is implementing various measures to improve its operation, working towards the objective, which Senator Grant mentioned, of becoming operationally viable over a period of time and now to be asked to produce a road map for the CEO is really a little difficult.

Mr. President, the road map is already there, so I have a little difficulty in understanding the issue, except that it may be a political issue rather than an issue of proper management of the financial resources of the company.

Mr. President, LIAT continues to provide a worthwhile service to Barbados and to the region. The airline is putting in place measures to improve its operations, it will continue to do so and it deserves our support as it strives to improve overall in the region.

Mr. President, on that basis, 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 on the Bill, Madam DEPUTY PRESIDENT in the Chair.
3.09 p.m.

Clauses 1 and 2 were called and passed.

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

On the separate motions of SENATOR THE HON. E. R. GRIFFITH, the Bill was read the third time and passed and cited as the LIAT (1974) Limited (Guarantee) Amendment Act, 2006.

ORDER NO. 7 – RESOLUTION TO APPROVE THE GUARANTEE BY THE GUARANTEE OF THE GOVERNMENT, IN FAVOUR OF BOMBARDIER SERVICES CORPORATION OF THE PERFORMANCE BY LIAT (1974) OF AIRCRAFT MAINTENANCE, RETURN CONDITION OBLIGATIONS AND REPOSSESSION CONTAINING THE TERMS AND CONDITIONS AS SET OUT IN THE SCHEDULE TO THE RESOLUTION

Mr. PRESIDENT: Senator Griffith.

SENATOR THE HON. E. R. GRIFFITH: Mr. President, this Resolution is related to the matter which we just discussed and with all the remarks which were made, I feel that we have exhausted all the discussion on this matter. Unless others Honourable Members feel otherwise, I beg to move that this Resolution do now pass.

The question was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

On the motion of SENATOR THE HON. E. R. GRIFFITH, the Resolution was passed.

ORDER NO. 8 – RESOLUTION TO APPROVE THE GUARANTEE BY THE GOVERNMENT OF THE PAYMENT OF THE PRINCIPAL SUM OF TWENTY-TWO MILLION DOLLARS AND INTEREST THEREON IN RESPECT OF A BOND ISSUED BY THE TRANSPORT BOARD TO RBTT MERCHANT BANK LIMITED

Mr. PRESIDENT: Senator Griffith.

SENATOR THE HON. E. R. GRIFFITH: Mr. President, I now understand where Senator Lowe got the $22 million. His mind was at the Transport Board while we were discussing LIAT. I must apologise for saying that he missed the plane. I think that he was ahead of the plane. If he had caught the bus, it was ahead of the plane.

Sir, it is a good thing that he caught the bus, because the Transport Board is an institution which is very often maligned by a number of persons in this country, while at the same time praising it. It is remarkable that at one moment we are all saying what a service it is providing, we are identifying additional services which should be provided and pointing out additional routes which will be covered and so on, then in a twinkling of an eye, we find fault when the financial support that is required, to provide these services...

My view is, we in this country have to make up our minds as to what type of transport system we want and

how we view any such system. Do we expect the Transport Board to service every route in Barbados throughout the day, especially when very few people are travelling, and still operate as if it is a commercial entity? Of course, we all expect it to operate in a manner which will result in little or no subvention from the Government, but I fail to see how we could expect the Transport Board to cover all the routes in Barbados, profitable and unprofitable, to run a scheduled service with no rerouting when it is clear there are no waiting commuters, as experienced with the others. I have also seen them turning around when they recognise that there are no customers ahead and so on. I notice that some of them do not run the routes after a certain hour of the day. The Transport Board is not expected to follow that practice. It is expected to continue service throughout the day according to the schedule. It is expected to go into every nook and cranny, across Barbados, whether there are large numbers of persons living there or not. Yet we somehow expect it to work the miracle that it will still be profitable in the same way as if it was making commercial decisions.

Mr. President, we have to make up our minds to decide whether we want the Transport Board to be as successfully financial as possible, or to make sure that persons in rural Barbados, in particular, would have access to service that enables them to make their journeys to and fro whenever they choose.

Sir, if we expect it to provide that extra service, which on its own will not be viable commercially, then we will have to give it support by way of subvention. Mr. President, it currently enjoys a small subvention from the Government, small within the context of the operation of the institution, and that amount of money is approximately $7 million.

Mr. President, what is before us is a proposal for the Government to guarantee a loan provided by RBTT Merchant Bank Limited, to enable the Transport Board to purchase an additional seventy buses. Currently, the Transport Board has approximately 240 buses. Unfortunately, they seldom succeed in scheduling all of those buses on the various routes at any given time. At the moment they achieve in the vicinity of 170 per day, which is still very significant and substantial. The additional seventy buses, when received by the end of December 2006, will bring them to 310 nearer to their goal, for them to have buses in excess of what are required, for their daily journeys and so on. They will get there eventually.

Mr. President, this facility being provided by RBTT, will allow them to make those purchases, improve their operations and to cover the various routes across Barbados.

I have visited a number of countries where there are bus services. First, I would say that in spite of any deficiencies in our system, we do have a good system. There is always room for improvement, no matter what area of operation we are looking at. Therefore, there is room for improvement here.

Sir, I would like to see the day when the Transport Board implements a schedule, where a person can approach a bus stop on the basis of the schedule, and board a bus at the time identified on the schedule. I certainly lived in countries, where that is done. On a daily basis I was able to travel by the bus. I left home at a particular time, knowing that when I reach the bus stop and at a certain hour I would get a bus. 3.20 p.m.

The bus would reach where I had to get off at a particular time, so that I could make my connection. I was able to buy that schedule at the beginning of every year, and it was valid for a whole year. I knew wherever I could get a bus, at whatever time, on every day of the year, including Christmas and Easter. I would certainly like us to reach that stage one of these days. It may be long in coming but I hope that we will work towards that, and I would like to see that for the entire bus service, not only in the Transport Board.

Sir, if we have a bus service that includes private operators, they too, in my view, should be expected to run scheduled services. They should not be allowed to stop running when they think they are not going to make any money, or turn back on the route and leave others standing at the bus stop. They ought to be required to provide the service and, if they cannot provide it, let somebody else do so.

Sir, certainly from the point of view of the taxpayers, whose money go into the Transport Board, we would expect the Transport Board to continue to improve its efficiency. Sir, no one can deny that within recent years, the Transport Board has made a significant improvement in its operation.

I am sure, Mr. President, you would permit me to say that a lot of the credit for that, has to go to Senator Gooding-Edghill, who is the Chairman of the Board and who, in my view, has been doing a fantastic job, in helping that organisation to rise to the occasion. Therefore, we should give our support to it by approving this Resolution before us, so that the Transport Board can be put into the position, where it has access to an increased number of buses, so that it can continue to provide the required service for commuters across the country.

On that basis then, Mr. President, I support this Resolution and beg to move that the Resolution do now pass.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Senator Dr. Lowe.

SENATOR Dr. D. S. LOWE: Thank you, Mr. President.

The Resolution before us is very important, in the context of how we see the Transport Board playing its role in the society. Sir, as the Honourable Minister quite rightfully said, that if you view the Transport Board as a revenue generating entity, that somehow would influence how you view how it should be financed and how it should be managed.

Sir, if you view it as the provider of a social good, then one would also have to look at the philosophical framework and try to articulate the role of the State, in seeking to keep the operations of the Transport Board efficient and effective, as it seeks to provide such a valuable social service to the country, as it seeks to allow the country to realise its full capacities, relative to human capital, relative to productivity, and relative to the ability to fulfill its mandate.

Mr. President, let me begin by saying that there are scores of very dedicated, very loyal employees of the Transport Board who, during their time, have provided valuable service to this country, through the Board. I want to say that the Democratic Labour Party recognises the efforts of these employees, in seeking to fulfill the mandate of the Transport Board, and applauds them wholeheartedly for the kind of the work they do, at times under strenuous circumstances, as it relates to the operational life of the Transport Board.

Mr. President, I say that because I have lived through, so far in my tender life, public transport when it was operated by the Rocklyn Transport and the Elite Bus Company. I realised that there has been a transition from one level of public transport to the current level we have, in the Transport Board.

I recall very well that in those days, not so very long ago, the bus service in Barbados seemed to be something that when you observe it, was conducted with a certain level of predictability, relative to buses getting to destinations. At the time, of course, the service was managed, not only by a chauffeur but also by a conductor, a person who was also responsible, then, there were persons called checkers. I am quite sure that many of you in this Chamber who are not as tender in age as I am, would remember that these persons would have been a key part of ensuring that the service was conducted with some measure of efficiency.

I grew up in St. Andrew, not too far from the Rocklyn Bus Company. I would recall how, from time to time, buses would get to certain destinations, a little off time and how the checkers, those persons who were responsible for ensuring that those time factors were honoured, would demonstrate a level of disappointment. They would be upset that these important time frames were not kept.

My view is that then, the service was not considered to be as mechanical and as impersonal, as in some cases today, and there was a significant human factor that always almost undergirded the provision of that important public transport, to the citizens of Barbados.

Mr. President, I would like to go on record as saying that, I believe those persons at the Transport Board currently, are genuinely seeking to uplift the level and quality of the service. I would also go on record as to say that those persons who are responsible for making decisions, and ensuring that the fleet of buses remain up to standard, relative to being able to provide the service that is needed to be provided, and that a lot of the management services seem to be pointing in a direction, where those who are responsible for leading the service, understand that there is a national urgency in trying to wean the Transport Board from a lot of the maladies that it has experienced over the years.

We would be less than honest and gracious to say that a lot of the issues in the Transport Board are issues that have lived across political generations. We would have to admit, Mr. President, that if we are going to be able to go forward, because the Transport Board is our business – it is not the Barbados Labour Party's business or the Democratic Labour Party's business, it is the business of this country – to ensure that all the necessary measures are put in place, and all of the services required are put at the disposal of those persons who are responsible for the delivery of the bus service. It is our business to ensure that these persons are given every opportunity to make real the expectation of travellers on the public bus service.
3.30 p.m.

Mr. President, we know that there are people who have come to a position where they would rather drive on a ZR van or a minibus than to take a Transport Board bus. We also know that there are persons out there who, even if they have to wait 15 minutes behind arrival time at a particular location, will wait there for the Transport Board bus to get to their next destination, I think that is important. Mr. President, that is the kind of expectation that I believe that the Transport Board must be enabled to deliver in order for us to realise the kind of bus service in this country that is predictable, that is undergirded by good customer service and that have an operational level of efficiency that would allow it to continue to move from strength to strength.

Mr. President, as we contemplate this Resolution for the Transport Board, we have to ask ourselves if we see it as a social good. We must ask ourselves what is the level of contribution of the Transport Board to the development of human capital, whether it relates to getting children to school, whether it relates to getting students to university

or whether it relates to getting people across the country to various points of training. Mr. President, whatever domain of social development it covers, we have to ask ourselves if we value the contribution of the Transport Board to the level where we understand that building national capacity requires having a viable transit system owned and operated by the State.

Mr. President, I think that is important because it is my view that social development and social enablement require the State to have every possible tier of social service provision so that individuals who may otherwise not be able to get from point A to point B, because they do not have personal transportation, would not be disadvantaged in the society because you have a service that is inefficient and unreliable.

The second point that I wish to make in terms of this social good is that the Transport Board, in providing its service, also contributes to productivity. Mr. President, we know that if you are scheduled to arrive at work by 7.30 a.m., and depending on your original point to get there, we would have to agree that to be able to predict that the bus is going to get there to pick you up on time to get you to your destination on time is critical.

Mr. President, a lot of things have happened in this society. A lot of issues have impacted upon transportation of all modes and a lot of issues have impacted upon the whole matter of traffic management that also impacts upon the Transport Board's ability to deliver the service. We know now that there are many more cars on the roads than they were when the Rocklyn Bus Company was in vogue. We know that there is a lot of development going on where there is a lot more movement early in the morning of transporting workers and so on that would also impede the progress of transportation. We also know that there are a lot more people on the road requiring the bus service than would have been the case many years ago.

Mr. President, all of these factors have to be taken into account if we are going to be able to come up with a pretty reliable qualitative and quantitative analysis as to what may be some of the impediments affecting the Transport Board and what could be done to alleviate many of those impediments.

Mr. President, if we see the Transport Board as simply a revenue generating organisation, then our approach in ensuring that it has the capital to deliver the services that are required would be different from if we see it as a critical social service. I would want to suggest that even though we may view it as a social good service that we must still hold the Board accountable for the effective delivery of services and that we must still do our audits within the Transport Board to ensure that those persons who are required to deliver those services are doing so with the highest level of efficiency.

Mr. President, when we talk about workers' performance in Barbados, we cannot just analyse it from a perspective of competence, we also have to look at whether or not the work environment has set any impediments in place that disallow competent people from performing services at the level of competence they are capable. Sir, we have to look at mitigating circumstances within the confines or the culture of the institution and we have to do a serious audit to ensure that we understand exactly what may be impacting upon the quality of service of the Transport Board.

Mr. President, we hear people all the time complaining about this and about that. We hear people talk a lot about the Transport Board and the quality of drivers and the quality of buses. We hear people talk about the number of buses you see broken down in a given week in a given area. We hear people talk about route and route management and the fact that sometimes you see the larger buses filling routes that would more adequately be filled by the smaller buses. People complain about these issues because they complain from a position of what they see.

Mr. President, I am happy that we have in this Honourable Chamber, the Honourable Senator Gooding-Edghill, who is the Chairman of the Board and who would be able to shed some light on these operational issues.

Mr. President, I believe that at the end of the day it would be important for us to allow the public to know from a position where the person who is informing the public understands the inner workings of the Transport Board so that they could have a better perspective of how to appreciate some of the challenges that the Board faces and how to work with the Board as passengers in helping, not to exacerbate those issues, but to help to alleviate them, so that when the Board does its quality surveys and its focus groups, it could focus its customers on some of those matters and the customers should be able to give expression to some of those issues.

Mr. President, from our perspective, the real issue is not whether the Government should fund the Board or not or should provide this $22 million. As a matter of fact, I would say that if the Government of Barbados can be so forthwith, and with careful reason, to support or to prop up LIAT, there could be no question that working to keep the Transport Board viable, in my view, is an equally important endeavour by the Government.

Mr. President, I believe that it is important for all of us to acknowledge that at the end of the day the building of a society, the creating of equality into the society, the

enabling of citizens to be able not to be disadvantaged because they do not have certain things in the society and the commitment to ensure that the society is fair and just and that all men and women in the society have an equal opportunity to build up themselves would make it important for the Government to understand that not just saving the Transport Board but to make it as viable and as functional as possible is absolutely critical in this day and age.

Mr. President, I believe that when we begin to look at the catalogue of concerns that have been shared in the public domain are some of which we have experienced ourselves either by relating experiences of other people, or whatever the case might be, that there are some real issue, for example, the whole area of route management.

Mr. President, the Transport Board has been extending itself through its service to reach all quarters of this country, to reach potential passengers and customers. Sir, but one of the things that customers have complained about and one of the things that you may hear coming from employees, in particular operators, is that when a route has been adjusted, it is necessary for the persons who managed the routes to adjust the times that persons have to get to and from those routes on time. Mr. President, and if there is an extension of a route, automatically you would have to extend the time period that the operator would need to be able to manage that route without putting himself, the Transport Board's property, or the travellers at risk.
3.40 p.m.

Mr. President, I think that is one of the areas, as I have observed in recent times, that the management of the Board has been looking at, in terms of ensuring those important issues are taken care of.

Mr. President, from time to time, one would find there are turning points on some routes, where smaller buses are able to maneouver better than the larger buses. Sir, I am quite sure the Honourable Senator Gooding-Edghilll would agree that someone has to be able to manage the delivery of the service, and not simply from Head Office or from a bus terminal but that it is necessary for them to travel these routes themselves, to see if there are any potential impediments that would impact upon the quality of service or that would negatively impact on the perception and the level of satisfaction of the customers.

Mr. President, another issue is that of maintenance. Sir, I think that perhaps one of the biggest challenges in the Transport Board, in recent times, has been the area of maintaining the equipment, making sure that an adequate number of buses are on the road continuously, and that there is a minimum of disruption in the service, as a result of any breakdowns, sustained breakdowns or unavailability of equipment.

Mr. President, I remember when the transition from the Rocklyn Bus Service to that of the Transport Board occurred. At the time, those buses were red and silver coloured. I am quite sure that history would tell that and that the Chairman is fully aware of that.

Asides.

SENATOR Dr. D. S. LOWE: Mr. President, I remember there used to be a few enclosed Transport Board buses. I remember the Transport Board then had a number of buses called Leyland buses, which were as durable as you could have found them. In some cases, some of them travelled the hills of St. Andrew frequently on their routes. I recall there was another type of bus called the Sedan, which was also another reliable piece of machinery.

Mr. President, I am only making the point that those who are responsible for selecting the buses, must ensure that all of the conditions, under which those buses must operate, are taken into full consideration, so that there would be no need to have incompatibility between the requirements of the buses, to operate in the conditions of Barbados, and the buses capacity to be able to meet those operational requirements.

Mr. President, I am quite sure that those who are the planners of the Transport Board would take those things into consideration but for the record we want to put that on the table. We also want to ask ourselves, when the buses are ordered, is there a suitable ordering of parts for those buses, at the same time. In other words, a total of 71 buses could be ordered, and one of the buses could be used to supply parts, in cases of breakdowns. There needs to be an availability of spare parts. Sir, one of the reasons the Transport Board graveyard is so plenteous with dead buses, is because parts are not readily available.

Asides.

SENATOR Dr. D. S. LOWE: Mr. President, I am not saying this is due to any act of negligence. I am saying that very often, when buses are ordered, there is the need to ensure that parts are readily available. I do not care if, when purchasing those buses, the ratio is 71 buses to 5, where those 5 buses would be used as spare parts. I do not care if it is 71 to l0 or 70 to 100 but the Transport Board must make sure that the parts are readily available because that would reduce the downtime for buses, when small and minor things happen.

Mr. President, I have certain knowledge that there are cases where small things on vehicles cannot be immediately replaced because of the fact that they are not readily available.

Asides.

SENATOR Dr. D. S. LOWE: Mr. President, I do not know what is the worry amongst the Members on the Other Side. Therefore, the point is that you have to be able to ensure that there is an adequate supply of parts, whether they are axils, tyres or lights, whatever the case may be.

Sir, frankly speaking, I am tired of seeing Transport Board buses working with one taillight out. I am sure that the Honourable Senator Gooding-Edghill would agree that, from time to time, buses would go into the terminal and would be flagged for some malfunction but that by the time the other shift turns over, that bus would go back out on the road.

Asides.

SENATOR Dr. D. S. LOWE: Mr. President, that is not a story, that is a fact. The reason it happens, is that there might not be the availability of the parts required to work those buses, as immediately as possible.

Mr. President, this Government has said that we do not offer suggestions. We are here seeking to suggest to the Honourable Chairman of the Transport Board, that he needs to ensure that whatever the case might be, to make the Transport Board fully operational or as much as possible, the availability of parts must be there.

Mr. President, if you talk to some of the operators there, they would tell you that one of the biggest headaches they have, is that when small things need to be done, they cannot be done expeditiously and that, from time to time, that bus might have been a good bus, which could be otherwise used but that they have to wait for weeks, sometimes for months before that bus could become fully operational.

Mr. President, I heard the General Manager of the Transport Board say recently that they are now reducing that time lag because they have been addressing issues related to the availability of parts. Sir, that is something that needs to be looked at and something that needs to be done.

Mr. President, I know it is possible to have a bus service that gets to its destination on time, one that could be predicted. I heard the Honourable Leader of Government Business talking about the fact that, in other places, persons could get a bus schedule and if the schedule says the bus would be there for 9.50, that by 9.50, that bus is going to be there. Sir, this service would be operating in climates where there is winter, as you would be operating here where there is a rainy season. Sir, the worst time of the year is operating during the winter but yet the level of efficiency is unbelievable, relative to how they are able to manage that.

Mr. President, the Transport Board has an arrangement with a maintenance company – and I do not know – but perhaps the Honourable Senator Gooding-Edghill or the Honourable Leader of Government Business could tell us whether or not that contract is producing the level of efficient service, relative to the servicing of the Transport Board buses.

Asides.

SENATOR Dr. D. S. LOWE: Mr. President, I would like to know that and I am sure that because of the level of efficiency of the Chairman of the Board, he would be able to tell us what is the status on that. Sir, we need to know. If that organisation is not producing the quality of service required to keep the fleet functional, then it might be the time for the Transport Board to look at other options, to ensure that the customer does not suffer, while they are waiting on a company that gets paid to do a job, for them not to do the job as efficiently as is required.

Mr. President, in terms of maintenance, there is the whole idea of logging efficiencies on buses. I believe, as I understand it, there should be a catalogue on all Transport Board buses that tells you the date of the last service and the date of the new service and that once those buses have reached that date, even if they are running as well as they could, they should be brought in for servicing.

Mr. President, that is the point I am making because very often, the truth of the matter is that some buses are overworked and are not meeting the maintenance requirements, which could contribute to the unnecessary wear and tear of parts. Sir, this could otherwise be avoided, if there was a consistent maintenance schedule for those buses.

SENATOR G. P. I. GOODING-EDGHILL: On a point of order. Mr. President, I did not want to interrupt the Honourable Senator, only to reassure this Senate and the public at large, to the fact that there is, in fact, a maintenance programme at the Transport Board. In fact, it is computerised and well-documented.

Mr. PRESIDENT: I will treat that as a point of order. Please proceed, Senator.
3.50 p.m.

SENATOR Dr. D. S. LOWE: Mr. President, I am happy that the Honourable Senator Gooding-Edghill is eager to respond to the question. I am sure he will have a chance to address the Honourable Chamber in his presentation but, Mr. President, the question I was asking is whether or not it was in place. I was not disputing that it was not in place and that if it is in place, what can be done to ensure that those persons who manage the catalogue, follow the stipulations relative to making sure that the equipment is spotted, flagged, repaired or maintained and that it gets back on the road in fine working condition.

Mr. President, let me go on to say that the other area which is important in terms of how the Government perceives the Transport Board is the whole area of customer services. Sir, I would go on record as saying that I am aware that the Transport Board has been investing a lot of energy in the area of customer services, not only as it relates to how the operators of the equipment, handle their customer but in terms of the terminal.

Sir, I have travelled by bus in more than one country and I know when you go to the terminal there is an information booth that you can get any piece of information to know where you need to get in the country. There are also booths set up in different locations which are strategic points, not necessarily in the terminal where, for example, if tourists leave the Port and on their way out they want to get information on a bus route, they are sometimes placed intermediate booths where such persons can get the information they need. You would not want a tourist or, for that matter, anybody to walk all the way up town to Fairchild Street to find information when it might be more functional in terms of the service provided to allow those persons to have access to that kind of information. Again, Sir, this is a suggestion if it is not in place. I am not saying that it is not in place but I would like it to be addressed because I hear people raised questions from time to time about the efficiency with which information is provided relative to how buses run from place to place in that regard.

Mr. President, I believe that the Transport Board is an entity that has to be put in the best possible position to succeed. I believe it is important that as we go forward in terms of seeking to continue to advance the social wellness of our people and to bring them into contact with all of the available services and opportunities in the country that the Transport Board plays an important role. The Democratic Labour Party understands that and supports the fact that from time to time the Government has to come on board and make sure that there are the necessary funds available to support the service.

Mr. President, I want to make sure when we talk about customer service that it is also understood that customer service is a two-way street. While we expect the external customer to be constantly studied, to be understood, their needs catalogued and the systems put in place to meet those needs, we also have to look at internal customer services because, often what happens internally, relative to customer service will impact what happens externally. In other words, Mr. President, if an employee feels that he or she is not given a fair opportunity to express concerns about the work they do or to make suggestion as to how the work should be improved, it is quite possible that the disposition of the person could be negatively impacted and the negative impact could play itself out in terms of how the person relates to the customer.

Mr. President, I know from time to time that the Board recognises workers and tries to make sure that those persons who have either served for a long time or persons who do great service get on the spot recognition. Sir, I think these things are wonderful but more needs to be done because there are low-cost efforts that could be put in place to make sure that persons who go the extra mile for the Transport Board are also treated with the same level of dedication from the management of the Transport Board in terms of recognising what they do.

Mr. President, very often what happens is that the Board of the Transport Board may, in fact, be putting all the systems in place but the Board has to deal with the Minister and, very often, the Minister is not on the same page in terms of vision and understanding the operational realities of the system, as the person who is sitting at the head of the Board, the General Manager and those key administrators who deliver the service.

Mr. President, I want to make the point that it is my hope that the Transport Board does not suffer any negative impact because a Minister feels that he or she should control what the Board does to the extent that when the Transport Board identifies service providers that would assist them in helping to build up the human capital of the Board, that they would give the Board the opportunity to be able to bring on board those persons without any impediment to themselves or any impediment to the potential consultant.

Mr. President, very often we talk about trying to save foreign exchange but Barbados brings so many foreign consultants to this country. There are persons in Barbados who can provide the same service from a position of certain intimate knowledge of the culture and those persons are not given the opportunity to do so.

Mr. President, I am sure the Chairman of the Board, the Honourable Senator Gooding-Edghill, would agree that every possible opportunity should be used to employ...

Asides.

SENATOR Dr. D. S. LOWE: Sir, we have the NISE Programme, you are working on customer service development and I do not see why that programme should not be involved. You have other persons, who are independent consultants, who bring a lot after the process and I do not see why they should be involved. Sir, it is my view that nobody cares about Barbados more than a Barbadian and, therefore, it is my position that when a Minister of Government, because of his own political bias chooses to disallow an entity of the State from having the best possible opportunity to be a top-notch operation, then

that person has missed the entire vision in terms of trying to create the best possible circumstances for excellent service in Barbados.

Mr. President, the Transport Board is an entity that must continue to do well. It is an entity that we believe is essential to the overall development of the country, especially at the domestic level. It is an entity that needs every possible support to ensure that a lot of the niggling issues that often impact negatively on the capacity of the Board to provide excellent service, those issues have to be removed and that those persons responsible for quality assurance, human relations, marketing and leading at different level, including the General Manager and all and sundry, know that with the backing and the support of the State, that they have every opportunity to ensure that the Transport Board becomes not only viable and efficient but a star quality public transport system in the region that provides outstanding service at every single point of service.

Mr. President, I thank you.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Senator Sir John Stanley Goddard.

SENATOR Sir John Stanley GODDARD: Mr. President, I rise in support of this Resolution because it is important that the people of this country have an efficient public transportation system. I would like to highlight, however, that the taxpayers of this country have subsidised the Transport Board very heavily over the years. Sir, according to the Audited Financial Statement, the year ended March 2004, the Transport Board lost $26 million and since then there have been significant increases in the prices of gasoline so I would expect that in 2005/2006 the losses to be in excess of $30 million. The Government has taken the decision, which I am not objecting, because it is an essential public service and therefore it needs to be subsidised, but this raises a more fundamental question. Subsidising the Transport Board is one thing, and I am not saying that it is not important. Sir, to what extent can the Government be expected to subsidise other essential services?
4.00 p.m.

Mr. President, I am referring to tertiary education. In the beginning it was subsidised by the State. I think it was imprudent that it was done at that time. I am talking about around Independence. It was important, because it provided upward social mobility within the society and more people had access to higher education, which otherwise would not be the case. Sir, tertiary education is costing Government over $100 million a year; the University of the West Indies is $60 million and Barbados Community College $35 million.

Another important service which we expect the Government to subsidise is medical care. The Queen Elizabeth Hospital, according to the Estimates, would have received $110 million in the last fiscal year. These are three services I have identified, public transport, tertiary education and medical care, all are essential and important.

Sir, the point I am making is, can the society continue to afford this level of subsidy, when we are seeing the national debt rising, when we are seeing increasing competition throughout the world? This country and every other country has to pay its way. The only question I am asking is, can we continue to pay our way if we want to provide the type of financial support to the three services which I have identified? These are transport, medical and tertiary education, and there are other subsidies in other areas.

Sir, it is a philosophical problem and, of course, it has political connotations as well, but it is basically a philosophical question. Can we continue? I am not criticising that in the past, but conditions have changed. Under existing conditions and the conditions that we expect to arise in the future, can we continue this level of support? I think that it is a very important question, and it needs to be addressed by the Government regardless of which Party is in power. It is not a political question. It is a philosophical and financial question. Can we continue that level of support?

Mr. President, with those few remarks, I support the Resolution.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Senator Eastmond.

SENATOR THE HON. Miss L. V. EASTMOND: Mr. President, I rise to speak in support of this Resolution, for us to approve the guarantee by the Government of the principal and interest, for the redemption of the bond issue in the sum of $22 million. My understanding is that this particular financial transaction will result in the purchase of a number of buses, to be put on the roads in Barbados.

Sir, I do not have that much to say, and would like to thank all Honourable Senators that have already made a contribution to this debate, because it makes my job easier. I would particularly like to congratulate Senator Dr. Lowe, because he has broken new ground on behalf of the Democratic Labour Party. He has gone out on a limb to seek to make suggestions, as to how one might address sum of the niggling social issues that affect us, one of them being transportation. He is very brave to do this. He has actually taken the lead, on behalf of his Party and we congratulate him for that.

Sir, I know that he must feel somewhat out there on a limb by himself, as it is not often done. It is very useful to get some practice at attempting to formulate policy, which

is a thing that Governments do and not Members of the Opposition, which means that he has some ambition of one day, being able to assist in formulating policy, not that we can take any of the suggestions that he has made, but it was a good start and I commend him for it.

Mr. President, I really rise to speak on behalf of the constituents, especially in the rural communities of Barbados, who are the ones who tend to suffer when there are any shortages. As the Honourable Leader for Government Business pointed out, it is in the rural communities that we really are going to have buses travelling late, with one or two passengers. The issue always arises about the viability of such exercises. Of course, people in rural communities, do have a necessity to travel into Bridgetown or other areas to conduct their business. Therefore, it is necessary for a service to be provided for them. Mr. President, all around the world this type of service is subsidised by the taxpayers in the country. We would expect this to continue.

I notice that Senator Dr. Lowe had the opportunity to speak on behalf of the constituents of Christ Church East as well. He did not do so but I assumed this is because he understands that their case would have been put elsewhere adequately. Therefore, there is no need for him to do it here.

Sir, with respect to St. Philip South, it was abandoned by the Democratic Labour Party a long time ago, so we do not expect that there will be any kind of representation here on behalf of that constituency.

Mr. President, with respect to St. Philip West, we know that clearly, no representation would have been made on their behalf before, with respect to this particular issue, whether it is intelligent, intellectual or audible. With respect to St. Philip West, nothing is ever said on behalf of that constituency in any other place, because the person that purport to represent that particular constituency, that person is only ever concern with national issues, never with community issues.

Sir, I accept that responsibility happily to represent the constituents of St. Philip West and their concerns.

Asides.

SENATOR THE HON. Miss L. V. EASTMOND: Mr. President, I am hearing that the people voted for one, and got one free, and that is true. I acknowledge that. Unfortunately, the person who now sits in the Senate, was not able to gain the confidence of the people of St. Philip in 2003, so they voted for one person, I am doing the work and the people of Barbados should know that statement came from the Democratic Labour Party's representatives in the Senate.
4.10 p.m.

Mr. PRESIDENT: I do not think the record would confirm that.

Asides.

SENATOR THE HON. Miss L. V. EASTMOND: Mr. President, I am happy to do it because, at the end of the last election, I said that this is what I would do, that I would do my best to continue to represent their interest, and this is exactly what I am doing. It is so unfortunate that we could not hear from the Other Side that my contribution was unnecessary, because the people of St. Philip West were adequately represented.

Asides.

SENATOR THE HON. Miss L. V. EASTMOND: The response that you get somehow is that they voted for one and they got Lynette Eastmond free, but that is okay.

Sir, as I was saying, individuals in the rural communities in Barbados, including St. Philip West are the ones that tend to suffer, when there is any difficulty with transportation, and the availability of buses. I must say to Senator Gooding-Edghill's credit that this issue of transportation has been a major one with some of the constituents in St. Philip West. I have asked him to come to St. Philip West on more than one occasion, to discuss these issues with residents in the constituency, and he has made himself available to do so.

We thanked him for it. He explained to us the difficulties that the Transport Board had been experiencing, over a number of years. The problems that we are dealing with now are not problems that started in 1994. Many of these issues go back well before then and, we are doing our best to make sure that we resolve them.

Therefore, he was able to come to explain to us that part of the difficulty was making sure that we had the appropriate number of buses to do the work that we need to do, in order to make sure that as many of the residents of Barbados as possible, especially those in the rural communities, are served by the Transport Board. We appreciated that and we appreciated the challenge that the Board faces, in meeting these various requirements.

Sir, this is why, publicly, I would like to express my wish, my desire, my hope on behalf of the people of St. Philip West, that some kind of ease can be brought to their situation now, that it looks as though we are going to get an additional bus complement coming to Barbados.

I drew to his attention in the past, and I will not go into all of them because that is not necessary, but we do have circumstances where, for example, the people who live

in the Fair View, St. Patricks area had that bus service changed, a number of years ago. When the road accessing Six Roads was being done, all of the buses were diverted to go through Fair View.

Unfortunately, a bus service was never put back on the route of the main from Fair View, up to St. Patricks that would go up to Six Roads. This is something that the residents continue to complain about. I know that no one on the Other Side would know about that problem, but that is a specific problem that they have. I have written and I have also spoken about it. They continue to speak to me about it and, I hope, that some relief now can be brought.

The issue is not with the bus going through the main area of central Fair View. I should make that point very clearly, Sir, that is a very densely populated area. That is to continue. The difficulty is that we are not having a service on the main road, which leads from Fair View to Grand View up to St. Patricks. Therefore, we hope that we can have that addressed.

The other issue has to do with the establishment of new communities in the area. I am sure that this is not peculiar to St. Philip West. One of the new communities that we have is the Breezy Hill Community, which continues to expand. It is actually a very large community.

The individuals in this area had been promised, and to the credit of the Transport Board, they have already looked at that area and have determined that the area should be served by making some alteration, through to the route, which buses currently travel. They would also need additional buses to take up the slack that is created in any other area.

This is an issue that was ongoing before 2003 but since I became interested intimately in the constituency, it is something that has been brought to my attention. I have done my best to make sure that the Transport Board is aware that this matter needs to be addressed, in a very substantial way.

We also know that many of the challenges which the Transport Board has, in terms of meeting the rising demands of the citizens of Barbados, has to do with the fact that the country continues to develop and to prosper. Breezy Hill exists because there are many Barbadians who are looking for new housing solutions. Breezy Hill is a large new development of individuals, who can now afford housing.

Prior to 1994, all of this great demand for public transportation would not have existed because people were home. They were not going to work. Now, in every house, there are several individuals who are going to work and they need to use the public transportation system. Before 1994, when the unemployment rate was approximately, I think, 24.3 per cent, people were at home trying to find a breadfruit to cook and that kind of thing. They are going out to work, so there is greater pressure.

Individuals have now moved into new areas and built new houses. Therefore, in areas where before you probably did not need the level of public transportation that you had prior to 1994, you now need it. These are challenges that we are not going to deny exist, because we understand why they have occurred.

They have occurred because the country is continuing to develop. People are continuing to develop. As people develop, they require better and higher standards of service. People are not only going to work but, they are going out more. They are going to events and they want to use public transportation for it because, often, it is easier to use public transportation.

If you were going to Party Monarch down the East Coast Road, you would prefer to take public transportation and not actually drive your own vehicle down there. Many Barbadians are recognising that this is how they wish to use public transportation. I recognise, for example, that at the Pic-O-De-Crop Finals, public transportation was provided for citizens after the event. Therefore, they did not have to worry about getting a lift down there with somebody, or getting a taxi or something like that. Therefore, this is the good work that the Transport Board is doing, seeking to meet the needs of all Barbadians for their work and their leisure.

The people of the rural constituencies and, in that, I would include Christ Church East for the purposes of this discussion, the Mangrove area and the people of St. Philip West as well... I am sure that they are anticipating, as I am, that with this loan guarantee, which I hope we manage to approve here, that we would be able to benefit directly from this injection of new buses into the public transportation system of Barbados.

4.20 p.m.

Mr. President, in addition to that, we will also have the ordering of spare parts. Mr. President, Senator Gooding-Edghill spoke to us, and I know that the inability of spare parts is a major issue which they are also addressing. I do not think they are addressing it by importing one new bus for every ten buses that they plan to bring in. Mr. President, my business sense tells me that you would not import a whole bus to get a back light. Mr. President, I hope that this is no indication of how the Democratic Labour Party plans to create public policy in Barbados, that for every ten buses that you bring in you would bring in an additional bus, so that you could get a back light.

Asides.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Order please!

SENATOR THE HON. Miss L. V. EASTMOND: Mr. President, I apologise that my Colleagues are distracting me in this way, so I would wish to end here before they distract me any further. I am much obliged to you, Sir.

Her HONOUR SENATOR Dame Patricia SYMMONDS: Mr. President, I intend to be very brief. Mr. President, when I say that, I always mean it, so those of my Colleagues who are anxious to speak need not fear that I am going to stand here and spend an inordinately long time.

Mr. President, I do wish to begin by congratulating the Chairman and the members of the Transport Board on the efforts that they are making and hope to make in improving the transport system in Barbados. It is very, very important, as Senator Eastmond said, as we continue to improve the quality of life of all of our citizens.

Mr. President, there is one area of concern and I know that you would not be surprised or any of my fellow Senators when I say that it is to do with education. It is a problem which has engaged not only myself but my fellow principals and other colleagues for many years, it is to do with the children preferring to use other means of transport than that provided by the Transport Board. I think not only for of course economic reasons but for reasons with which we are all acquainted, that some ways should be found to encourage more children to use the Transport Board buses.

Mr. President, I am aware that the Ministry of Education, Youth Affairs and Sports and the Transport Board have started discussions. I think they need to discontinue to discuss these problems and to find the best ways of transporting school children across the country. In the United States of America, there are dedicated school buses. I think we may need to look more closely at how school children in other countries are transported to school.

Moreover, in other parts of the world there is a Code of Conduct for the behaviour of children who travel by these buses. We do need to examine a system where normally nowadays there is only a driver on the bus. I think it may be wise in deliberations between the Board and the Ministry of Public Works and Transport, to consider having a responsible adult on board to keep an eye on the children. I think that is vital not only for economic reasons but for the behaviour of the children nowadays who need more discipline and who would listen to a responsible adult whom they respect and who possesses the sort of values that can speak to and listen to the children.

With those few words, Mr. President, I just wish to say that I totally support this Resolution.

I thank you.

SENATOR Miss P. E. PARRIS: Mr. President, I rise to support the Resolution before us today which is seeking to give the Transport Board permission to purchase 70 new buses. We are all aware that the Transport Board is presently having challenges with the service that it is offering to the public. This guarantee would assist them in its efforts at providing a better bus service.

Mr. President, we hear many stories from persons who get to work late and children who get to school late because they were waiting long for a bus, and this affects the productivity in the country. Sir, I agree with Senator Lowe as it relates to the maintenance programme to be put in place at the Transport Board. I am appealing to them to ensure that an effective maintenance system is in place because these buses are on the road for several hours and if they are not properly serviced and maintained, we could find ourselves in the situation that we are presently having with several buses parked for repairs.

Mr. President, there has been an increase of 8 per cent in the number of traffic accidents by the Transport Board drivers. I believe that the care of the buses should not only be left to the management of the Transport Board, I believe that greater care must be taken by the operators of these buses.

I am aware of the initiative that is being done by the insurance brokers and the Transport Board in recognising operators who were not involved in accidents, and I would like to commend the Board for this initiative and would urge other drivers to be part of this recognition, because the safety of the passengers is very important and they need to try to minimise the number of accidents that occur.

Mr. President, the delays experienced by the commuters are sometimes unavoidable. We hear stories of persons waiting in the bus terminal for some times three to four hours for a bus to take them to their destination. I believe that communication needs to go to the commuters who are in the bus terminal, saying to them that the bus has been delayed and what time they could expect a bus. The Transport Board is providing a service to the public and they need to take their customer service seriously and let the commuters know when they could expect a bus. I am sure that with the increase of the 70 new buses that this would be a thing of the past.

Mr. President, the charter service at the Transport Board is providing excellent service. We oftentimes hear of operators who are requested by persons who are chartering these buses. Mr. President, I would like to commend them because when an organisation, a church, requests a

specific driver – because they had them last year and they want that driver again this year – it shows that the Transport Board is doing something right as it relates to its customers service. Again, I would like to commend the management of the Transport Board, and the drivers for this initiative, in training its staff so that they can be requested by individuals. 4.30 p.m.

Mr. President, Senator Dame Patricia spoke to the dedicated school bus service. I have spoken to this in this Honourable Chamber, before and I am appealing again to the Transport Board to implement this. We hear school children saying they are getting to school late, as a result of not having a bus service. If this bus service is made available to them, it would help to eliminate some of the deviant behaviour we now have. They would not have an excuse, when they are late for school, neither would they have the opportunity to use another source of transportation.

Mr. President, I believe the matter of vandalism to the buses must be thoroughly investigated by officials of the Transport Board. I also believe that children, who are responsible for vandalising these buses, should be made responsible to pay a percentage of cost. In this way, they would be able to appreciate that nothing in life is free but that there is a cost to what they are doing.

Mr. President, as we look forward to these new 70 buses on our roads, a greater effort must be made by the Ministry of Transport, to maintain the number of bus stops. We are going to have 70 new buses on the roads but the signage on the bus routes would still be in dire need of repair. In some instances, we see buses stopping where there are no bus stops or when a bus stop is present, it would either be illegible because of the fact that it would either be covered with grass or that it is rusty and needs maintenance.

Mr. President, therefore, I appeal to the Transport Board and to the Ministry of Transport, to maintain the bus stops and have them so that persons can read them easily. I know that sometimes, as we drive around the country or sometimes when we are lost, both locals and visitors use these bus stops to guide us as to whether we are going in to or out of Bridgetown. Therefore, these bus stops act as a means of direction for us.

Mr. President, in closing, I am cognizant of the inconvenience being experienced by the commuters and so too is the Transport Board. Therefore, as it goes forward to the purchasing of these 70 new buses, I look forward to an improvement in service. Sir, I would not want to dwell on the past but would like to congratulate the Chairman, the management and staff of the Transport Board. We look forward to them servicing the routes and increasing its fleet.

Mr. President, I thank you.

SENATOR I. St. C. LINTON: Mr. President, I rise to give support of the guarantee of $22 million for the purchase of 70 new buses.

Mr. President, I think I could relate to the history of Government's involvement with commuting passengers across Barbados but first I would want to congratulate Senator Lowe for having taken my advice earlier this morning and having put something on the table.

Mr. President, Senator Lowe mentioned the Transport Board as being a revenue-earning agency. He also mentioned it as being a social good to the people of Barbados. Sir, how do we marry these two? Any social good in Barbados has a cost, and I do not think that over the years, when we look at the Transport Board and its subsidies, that we have ever quantified the cost of the social good to the society. Therefore, I think that a study should be taken, to include this as part of the cost of transporting Barbadians across the island, on a public transport system. It is needed, in order to get an understanding that the millions of dollars spent on the Transport Board, include that cost. Therefore, it would relate to a softening of the impact, in relation to the subsidising or spending of so much money on the Transport Board, in commuting passengers, without such an understanding of the social impact on the cost.

Mr. President, the history of the Transport Board, in my view, is one that we should certainly look to pull out of partisan politics in Barbados. It is too important to us in Barbados. It is the same thing we studied this morning when we spoke to the matter in relation to LIAT, is the same matter with the Transport Board.

Mr. President, when one considers how Government has gotten involved with a transport system, one would realise that it came as a result of private concessionaires deciding to pull their buses off, in order to get higher fares. The Government of the day felt that to pay a higher fare, at that time, would have been disadvantageous to the society as a whole, who depended on private concessionaires to bus them all over Barbados. These private concessionaires might have had a good reason but the effort to do so, in my view, was not a correct one. I think in matters such as these, there should be consultation. They should be looking at the whole ramifications of what it would cost and what would be the needs of the society.

Mr. President, persons cannot talk about revenue earning and the social good, while, at the same time, doing some of the things that were done at the Transport Board. I recall, in 1975, before the General Election, the bus fare was reduced on the Transport Board, from $0.65 to $0.25. At the same time, the Government had decided to subsidise the private concessionaires with $0.40 to each

passenger, which meant that the Transport Board and Government were being stifled of funds. Sir, if bus fare is reduced to $0.25, while the private concessionaires are being subsidised by $0.40, that would not be a revenue-earning exercise. That would be putting money into private business.

Mr. President, another interesting occurrence was in the 1990s, when the Transport Board had to face a situation, introduced by the various Ministries, where the major earning routes of the Transport Board were given to private enterprises. I recall that on the road, from Bridgetown to Oistins and Silver Sands, buses used to move every 15 minutes, and it was working. People knew that they could have gotten a bus on time. They knew that they could come out at a particular time and a bus would be on its way up, either from Bridgetown or from its point of destination.

Mr. President, it also happened in the Pine, the Ivy and in Bank Hall, where I live. In other words, when such a decision was made, the Transport Board was literally stripped of its revenue. Sir, to my mind, that impacted on the revenue on the Transport Board, to a point where it has not yet fully recovered. I am simply saying that it is time, when we look at matters like these, to be able to sit together in some way and work out a system which is best for Barbados, best for the consumer and best for the operation of the Transport Board along with the private sector and one should not disadvantage the other.

4.40 p.m.

Mr. President, we bring new buses to Barbados and in no time, either by careless driving or whatever, you can hear that new bus is damaged to the effect that it cannot go back on the road. I am disturbed at a time in this country when we are looking at having new traffic arrangements in Barbados because I believe that any responsible Government and responsible Opposition would rally to this cause. I am disturbed to hear that the matter of looking at the traffic laws of Barbados has come before Parliament of Barbados and that the Ministry and Government decide to establish a Select Committee in this important matter relative to what happens on the roads of Barbados with traffic, with the buses of the Transport Board and with what happens to the private sector buses and things of that sort.

Mr. President, it disturbs me that a serious Opposition decides not to participate in that Committee. Sir, they cannot be serious when on the streets of Barbados, at this time, there is road rage. Recently, in the area where I lived, we were getting trouble because vehicles were coming down the street quickly and they introduced a system where for two hours, 7.00 a.m. to 9.00 a.m. traffic would not be able to come through those areas.

Mr. President, you want to know something, some people still came down the street between 7.00 a.m. to 9.00 a.m. at greater speed than they did before because they knew they were breaking the law and that a policeman cannot be everywhere and in their haste to get off the road which they should not be on, they travel faster.

Mr. President, I am simply saying that at this time, the entire Parliament system should be looking at the matter of what happens on our streets in relation to driving vehicles. There are two things which I want to suggest and I hope that the Chairman, Senator Gooding-Edghill would take these two matters into consideration.

Mr. President, I believe that we should introduce a system in Barbados where at least you should be able to have a transfer ticket to two rides. For example, a person coming from one part of the country and then have to travel by another route should at least be allowed to pay the first $1.50 and the $1.00 to transfer. It will improve the revenue. Secondly, I believe it is time for us to have at least two buses dedicated by the hour, one to leave Grantley Adams Airport and travel the whole highway to St. Lucy Church and, at the same time, one leaving from St. Lucy Church to run the whole highway. I think it is an opportunity to help persons who have to travel between the airport and St. Lucy. It would make a lot of sense, and it could be viable and if Barbadians know that there is this system, they would use it.

Mr. President, I want to support this Resolution with the points I have made and would like to ask the Opposition to reconsider its position on the new traffic regulations in Barbados. They need to make a contribution and it would be crucial at this time for them to participate. It disturbs me because they have signaled that they would not but I am hoping they would change their mind.

Mr. President and Honourable Members of this Senate, I support this Resolution wholeheartedly.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Senator Dr. Chandler.

SENATOR Dr. F. L. CHANDLER: Mr. President, like LIAT in the air, I think that the Transport Board buses are necessary on the ground but I think that we need to ensure that the bus system is run efficiently and with some discipline that would control the vandalism which we have at the moment and also to properly maintain and service the stock, if not the 70 buses would just go the way of those in the very unsightly graveyard at Weymouth.

Mr. President, I have always wondered why parts of some of these out of service buses, if we could not cannibalize some of these buses which are out of service to get parts and put some buses back into service – I think I have mentioned it to Senator Gooding-Edghill at some time. The bodies of the others along with other scrapped

vehicles from around the island could be used to start a very lucrative recycling business while the useful engine and other parts should be stored neatly in a warehouse somewhere similar to the warehouses used by the private sector people who run second-hand parts businesses.

Mr. President, if you put all the carburettors here, all the distributors and the different parts together, it would be easy to find them and use them in repair rather than having the whole bus in the parking lot at Weymouth. This would free up space at Weymouth and improve the untidy appearance there.

Mr. President, I hope too that the Board would ensure that the company which is supplying these buses will stock parts since my own experience with that company does not give me much confidence that it will. Sir, recently I had to replace the back door of my jeep, the door was in stock but not the glass which fits into the door. If you damage your door so badly that it has to be replaced, I would think that the glass would be shattered. Sir, the glass had to come in from Trinidad and I had to wait for many other simple parts and I trust this would not happen with the buses.

Mr. President, also on that same subject, I think we need to look into some amendment for the Consumer Guarantee Act, which ensures that when you sell someone a vehicle that you carry the parts.

Mr. President, with these few words, I support this Resolution.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Senator Barker.
4.50 p.m.

SENATOR T. E. BARKER: I rise to give my wholehearted support to this measure, where Government seeks to guarantee a loan of $22 million, to be used by the Transport Board for the provision of more rolling stock.

Sir, the question of a guarantee, is one of great importance. The Transport Board will use the guarantee, to access a loan from the commercial bank. As we all know, the Transport Board is a statutory corporation and they have the right by law, to enter into these arrangements. Sir, not only will the guarantee allow them to acquire the loan, but also it can have a positive effect on the interest rate, at which the loan is secured. The use of a Government guarantee in this regard is commendable and it makes sense. It strengthens Transport Board's financial position to access the loan market.

Mr. President, it is expected that the Transport Board, over time, will repay this loan. This brings us to the question of the transport sector, especially in relation to the Transport Board and also the question of subsidies or lack of subsidies.

Sir, it is has been stated that in order for the Transport Board to break even, we will have to double bus fares. That is a fact. Sir, as we are aware, bus fares have not been increased for the last thirteen years or so, from the present $1.50. As we know, everything else has increased.

The Government has taken a decision, that given the need for an efficient and stable transport system, it would use State funds, to meet the needs of the Transport Board. For example, last year $45 million was the subsidy to the Transport Board, and in 2004, $23 million. The Government is putting a lot of money into the Transport Board, and doing so consciously, because the alternative, is to increase bus fares to a very high level. We know that the persons who use the Transport Board are in general the local workers. That is a fact.

Sir, to call upon them, to pay more especially, those who have to take two buses to work, we can see the tremendous effect it would have on their pockets.

The Government has taken a decision, and one which makes economic sense and this is how this Government seeks to order its affairs, especially in relation to transport – that the State will subsidise transport, in order to keep the cost at a level which the users can tolerate. Sir, the alternative would be a $3 bus fare and we all know the chaos and hurt that will result from such an imposition.

Mr. President, I have no fundamental problems with a subsidy. As I said, it makes economic sense and it is consistent with the way we do things. This is one of the reasons, in terms of all the indicators of the Human Development Index, we are at a high level. We have decided that health, education and transport, those social services, would be subsidised, in order to keep the cost to the consumer at a reasonable level.

I think that most Honourable Members here would agree with that approach to the transport sector. It has brought tremendous benefit in the past and will continue to do so in the future.

Sir, I remember as a boy, and Senator Dr. Lowe would have had that experience, that the last bus to St. Andrew was 7 o'clock and that the fellows who attended the 4.30 p.m. shows, very often had to leave, just before the last shot was fired in the western. They had to leave 'stupsing' and quarrelling, to rush down town to catch the 7 o'clock bus. The fellows would always complain. As a result, a lot of people have left the countryside, the resultant urban shift, because services were not readily available in the rural areas. The resultant urban shift has not helped this country, there is now a lot of neglect of agricultural land, because of the exodus of people away from the rural areas into town. Sir, a lot of it could be the result of services, including transport, not readily available in these areas.

Sir, I want to suggest that the same problem is happening now in another way. When we think of it, we are moving from a 7.00 a.m. to 4.00 p.m work shift. That is a fact. A lot of new businesses operate with different hours. For example, supermarkets are now opening until 10.01 p.m. Sir, when the worker leaves at 10.00 p.m. or there about, unless you have a bus service operating to midnight and so on, that person will have tremendous difficulty getting home.

Mr. President, do not forget that the buses running those hours are not going to be full, because the demand is not going to be that great, at that time of the night, so the buses are half full. That is why the private sector does not run their vehicles after 8.00 p.m. or 9.00 p.m., primarily because after that time, there are less passengers available. Therefore, the Transport Board has to fill that gap, to make sure that although it might be in a sense, uneconomic so to do, they have to ensure that buses are there so that workers in the hotel sector and other sectors who finish work at 10.00 p.m. and 11.00 p.m. can get home.

If you are looking for the same profitability for the public transport sector, you have to take all of these into consideration. I am contending that profitability cannot be the sole criterion, by which we assess the public transport system.

Sir, I am saying that they must be efficient, and they must operate properly, but at the same time we must not judge the public sector transport, on just the criterion of profitability alone. We have to look at it in a holistic way. The provision of buses at those hours where the buses are unprofitable, are providing a much needed service, to keep the rest of the economy going. Therefore, the rest of the society should pay for the shortfall, which the public transport will incur, as a result of the fact that it has to run at uneconomic times. Sir, that is something we need to understand and appreciate.

If we go on strict profitability lines, we will have a bus service which ends at 8.00 p.m. or 9.00 p.m. and we are back to square one, in terms of our social services, *et cetera*. Mr. President, as we move to what we call a twenty-four-hour work day, these things become critical. These are critical and crucial.

Sir, I would like that when we are looking at the operational deficit and other deficits of the Transport Board to take these factors into consideration.

5.00 p.m.

Sir, I know that the money is to help the sector with the new rolling stock. I want to suggest that the Transport Board needs to have a better policy with respect to the acquisition of rolling stock. Sometimes one year, they buy 100 buses. Then, they do not buy for two to three years and then, they buy another 100 buses or whatever.

I believe that if we know what the useful life of a bus is, then it is very easy to work on a mathematical model. There are many models around, where you say, look, in order to keep the fleet going, I need to have this replacement policy, so that every year, I should be replacing 20, 30, whatever the figure is, based on the calculations.

Sir, when you do that, two things will happen. You are not going to have the buses available and, secondly, those buses that are working well, you would tend to overuse and create even more problems. Sir, rather than the bus getting a breather, so to speak, because it is working, you have to keep it working, in order to satisfy the demand out there on the road. Therefore, we need a better replacement policy, so that you would not have this spasmodic system of buying.

Sir, we should be buying every year, whether 20 or 10 or whatever, in order to keep the fleet going. What I think would very well happen, if this was properly done, we may even get another year or two of useful life, out of the bus. Sir, with a proper replacement policy, you may be able to extend the life a little more, which would obviously be to the benefit of the Transport Board. I say useful life, because sometimes, it might be uneconomical to keep a unit going just because it is going. All of these are issues we have to take into consideration.

Sir, on the question of staff training, I believe that the Transport Board has to pay a lot more attention to training the drivers. For example, a bus may cost, approximately, a quarter of a million dollars, a fellow goes and he is backing down every minute and so on. Now, he is showing off. He has a new toy, so he goes down the hills and parade, and in 'two-twos', as the saying goes, the bus has transmission problems. Sir, I do not know what it would cost to get a replacement transmission but you see the difficulty.

Now, from the start, if that driver was trained, and I do not only mean trained today, but every year, or two, you call him back in for a couple days of training or whatever, so that you reinforce what he has been taught before. Then, above all, we have to pay special attention to the drivers and the operators and how they react with the buses.

Sir, if a particular driver, every bus that he is driving, very often is in the workshop, you know the problem is probably not the bus. The problem is the operator. He may be doing something, which ensure that every time he takes up a bus, within a few weeks or months, it has to go into the workshop. Therefore, we need to keep proper records of, not only how the bus works, but who is operating the bus. Sir, if we could get the efficiency up, then I believe we may be able to get a couple more years out of the same vehicle.

Sir, when I was a boy, the Federal Bus Company was the one that I grew up on, and some of those buses last for many years. If you live on the 22 route, you may meet two or three drivers. Obviously, they are going to change shifts but, year in and year out, you have the same fellow driving the bus and you knew them by name. It is almost a personalise service. Even now, when I see some of them, we strike up a conversation, so that you got to know your bus driver. He became part of the community, so to speak.

Probably, I wonder if the Transport Board might not want to go back to that sort of system, where drivers are identified in their routes. All these are things they can look at, but the point is that the bus system to the community, was seen in a slightly different way in those days. It was a little more than making money. It was providing a service, and the drivers and conductors were part of the community, and we need to get back to that sort of system.

Sir, this is the age of technology and I believe that it is easier now, than it was then, to keep track of the buses. I am not sure if the technology is available to the Transport Board but I know it is available, worldwide, a tracking device, where one can stay in his office and say, for example, that Bus No. 50 is in Horse Hill and it is moving at 30 miles per hour. Or, Bus No. 45 is going down Horse Hill and moving at 60 miles per hour. This way, when the driver comes in, the superintendent could have a word with him, and say, "sonny, you were ... and you were trying to kill people". I think we are going to have to use these sorts of techniques, in order to improve the efficiency at the Transport Board.

Sir, I support this measure. It is an important measure and we need to do every thing possible to ensure that the transport service in this country, is at first world level. We should be able to set our clocks, so to speak, by the buses.

When I was a boy, and this was not too long ago, you knew that the bus was going to be at your bus stop at five minutes pass the hour or whatever. Sir, come rain, come shine, you know that virtually that is going to be the case. I believe that we can get back to that system. If we can get back to that sort of efficiency, than a lot more people will say, yes, I have a car but at the same time, the bus is so comfortable and efficient, I am going to leave my car home, as is done in a lot of countries, and take the bus. Obviously, that would have the effect of easing congestion on the road, to some extent. Therefore, it is key that we get this transport system working properly.

As for the place of the private sector, they have a place but there is a need for them to be responsible and to be responsive to the needs of the society. At present, I am not sure that they are. Sir, just as the Transport Board can be more efficient and can provide a better service, I believe that the private sector can provide a better service than they are presently providing. Therefore, I am calling for the Transport Board to increase their efficiency and more so, calling on the private sector, within the transport system to also do their best to ensure that this country has a much better transport system.

Sir, I also want to say that, yes, we have a good system. It is not the worse. In spite of what we are saying, it is working to some extent but there is room for improvement. If we are to maintain the sort of society that we all want to see, transport must be a key element in all of that.

Sir, I support this Resolution and commend it to this Honourable Senate.

I thank you, Sir.

SUSPENSION OF SITTING

SENATOR THE HON. E. R. GRIFFITH: Mr. President, I beg to move that this Senate be suspended until 5.30 p.m. today.

The question that the Senate be now suspended until 5.30 p.m. today was put to the Senate and agreed to and Mr. PRESIDENT suspended the Senate accordingly.
5.09 p.m.

RESUMPTION

Mr. PRESIDENT: This Sitting is resumed.

SENATOR A. A. BYNOE: Mr. President, I rise to support the Resolution before this Honourable Chamber in relation to the $22 million to purchase 70 new buses. The Guarantee for the loan is for 10 years at an interest rate of 7.25 per cent.

Mr. President, I would like to dwell a while on the interest rate to make the point that we have to watch interest rates in this country.

Mr. President, in today's climate, the business cannot survive if we find interest rates escalating. Therefore, I am somewhat pleased that Government has been able to negotiate an interest rate of 7.25 per cent.

Mr. President, Senator Goddard was somewhat concerned about the national debt, which, according to the *Barbados Economic and Social Report, 2005*, shows that the domestic debt reached $3. 250 billion. Mr. President, Government is a significant borrower within the local market and, therefore, it is in Government's interest to operate and to create the fiscal environment that would contribute to interest rates being as low as possible.

Mr. President, in supporting this Resolution, I would like to make a plea to the commuters and would ask that they pay close attention to the upkeep of the buses. Experience has shown that a lot of the buses are disfigured, from time to time, because of vandalism. We, therefore, have to send a strong message to such persons, to desist from such practices and to consider that they too are taxpayers, who are contributing to any cost of repairs that would ensue. There is, therefore, a civic responsibility on the behalf of all persons using the Transport Board system, to safeguard these assets. Similarly, those who do the repairs, *et cetera*, as workmen, also have a civic responsibility to do the best job possible, in maintaining the stock at the Transport Board.

Mr. President, I would also like to take a look at our bus terminals. Sir, this Government spends a considerable amount of money in providing modern bus terminals in this country. However, I am not so sure that Bajans realise how important it is and what a responsibility they have, in ensuring that they respect the property of the Transport Board, for example, its bus terminals.

Mr. President, furthermore, here is a plea to all those persons who use the terminals, to make sure that they use them in the best way possible. Sir, that not only relates to the actual disfigurement of the compound but also to the manner in which they take care of certain urges. I think too much disposal takes place behind corners, when people ought to be more responsible and do what they have to do, in the places that are designed for such disposal.

Mr. President, it would seem as though I am pleading again, and this is perhaps a term that should not be forgotten. Sir, there is one, who was elected and there is one, who has come freely. Well, I am sure that Senator Eastmond would be happy to consider herself a 'Freebie' in such circumstances but my plea would be to the goodly Senator, to put in a case for a bus terminal at Six Roads, St. Philip.

Mr. President, it was 5.01 p.m. when Senator Barker spoke of a supermarket that closes at 10.01 p.m. There are two such supermarkets, one being located at Six Roads. Sir, I am somewhat concerned that when employees, not only from this establishment but from others within the Six Roads area, have to get from St. Philip to St. Lucy; from St. Philip to St. George; from St. Philip to St. Thomas; from St. Philip to parts of Christ Church, they have to go to Bridgetown. They then have to catch one or two other buses, before they could get to their homes.

Mr. President, in this day and age, I believe we should be able to construct a route system that would allow commuters from Six Roads, to take a bus to Speightstown, where they could then take a bus to St. Lucy or for that matter, take a bus from Six Roads, straight to Oistins or for that matter, from Six Roads to St. George Church or for that matter, from Six Road, to somewhere in St. Thomas or somewhere in Belleplaine.

Mr. President, the point I am making is that Six Roads is now developing into a commercial hub and, therefore, attention has to be paid to the transport needs of the area.

Mr. President, it is with these few words that I lend my support to this Resolution before this Honourable Chamber. I thank you.

SENATOR R. O. MARVILLE: Mr. President, I too rise in support of this Resolution and to say that I do think there are some things at which we need to look.

Mr. President, I think perhaps we tend to look at items a little bit too narrowly, in the sense that we would look at the bus service now, at traffic offence another time, we tend to avoid looking at cars, and we would look at the question of schools and the school bus service at some other time. Mr. President, fundamentally, I believe there are so many questions or issues relating to the whole scope of transportation that need to be dealt with, that we ought to think of setting up a committee, to deal with these matters. This committee could then put up a body of recommendations.

Mr. President, we are in a situation where oil prices are spiralling and that means, whether or not we like it, that everything is going to cost us more but perhaps what costs us most, is the number of vehicles that run around our roads in Barbados. This is an area where the bus service would serve us more cheaply and more efficiently if it were organised along the right line. I do not myself believe that there is any country in which at least some element of the bus service is not subsidised.

5.40 p.m.

We cannot fool ourselves into believing that given the circumstances of having to serve distant areas where very few people go but where people live and where people have to move from that point to work somewhere else that we can do without providing some means of getting back home. We are a country with one vehicle to every two persons. What is interesting is that less than half of us own vehicles. It means that almost invariably, we have vehicles running all over the place with only one person. Undoubtedly, we need to reorganise the bus service. We need to have schedules that make sense and to know that you can go out on the highway at 5.23 a.m. and know that there would be a bus at 5.23 a.m. or whatever time that the schedule says.

Mr. President, we also need to have successful maintenance of the buses and some guarding over the property. There must not be the vandalism that exists now, *et cetera.* We need to reorganise a few other things.

Senator Linton mentioned the possibility of transfer. I would not say $1.50 or $1.75 but I would say $1.50 or $2.00. In other words, if you are in St. George and need to go to St. James, you have to go to town and take another bus to St. James but you could use the same ticket if you pay $2.00 for a transfer ticket as long as it is done within one hour. This is done in several countries.

Mr. President, there is another alternative where you could buy a ticket for one month which is cheaper than if you pay day by day. Sir, all these measures would make it a lot easier for the Transport Board to compete with the private sector in ways they would not come up with because nobody would accept another person's transfer, *et cetera.*

Mr. President, let us get back to the point about cars. We have all these people travelling one in a car all over the place. We really have to deal with that. We have to say that no car will come into Bridgetown between 7.00 a.m. and 10.00 a.m. with one person in it.

Asides.

SENATOR R. O. MARVILLE: Sir, this would require some sort of system where you had short bus rides into town but it would be possible, or, some of us who have cars could pick up people who do not have cars, we would have much less traffic on the road and, therefore, a considerable saving on gasoline. The bus system itself does need support and reorganisation.

Mr. President, I have noticed that when school is out that it is terribly easy to travel and that when school is in that it becomes extremely difficult and it is practically the same vehicles on the road only running different routes with parents ferrying children in and out of school. There has to be a school system that is a bit more properly organised. In other words, if you are from St. Lucy, basically there is no reason why you should be going to St. Leonard's School and if you are from Christ Church, no reason why you should be going to Coleridge & Parry School, then we could have a rational school bus system which takes children from school and back. Again, this would take a lot of the traffic off the road.

Mr. President, we need to look at these things. While I approve of the Resolution in front of us, we have to look at the broader picture. Again, when we are talking about penalties on minibus drivers, the same offences practised by them are practised by other vehicles. There are some occasions when I stop on the road, I have a car that weights three tons and it shakes because the person behind me has his music up so loud that the bass is actually shaking my car. He is not a minibus driver but is committing an offence in much the same way.

Mr. President, I think we have to cover everybody in the legislation and not just look for specific areas. We have to try seriously to rationalise the total problem of transport, which is a problem in itself.

Mr. President, I thank you.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Senator Gooding-Edghill.

SENATOR G. P. I. GOODING-EDGHILL: Mr. President, I too rise to support the Resolution before this Honourable Chamber to approve the guarantee by Government, principal and interest necessary for the redemption of the bond issue in the sum of $22 million. Sir, I must also disclose my interest as well as Chairman of the Transport Board.

Mr. President, we know that from time to time the Transport Board comes under fire, that some people attack it unnecessarily, that some people often speak often on issues relating to public transport – not in this Honourable Chamber – not based on any fact but oftentimes, based on feeling and emotion. I think it is important that from time to time, we have a debate on public transport because it is necessary and specifically in this case, the Transport Board.

Mr. President, the Leader of Government Business did an outstanding job in presenting the Resolution before the Senate not so long ago and certainly, the presentation would have captured in a broad way the issues relating to public transport in Barbados and, indeed, other Honourable Senators have spoken.

The lead spokesperson for the Opposition spoke in measured terms and I am not going to be too political on this occasion, except to say that when contributions oftentimes are made, that it is important to sit and listen to those contributions, dissociate fact from friction and try to put the record straight.

Mr. President, as I said not too long ago, there is always the preception that the Transport Board is the 'whipping boy' in the public domain albeit the exceptional service that we offer to communities in Barbados. Sir, this Resolution is essentially born out of a commitment. If we go to page 43 of the *Barbados Labour Party Manifesto, 2003,* there is a commitment and a social contract, which we have to honour, to re-equip the Transport Board to enable it to extend its service. When you go to the Manifesto and see where we are, we can certainly say that the Barbados Labour Party is indeed honouring its commitment to Barbadians.

Mr. President, the Resolution before this Chamber is for $22 million and provided for within that sum is the purchase of 65 buses, five wheelchair units and parts. Sir, earlier there was discussion and the issue of parts was raised by Senators. I am going to speak to that, not in a very

detailed manner but I will speak to the issue of it as well. Sir, to assure Honourable Senators, that within the provision of the $22 million bond issue, we have specifically allocated $2.3 million of that $22 million for the purchase of parts. Those parts will arrive with the units and it is also intended that we have enough parts to service the units as we go along.
5.50 p.m.

I must also add that the wheelchair units, that the Transport Board, as part of its consultation process, met with the Disabilities Unit, the Council responsible for the disabled and other parties and other partners and discussed the requirements. We got the Council to sign off on those requirements, and those will be built specifically for the disabled community, that is very important. One thing that we have taken as a policy within the Transport Board, and adopted by Government, that with every bus purchase, there will be provision for units for the disabled in our community. It is part of our social responsibility and on each occasion we will enter into consultation with the disabled community, to ensure that we are purchasing units that would fit the requirements.

The remaining 65 are in production. These buses will be coming out of Brazil. I should also say that there are new units, because it is often this perception, not in this Honourable Place but outside of this Honourable Place, that we are buying either old buses, used buses or reconditioned buses, again, I have to put a lie to that. The buses that we are purchasing are new buses, like we have done in the past. There is a production process that they must follow, from the chassis through to the bus body. There are different stages, and there are very secure in terms of the coating and specs that we require.

Sir, it is also important that you just do not go out there and purchase buses. There is a process involved. Again, there are some people who believe that we just take up money to buy buses like that. That is not the case. There is a process and the process is, the Board has to agree with the specifications for all units. In the case of the disabled we would discuss their specifications and amend them accordingly; we sign off on those specifications. Sir, we meet with the bus agent and go through the whole process, to ensure that whatever we ask for in terms of the specifications, that those specifications are factored in and we also sign off on agreements with the bus supplier, to ensure there is no variation from the contract.

Sir, I just want to spend a little time taking us through that process. Once that is done, a prototype is built. That prototype has to be inspected by the Transport Board officials and/or the bus agent. We do that to confirm that everything we asked for contractually, the bus manufacturers or builders have committed to and they have delivered, so it is a process. Sir, even to the point where the units have been produced and shipped, and in this case I must reveal to the Chamber, they will be shipped in what we call an underground shipping bay, so that they are fully protected as well.

Mr. President, these new units will also, for the first time within the history of the Transport Board, meet Euro 3 emission standards. Sir, from time to time, not any of the Transport Board, I am pleased to say, we will see oftentime, emission that you should not normally see, particularly from other private units within Barbados. It would be a first for Barbados in terms of Transport Board meeting the new Euro 3 emission standards, the highest standard out there.

Sir, the other thing that we have asked for on this occasion is an electronic engine. In the past, the Transport Board had to install speed limiters, because there has always been this problem of speeding in Barbados. We have, in this case, gone with a new engine, an electronic engine, and that engine will help us to control speed. The speed limit would be set by the bus manufacturer, and only the bus agent can change it. I think that would go a long way in addressing any complaints with respect of speed.

There are several enhancements with the new fleet. We will have, not only the electronic engine and the repositioning of the compartment for the driver to make him more comfortable, but there will be additional seating within the units. We are aware that the Transport Board units carry in excess of the required limit, that is because of the situation we now find ourselves in.

Sir, it is important to note that, there is a warranty on the units and a maintenance clause. We had this situation in 2004 when we required thirty units, that programme has served Transport Board well. Regrettably, part of that, even though there were service agreements, there was the reluctance to have that in place, because there was an agreement with UCAL. Sir, if you have a maintenance agreement, in accordance with any warranty agreement, and there is a problem with the bus, it would be returned to the supplier to be inspected. If you violate the maintenance agreement, like we do with our personal cars, then there is the risk of violating the warranty. Mr. President, we have successfully managed the warranty with the 2004 fleet, and on this occasion we will also have a warranty on these buses, including the chassis and bus body.

Sir, the buses should arrive in Barbados on or about December 31, 2006. If everything goes well, obviously, the shipping is critical, those buses should arrive on time. Those buses would certainly improve bus availability.

It is instructive for me to point out to this Honourable Senate, that we have an aging fleet of buses at the moment.

Currently, within the Transport Board we have 42 per cent of the fleet approximately nine years old; 46 per cent six years old and the remainder under twelve years old. I recognise that some Senators made the point that we should have a fleet replacement policy and we should not buy buses in such large quantities. It is in the best interest of the Transport Board, at this time to order such large quantities.

I also want to let the public know that the Transport Board has a fleet replacement policy. Obviously, the shareholder, and in this case the Government, has a number or priorities and we could only submit requests as required and await the appropriate funding to supplement the purchase of the units.

Sir, I do not want it to be said, that we do not have a fleet replacement policy. In fact we have a fleet replacement policy, and I think that we are one of the first Government institutions, unless I am corrected, that has a fleet replacement policy. I know that the Sanitation Services Authority, has followed the Transport Board's lead in terms of having a fleet replacement policy.

Sir, the fleet replacement policy goes a long way in ensuring that the Transport Board, does not purchase buses in such large numbers. As I said, in 2004, we purchased thirty units, and again, that was in accordance with the fleet replacement policy at the time.

Mr. President, often we get a lot of criticism about public transport, but mass transit management any part of the world is very complex. It is important that we recognise that in managing a complex mass transit operation, you will have challenges.
6.00 p.m.

Fortunately, I had an opportunity to visit several bus companies – not paid for by the Transport Board, I assure the Senate – and I saw the other bus companies at work and the challenges that they have. Therefore, I do not want the impression to go out there that it is just something you jump into a seat or a bus and drive. There is a whole process, including passenger safety, that you have to go through.

Sir, the new buses will help to improve scheduling, route extensions into new housing estates, and will improve service delivery. There is a demand in Barbados for route extensions. The Transport Board has accommodated several requests. Often, when I hear people condemning the Transport Board, who would have a political advantage and should know better, we often work with those persons, in terms of improving public transport. It is a bit disheartening sometimes when you have to hear some people criticise the Transport Board, who should know better from their political perspective.

Nonetheless, Sir, there are a number of extensions that we have taken into new housing estates. I am pleased to say that with the response we have got it is quite encouraging. Certainly, there are a number of areas, where we would have to improve. However, we can only do that, if we improve the size of the fleet, and that is what we are seeking to do with this purchase to improve service delivery, and to improve route extensions into new housing estates. As our demographics change, we would have to respond accordingly.

Sir, it would also certainly improve customer satisfaction. This is really an area where we have spent a lot of time. We have analysed it and we recognised it, but once we get the fleet to the required standard, we will improve customer service, through improved running times. By running times, I mean that the time it takes for a unit when it leaves the terminal to get to its destination, and back. This has been a challenge in Barbados. We have been having some road works, and we must have road works to improve our infrastructure. We have accepted that it has created a problem for the Transport Board. Sir, because we suffered by not having enough available units, we often had to double up routes, particularly in the north of Barbados.

Sir, with the purchase, we will certainly return to short haul routes, and we will improve service to those short haul routes that we do not now serve. Certainly, we will seek to improve the charter bus segment. I must point out that the charter bus segment is worth more than $2 million in additional revenue to the Transport Board. Therefore, in addition to passenger fare revenue, we have an additional $2 million that we get, as a result of improved charter service.

I believe it was Senator Parris who made the point that there are numbers of organisations, who prefer to use the Transport Board for their charters, compared to going to other private operators. We have seen that in the numbers of the Transport Board, in excess of $2 million. Certainly, when we get the additional units, we will ensure that we satisfy all of our route requirements, our extensions and then, we will still have some buses to assist the Transport Board in earning some additional revenue.

Sir, the decision to purchase the 65 additional units was based on the exceptional performance of the 30 buses that we acquired back in 2004. I know there is always a lot of confusion. I believe, it was Senator Lowe who asked whether or not we are purchasing the correct units. I want to assure Senator Lowe that, as I said, there is a process involved, in terms of meeting the specs. It is important that in Barbados, we purchase buses from a supplier who can service the units, and if there are any problems or issues concerning the units that we have somebody to whom we can turn.

The Transport Board had the sorry experience in the past, where they have entered arrangements where

they have bought the Leyland buses from Portugal and within 12 to 24 months they were rusting and then we could not get the parts to repair those buses. The Transport Board is replete with examples, where people came to Barbados, and sold the Transport Board buses, with no service agreements whatsoever. They got the sales and after that they did not look after the fleet. This will not happen, certainly, while I am the Chairman of the Transport Board because I will not engage in anything like that.

Sir, people reserve the right to criticise the fleet. They could criticise the producer, the manufacturer or whomever, but at the end of the day, it is important that you have a locally based supplier, in the event that there is any problem. Sir, the lesson we can learn from the problem at the Sanitation Service Authority is one for the record.

The other thing that I want to mention, Sir, is the whole issue of bus maintenance. Again, there is a lot of misinformation out there. Often, people suggest that the buses are not maintained. I believe it was Senator Chandler who said that we have a graveyard of buses but I am going to come to those things individually.

I want to say on the whole issue of maintenance that the Transport Board has a maintenance policy. Sir, when I assumed responsibility for the Chairmanship of the Transport Board, I ensured that we had certain standard operating policies in place, which bore fruit for the Transport Board, and that is a fact.

Sir, the Transport Board buses are checked. There are several maintenance standards that we have to meet for passenger safety. We have M-services (maintenance services) that we have to follow. All the Transport Board's units are serviced in accordance with the bus manufacturer's requirements and specifications. We are using the correct lubricants on all of the units. When the buses come in, after they have finished their shift, they are checked, cleaned and fuelled.

Sir, I do not want any misinformation to go out that the Transport Board does not have a system for maintenance checks. The Transport Board has a proper maintenance system. There is also a system known to the Transport Board as a Meridian Computerised System where we also keep history on the units. There is also a manual system in part that we use to check on the maintenance of the units periodically. At least, once a year, these units have to be prepared for inspection.

Therefore, I do not want the impression to go out there and, certainly, the misinformation being communicated that the Transport Board does not maintain its fleet. Sir, for as long as I have been there as Chairman, I can say to this Chamber and the public that Transport Board has an efficient and proper maintenance system in place.

Sir, I want to deal with some of the issues affecting bus availability. Often, you will hear that the Transport Board will have from 110 to 150 units. Sir, some people would get confused and give the impression that the buses are no good, or we are not maintaining the buses.

There are several factors, funding for parts is a concern, the Government continues to meet its obligation. That has not been a significant problem at all. Within the last year, we have been getting supplementary funding from the Government. This year, we have built into the Estimates, some $7 million. Last year, we benefitted substantially in excess, I believe, about $40 million, as a result of supplementary funding.

Sir, if we have an inadequate fleet replacement policy, you would have some challenges, but vandalism is a major headache for the Transport Board. There are people who would vandalise the units, and then would condemn the Transport Board for not providing an efficient and timely bus service. This is one of the criticisms. Of late, certainly, we have the management out there, putting out the information in the public domain but this was a problem for the Transport Board for sometime. It is true that they have been late in coming to the public and explaining the impact of vandalism to them. Sir, vandalism is a significant factor, in the reduction of buses on the roads of Barbados.

We also have the issue of running defects. Those of you who are familiar with bus operations, will tell you that you will always have a running defect. Sir, at the international standard, as I said before, in the Estimates Debate, in transport, is 20 per cent of your fleet. For example, you will have a situation, where you will have to change tyres. You will have a situation, where the battery goes dead, and we have to go out there and change it, so there are several running defects with an aging fleet. I made the point not so long ago that we have in excess of 42 per cent of the fleet in excess of nine years, so we would have some defects as a result of an ageing fleet.
6.10 p.m.

Mr. President, I must say that when you look at the condition of buses today you cannot help but say that the Transport Board is doing a very good job in trying to maintain bus availability.

Sir, I also want to draw the Senate's attention to the usage because there are a lot of people who believe that you just go in and you start the buses. Mr. President, when the buses come in, there are a series of maintenance checks that must be performed and a series of health and safety

issues that must be addressed. Mr. President, oftentimes the buses return to headquarters or to the various terminals at maybe 2.00 a.m. in the morning or sometimes later and those buses are parked and then at about 4.00 a.m. or 4.30 a.m. the engine has to be rolled again to get that bus on the road.

Mr. President, bus manufacturers globally recommend at least 60 000 to 70 000 kilometres a year, but these buses that we have in Barbados do in excess of 120 000 kilometres a year. Sir, that is the pressure that we have to face in Barbados in respect of the kilometres, so we have to ensure that the buses are maintained. Mr. President, an engine should be changed every 300 000 kilometres, and if you are running at an average of 120 000 kilometres a year, you would imagine that you would have to have some significant repairs.

Sir, when we look in the Transport Board P&L, I am pleased to say that we are up to date and the one for the last financial year should be coming very shortly, you can see that you would have some issues. Sir, all you have to do is to look at the ageing fleet, look at the kilometres and then you could reconcile it and audit it and you can determine whether or not the Transport Board maintenance cost is significantly higher than most bus companies.

Mr. President, the depreciated bus life is for 10 years. I can assure you, Mr. President, that come next year we will have buses that will be ten years old, but I know that those buses would give us in excess of 10 years life on the roads, I am very confident about that.

Mr. President, the question was asked about the issue of maintenance. We have the maintenance arrangement. When I got to the Transport Board, we had a very lopsided agreement where you had to go to United Commercial Autoworks Limited (UCAL) for everything, it was an exclusive arrangement. We no longer have an exclusive arrangement as such because we have a small L&N body repairs workshop that would assist us and we also have Simpson Motors that would assist us. That has contributed, and substantially so, to the output of units at the Transport Board. Mr. President, bus availability is where it is. On Monday, August 14, the Transport Board achieved a bus availability of 170 buses. That is as a result of the combined efforts of UCAL, L&N Workshop and Simpson Motors.

Mr. President, I want to thank them because it is a lot of hard work. We have contracts in place with the service providers. We also have warranty provisions. Sir, gone are the days when anybody including UCAL can repair a transmission or an engine and not give the Transport Board a warranty, they have to give the Transport Board a warranty for the life, so that if they change the transmission or the bus engine they would have to replace it at no cost to the Transport Board, so there is no issue of double invoicing or the Transport Board having to pay twice for the service, that is not the case at the Transport Board at all.

Mr. President, the Transport Board is not and should never be in the business of stocking a substantial amount of parts. You should have a system of just in time inventory. Mr. President, we know what are the fast-moving parts, we have a list of those fast-moving parts and we order accordingly and in accordance with our financial resources. Other parts are supplied from the bus suppliers who are in the business of supplying parts. We negotiate prices and we have an arrangement so that we get cheaper parts in terms of getting those parts out of Brussels into Barbados to the buses. Sir, we get discounted parts at the Transport Board.

Mr. President, in the past there was an issue where the Transport Board never had enough funding to support the payment plan for parts and so on, especially when you have a letter of credit. I am pleased to say that we buy parts, we have credit, and oftentimes if we are in a financial bind, the bus agent would go overboard and would help us at no interest charge.

Having said all of that, Sir, I want to also make the point that the shareholder continues to meet its obligation. In this case this is another example of the shareholder meeting its obligation in terms of its capital expenditure and they will continue to meet their obligations in terms of our required supplementary funding.

Sir, I have spoken to the whole issue of inadequate maintenance. There is no issue at all about inadequate maintenance in terms of the Transport Board, I have dismissed that and the myth should stop. On the financial side, I have spoken about the wear and tear of the ageing fleet and as a result you would be required to purchase more parts if you have an ageing fleet, but you would do that in a very disciplined way.

Mr. President, as it relates to the issue of cost containment, the Transport Board saved in the financial year 2002-2003 in excess of $2.14 million, I believe that is the correct figure, I do not want to mislead the Senate. Sir, there is so much that we can do within the framework of cost containment.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Within the constraints of time, one minute, please.

SENATOR G. P. I. GOODING-EDGHILL: Sir, I want to disabuse those out there who believe that the Transport Board is anywhere that ... We have done almost everything to do that...

Sir, I quickly want in my five minutes to...

Mr. PRESIDENT: I make that five seconds for you to complete.

Asides.

SENATOR G. P. I. GOODING-EDGHILL: Sir, I want to quickly talk about the vehicle monitoring programme. Some persons spoke to the issue about knowing exactly when the bus is going to arrive. I am pleased to indicate to the Senate that we are in discussion with a company, there are only two such companies in Barbados. We had a pilot project on one where we could see on a computer screen where the bus is at in any part of Barbados, the speed that the bus is being driven at and we can also tell how many stops within that route that the driver has stopped. This will help us in terms of measuring fuel, it will help us in measuring driver productivity and in other factors.

Sir, I am so sorry that I do not have enough time that I could take Honourable Senators through other things including the implementation of a smart card system that we will be implementing in terms of bulk fares in Barbados, the terminal improvements that we will have to make and the park and ride system. Mr. President, I am sure that I would have another opportunity at some time to speak.

Sir, with no disrespect to the Chair, I am indeed grateful that the Government has brought the Resolution before the Honourable Senate. I fully support the $22 million bond issue and I know that it would go a long way in alleviating much of the concerns and issues we have in respect of public transport in Barbados.

I am obliged to you, Sir.

SENATOR THE HON. E. R. GRIFFITH: Mr. President, I wish to thank Senator Gooding-Edghill for that very detailed presentation. It is clear to all of us that there have been substantial improvements in the management and functioning of the Transport Board under his watch and I wish to commend him for that and to commend also the Board and the management and staff of the Transport Board.

Mr. President, we in this country always have the tendency to underestimate our potential. Mr. President, it is easy for us to believe that other people from far away can do things and know how to use technology to their advantage and so on, but we are always reluctant to believe that we can do it ourselves. This is a perfect example of an understanding effort on the part of the Transport Board to use the technology to the advancement of the institution's operations and they deserve our commendation and our continued support as they strive to bring the much needed improvements to the functioning of that institution.

Mr. President, all of us have recognised that while we expect the Transport Board to put in place measures to reduce its reliance on the public purse, that we cannot expect it to provide coverage to the entire Barbadian community and not provide some measure of support for it.
6.20 p.m.

Mr. President, we all recognised that while we expect the Transport Board to put measures in place, to reduce its reliance on the public purse, that we cannot expect it to provide coverage to the entire Barbadian community and not provide some measure of support for it. It is not possible for it to perform the role that it is asked to perform, without some support from the Treasury.

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

The question was put to the Senate and agreed to.

ORDER NO. 9 – TO MOVE THE SECOND READING OF THE TELECOMMUNICATIONS (AMENDMENT) BILL, 2006

SENATOR THE HON. E. R. GRIFFITH: Mr. President, the Telecommunications (Amendment) Bill, 2006, is seeking to make provision for:

6. the duty-free importation of telecommunications and radiocommunications apparatus during a state of emergency;

(b) the importation of telecommunications and radiocommunications apparatus without a licence during a state of public emergency;

(c) the giving effect to the Tampere Convention on The Provision of Telecommunication Resources for Disaster Mitigation and Relief Operation;

(d) the creation of offences with respect to the unauthorised reception of broadcasts and cable programmes, the theft of or tampering with multi-channel video or information systems; and

(e) for related matters.

Mr. President, in other words, the Bill before us is a consolidation of two Bills, which were prepared initially, one to do with the accession of Barbados to the Tampere Convention to provide for the provision in that convention. The Tampere Convention, as you know, is essentially to facilitate and to expedite telecommunications assistance in a disaster relief operation amongst State and non-State parties.

Mr. President, the provision, as set out in the Tampere Convention, is important for us because we live in a region which is prone to disasters, and in the event that we, in Barbados, suffer a severe disaster, we would naturally expect other States to provide assistance to us, during the recovery period. This Convention places obligations on the parties to it, to provide assistance to member countries. Therefore, it has become necessary for us to put provisions in the legislation that would allow that assistance to take place within the context of the Convention.

Mr. President, at the present moment, there is no legislation that would allow us to accommodate the provisions of the Convention, and that is why it is now necessary for this amendment. Barbados has acceded to the Convention, in 2003. We are now seeking to put it into our legislation, so that we could exercise our functions and obligations under the Convention, and that we create the framework that would allow countries, which would be coming to our assistance in a state of emergency, to operate. It would also allow such necessary equipment to come in, free of duty, and to go back out without any undue delay. Mr. President, in essence, that is what is being provided for, in relation to the duty-free importation of radiocommunications and telecommunications apparatus.

Mr. President, the other part has to do with the question of putting in place anti-signal theft legislation. Sir, I trust that all persons hearing my voice would take note of this piece of legislation. I know it is fashionable for persons to look for a deal and that they do not mind entering into such an arrangement, as long as they would benefit, even though it would be at the expense of someone else. Sir, that is exactly the issue before us.

Mr. President, as an example, the Caribbean Broadcasting Corporation provides service through its Multi-Choice programming, is an agency that is suffering from signal theft, by a number of persons in this country. The corporation has about 17 000 legitimate paying customers but we have estimated that there are about 5 000 persons, who are stealing the signals of the corporation. Apparently, it is easier for those persons to pay someone else, to provide them with the equipment that would allow them to access the signal, and they are happy doing that and would want to continue doing that.

Mr. President, the legislation before us is seeking to create offences in such circumstances. Therefore, as soon as the legislation is passed, the Caribbean Broadcasting Corporation would be in a position to monitor the situation and to take legal action against persons found stealing its signals.

I trust that when the legislation is in place, the Caribbean Broadcasting Corporation would pursue those cases vigorously and that those persons, who are now benefitting from that activity, would be brought within the net and would either now, on their own, accept that they have had a free-for-all for a long time and that it has come to an end. I do hope that persons would now willingly follow the legal route of obtaining the signals. If they do not, it would then be left to the Corporation to proceed, within the provisions of this legislation and to take action against such persons, and to bring some order to it.

Mr. President, I do not think it is fair for persons to be accessing the signals of the Corporation freely and to be benefitting from the services provided, without paying the Corporation any money. Therefore, in due course, the Corporation would have to take control over that.

Mr. President, on that basis, I beg to move that this Bill be read a second time.

The question was put to the Senate and agreed to.

SENATOR F. J. STUART: Mr. President, I have listened with care to the contribution of Senator Griffith, as he introduced this Bill, the Telecommunications (Amendment) Bill, Cap. 22B, which is to make provisions for the items identified from (a) to (e).

Mr. President, once again this Honourable Chamber is being called upon to zero in on the issue of a state of public emergency, now within the context of making provision for the duty-free importation of telecommunications and radiocommunications apparatus.

Mr. President, the importation of telecommunications and radiocommunications apparatus, without a licence and – of course, Senator Griffith has spent some time on this – the Tampere Convention on the Provision of Telecommunication Resources for Disaster Mitigation and Relief Operations...

Mr. President, what I find troubling about this preoccupation with state of public emergencies is that within 40 years of Independence, Barbados has not had one occasion or any reason to declare a state of public emergency, and in any event, if it had reasons so to do, the legislative mechanisms for so doing, have always been there. 6.30 p.m.

Recently, Parliament passed an Emergency Management Bill and Parliament was told then that for all practical purposes, that Bill would govern issues relating to states of emergencies in Barbados. The Bill, it would be recalled, amended the Emergency Powers Act to make provision for the declaration of a state of emergency on the basis of civil unrest. I thought that since we now had an Emergency Management Bill in place that any legislation succeeding that Emergency Management Bill which

deals with states of public emergency, would be incorporating by reference, the Emergency Management Bill.

Mr. President, if one goes to Section 2 of this Bill, it reads:

> "Section 10 of the Telecommunications Act referred to in this Act referred to as the principal Act is amended by adding the following Subsection (3) notwithstanding paragraph D of Subsection 1, where the Governor-General has, in accordance with the Emergency Powers Act..."

Sir, not in accordance with the Emergency Management Act, which is now law in Barbados but still in accordance with the Emergency Powers Act which deals with the issue of civil unrest.

Mr. President, I do not understand why there is this preoccupation with states of emergency and making provision for states of public emergency in circumstances where for 40 years, Barbados has not had to confront this issue. Sir, I am not suggesting that because it has not happened for 40 years that it cannot happen now or some time in the immediate future but the Government needs to explain its preoccupation with states of public emergency and making provision for them and still using the Emergency Powers Act, which has been amended to deal with civil unrest rather than dealing with its own Emergency Management Act passed by Parliament just a few weeks ago.

Mr. President, I think there is some inconsistency in the position of the Government, having declared that the Emergency Management Act would now deal with all natural disasters, emergencies and so on, and we were told that in this Chamber. I remember Members of the Government speaking with a certain amount of fervour on this issue when I raised the amendment to the Emergency Management Act. This legislation, rather than referring to the Emergency Management Act, 2006 is still referring to the Emergency Management Act, which was amended a few weeks ago in this Chamber to deal with the issue of civil unrest.

Mr. President, I should like the Leader of Government Business and all other Members of the Government to explain to Barbadians if we now have so comprehensive a piece of legislation to deal with emergencies, whether as a result of natural disaster or otherwise, why are we still relying on the Emergency Powers Act that is supposed to deal with civil unrest. Mr. President, that question needs to be answered. Sir, if the Resolution has anything to do with World Cup, it does not say so. I really cannot say it does because there is no indication that it does and if it has anything to do with the World Cup, it does not say so and, in any event, the World Cup legislation has a life which comes to an end at the end of June. This legislation, in its present terms, has no lifespan and incorporates, by reference, the Emergency Powers Act and not the Emergency Management Act, which was recently passed and which was supposed to be a more comprehensive piece of legislation dealing with all the issues previously covered by the Emergency Powers Act.

Mr. President, that is an area of concern for us on This Side and I await the explanation of the Government on this because it is certainly not consistent with what was said in this Chamber a few weeks ago when we debated the Emergency Management Act.

Mr. President, I am obliged to you, Sir.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Senator Sir Allan Fields.

SENATOR Sir Allan FIELDS: Mr. President, I rise to support this amended telecommunications Act. I must confess that I put particular emphasis on paragraph No. (d), "the creation of offences with respect to the unauthorised reception of broadcast and cable programmes, the theft of or tampering with multi-channelled videos or information service systems." As most of you would know, I was recently appointed as Chairman of the Caribbean Broadcasting Corporation and, Mr. President, it has been a real eye-opener as to the extent that some people would go to steal the signal of the Corporation. The sad thing is that it seems very flippantly to be referred to as piracy which is almost romanticised and almost like Robin Hood and is not recognised for the blatant theft that it is.

Mr. President, this Act would go a long way towards curing some of the ills at CBC. The Caribbean Broadcasting Corporation always produces a huge amount of airtime as a public broadcasting service from which it receives no revenue. In addition to that, the revenue aspect of CBC which is most important, is the TV system which provides a signal for which people pay. Mr. President, I am very happy to see that there seems to be little discretion in the penalty which is fixed at $25 000 and presumably, anybody who obtains the service system without the authorisation also has to hook it up to their TV, which is another $25 000.

Mr. President, I would like to make sure that the people out there who are stealing this system recognise that the receivers are stolen goods and, in effect, if and when they get caught and have to pay $50 000, that it would buy them 20 years of MCTV premium channel for two boxes in their homes and that they should not treat this likely. In fact, it will buy them 64 years of the basic system in their house, the penalty for which they are going to have to pay.

Mr. President, I would like to send a clear signal to those people in the heights and terraces and various places of Barbados who sit with their doors and windows

closed and think that CBC cannot identify them but that, in truth and fact, that the technology now exists, that they will be able to be identified, that the management of CBC is not going to sleep happily until they are identified. Mr. President, I want to make it very clear to the public of Barbados, who have been stealing this system for many years, that they are going to be caught now that the legislation is in place.

Mr. President, between the years 1996 and 2004, there were over 10 000 boxes in this island fraudently stealing signals which caused CBC revenue of $11 million. Sir, in 2004, CBC changed its analogue system to a digital system and the theft had to stop for a period of time. While CBC dreams of catching these people, these people are using dream boxes to capture the signal but, Sir, their dreams are about to come to an end and CBC's dreams are about to be fulfilled.

Mr. President, since 2004 with the advent of the new digital system, there are over 2 500 people out there stealing $3 million from CBC on an annual basis which would certainly put CBC in a profitable situation. Therefore, there are a lot of incentives for CBC to stop this theft.

Mr. President, once again, I reiterate that these people who are ordinary thieves, who are receivers of stolen goods should truly thank their lucky stars. Sir, Caribbean Broadcasting Corporation has been able to identify the boxes coming from the United Kingdom, China and Taiwan. They came in satellite receivers and Customs had no option but to let them in because satellite receivers are not banned from entering Barbados, once the requisite duty is paid. When they come into the island there are reconfigured to steal the signal from the Caribbean Broadcasting Corporation, so that people can have their own enjoyment. It is almost as if it is something to boast about. Those days of boasting have to stop.
6.40 p.m.

I sincerely hope that everybody will support these additional items in the Act, from 89 (a) to 89 (e). Mr. President, I can assure you and Members of this Honourable Senate that the Caribbean Broadcasting Corporation will do all in its power to use this Act for good purpose.

I am much obliged to you, Sir.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Senator Griffith.

SENATOR THE HON. E. R. GRIFFITH: Mr. President, I have listened carefully to Senator Stuart. I am sure that he will pardon me for saying, that I think the fixation is with him rather than with the Government. My recollection is, that Act, when passed, did not remove the responsibility for the declaration of the Emergency Powers Act. In any case, this section I will read for the benefit of other Honourable Members, because Senator Stuart read only a part of it.

> "Notwithstanding Paragraph D. (1) of section 1 where the Governor-General has in accordance with the Emergency Powers Act, declared that a State of public emergency exists, the importation of all telecommunications and radio-communications apparatus with a non-governmental organisation or a non-State entity for the purpose of granting assistance in disaster mitigation, and emergency relief, shall not require the issue of a licence and shall not be subject to payment of any duties or taxes ..."

Those are the points that I was making, when I introduced the measure, stating that what was being proposed here, was an amendment to the Telecommunications Act to facilitate the application of the provisions of the Tampere Convention.

Sir, it further states:

> "For the purposes of this section non-governmental organisation and non-State entity have the meaning assigned by the Tampere Convention."

Sir, the issue here is that the Government is trying to facilitate the operation, by any of these entities here in the event that Barbados is affected by disaster and persons are coming to assist with mitigation, and providing emergency relief. Sir, Senator Stuart has other things on his mind, while we are dealing with disaster management and so.

Mr. President, to me, the matter is fairly straightforward. On that basis, I beg to move that this Bill be read a second time.

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

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

COMMITTEE

Madam DEPUTY PRESIDENT: The Senate is in Committee.

Clauses 1 to 6 inclusive were called and passed.

The Schedule became the Schedule to the Bill.

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

On the separate motions of SENATOR THE HON. E. R. GRIFFITH, the Bill was read a third time and passed and cited as the Telecommunications (Amendment) Act, 2006.

SENATOR THE HON. E. R. GRIFFITH: Mr. President, in response to the announcement which was made earlier this morning, about the need for five members to be nominated by the Senate, to sit on the Select Committee to deal with the Road Traffic Act, I wish to indicate the names of those persons. As you are aware, the Members of the Opposition, have decided that they do not want to be involved in that exercise. Therefore, we will have to proceed to make up the five persons in a different way than was anticipated.

Therefore, on the Government Side there will now be three Members and two Members from the Independents. On the Government's Side the Members are Senator Eastmond, Senator Grant and Senator Gooding-Edghill. I have been advised that on the Independent Side the two persons are Senator Newton and Senator Sir Allan Fields. Those are the five persons who are being proposed.
6.50 p.m.

Mr. PRESIDENT: As the Leader of the Senate has indicated, five Members of the Honourable the Senate have been nominated to serve on a Joint Select Committee on the Road Traffic (Amendment) Bill. These are: Senator Eastmond, Senator Grant, Senator Gooding-Edghill, Senator Newton, and Senator Sir Allan Fields.

The position of the Opposition has been noted. That stated, can I take it that this Senate concurs in these nominations? That being so, I will direct the Clerk to forward the appropriate message to the Other Place.

ADJOURNMENT

SENATOR THE HON. E. R. GRIFFITH: Mr. President, we have come to the end of business for the day and for this Session. Sir, before moving the adjournment, I wish to thank the Clerks and staff of Parliament for their assistance during the past Session, to thank all Senators for their contributions to the various debates and to thank you, Mr. President, for so ably conducting our affairs. I look forward to our resumption sometime around the middle of October.

Mr. President, I beg to move that the Senate be now adjourned *sine die*.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Senator Stuart will speak on the adjournment.

SENATOR F. J. STUART: Mr. President, in speaking on the adjournment, I just want to associate myself with the comments of the Honourable Leader of Government Business, in thanking Members of Staff of this Chamber and the Clerks for so ably assisting us, during this Session.

Our tasks were made considerably easy because of the cooperation which we were able to secure from the Clerks who went out of their way to accommodate us, whenever we requested their assistance. Sir, members of staff, seen and unseen, have also contributed, in no small measure, to our comfort in this Chamber and to the ease at which we were able to do the public's business.

None of this would have been possible, Mr. President, without Your Honour's mature and always alert steering of the deliberations of this Chamber. I have sometimes had to marvel at the seemingly unending attention span of Your Honour, during these debates. Today, was no exception. I was amused and at the same time overwhelmed by the intervention by Your Honour, pulling an Honourable Senator back from what he himself described as a very long safari. It calls for a certain amount of alertness to be able to do that.

Sir, This Side, we want to thank Your Honour for steering these deliberations as maturely and as impartially and as ably as Your Honour has done and always does. Of course, in Your Honour's absence, Madam Deputy President certainly steps up to the plate, if I may use one of these rather clumsy Americanisms. It certainly does not subtract from the quality of Madam Deputy President's management of our deliberations.

I should like to wish all Honourable Senators a restful Summer and hope that on our return, we continue with seriousness to do the public's business, and to make Barbados a better Barbados.

I am obliged to you, Sir.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Before putting the motion, let me first of all thank Senator Griffith, the Leader of the Senate and Senator Stuart for their kind remarks, which I accept with great humility.

I also want to associate myself with the tributes paid to the work of the Clerks and staff of Parliament, who certainly today, had a long stint with us, running into something like eight hours.

It remains only for me to wish all Honourable Senators an enjoyable Summer recess. I am sure you will all be back here in the middle of October, feeling refreshed and ready for the next battle.

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

CONTENTS

The Senate met in the Senate Chamber, Parliament Buildings on Monday, the 14th day of August, 2006 and Wednesday, the 16th day of August, 2006 at 11.00 a.m.

PAPERS

Senator the Hon. E. R. GRIFFITH 1

1. Value Added Tax (Refund) (Marjorie Davis) Order, 2006.
2. Barbados Economic and Social Report 2005.
3. Annual Report and Accounts of the Barbados Agricultural Management Co. Ltd. for the year ended June 30, 2005.
4. Instrument adopted by the International Labour Conference at its Ninety-second Session held in Geneva in June 2004 concerning Human Resources Development: Education, Training and Lifelong Learning.
5. Shipping (Incentives) (Yellowfin Water Sports Inc.) Order, 2006.
6. Shipping (Incentives) (C.R. Cruises Ltd.) Order, 2006.
7. Shipping (Incentives) (Maxi Yacht Challenge Inc.) Order, 2006.
8. Annual Report of the Chief Medical Officer 2002-2003.
9. Export Promotions and Marketing Fund Order, 2006.
10. Fifth Report of the Electoral and Boundaries Commission.
11. Draft Electoral and Boundaries Commission (Review of Boundaries) Order, 2006.
12. Duties, Taxes and Other Payments (Exemption) (William Gooding) Order, 2006.
13. Value Added Tax (Refund) (Covenant Life Teaching Centre) Order, 2006.

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS

Senator the Hon. E. R. GRIFFITH 2

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

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Senator the Hon. E. R. GRIFFITH 2

1. LIAT (1974) (Guarantee) (Amendment) Bill, 2006.
2. Telecommunications (Amendment) Bill, 2006.
3. Final Appropriation (2005-2006) Bill, 2006.

NOTICES OF RESOLUTIONS

Senator the Hon. E. R. GRIFFITH 2

1. A Resolution to approve the guarantee of the Government, in favour of Bombardier Services Corporation of the performance by LIAT (1974) Limited of aircraft maintenance, return condition obligations and repossession containing the terms and conditions as set out in the Schedule to the Resolution.
2. A Resolution to approve the guarantee by the Government of the payment of the principal sum of Twenty-two Million Dollars and interest thereon in respect of a bond issue by the Transport Board to RBTT Merchant Bank Limited.

FIRST READING OF BILLS

Senator the Hon. E. R. GRIFFITH 2

1. Immigration (Amendment) Bill, 2006.
2. Pre-Clearance (ICC World Cup West Indies 2007) Bill, 2006.
3. Small Business Development (Amendment) Bill, 2006.
4. Export Promotion and Marketing Fund (Amendment and Validation) Bill, 2006.
5. LIAT (1974) Limited (Guarantee) (Amendment) Bill, 2006.
6. Telecommunication (Amendment) Bill, 2006.
7. Final Appropriation (2005-2006) Bill, 2006.

PUBLIC BUSINESS

ORDER NO. 2 – TO MOVE THE SECOND READING OF THE IMMIGRATION (AMENDMENT) BILL, 2006 2

Senator the Hon. E. R. Griffith, 2, 6; Senator Dr. D. S. Lowe, 3; Senator R. W. Grant, 4; Senator A. A. Bynoe, 5; Senator R. O. Marville, 5; Senator G. P. I. Gooding-Edghill, 6.

ORDER NO. 3 – PRE-CLEARANCE (ICC CRICKET WORLD CUP WEST INDIES 2007) BILL, 2006 7

Senator the Hon. E. R. Griffith, 7.

ORDER NO. 4 – TO AMEND THE SMALL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT (AMENDMENT) BILL, 2006 8

Senator the Hon. L. V. Eastmond, 8, 40; Senator Dr. D. S. Lowe, 14; Senator Dr. F. L. Chandler, 19; Her Honour Senator Dame Patricia Symmonds, 19; Senator G. P. B. Nicholls, 20; Senator A. A. Bynoe, 25; Senator Sir John Stanley Goddard, 25; Senator Miss S. C. V. Husbands, 31, 41; Senator the Very Reverend H. E. Crichlow, 32; Senator T. E. Barker, 33; Senator R. W. Grant, 35; Senator the Hon. E. R. Griffith, 38.

ORDER NO. 10 – SECOND READING OF THE FINAL APPROPRIATION BILL, 2006 44

Senator the Hon. E. R. Griffith, 44.

ANNOUNCEMENTS BY HIS HONOUR THE PRESIDENT

Mr. PRESIDENT 44

OBITUARIES

Senator the Hon. E. R. Griffith, 45; Senator F. J. Stuart, 45; Her Honour Senator Dame Patricia Symmonds, 46; Senator A. A. Bynoe, 47; Senator G. P. I. Gooding-Edghill, 47; Mr. President, 48; Senator Miss P. E. Parris, 48; Senator the Very Reverend H. E. Crichlow, 48.

ORDER NO. 5 – THE EXPORT PROMOTION AND MARKETING FUND (AMENDMENT AND VALIDATION) BILL, 2006 49

Senator the Hon. E. R. Griffith, 49.

ORDER NO. 6 – THE LIAT (1974) LIMITED GUARANTEE (AMENDMENT) BILL, 2006 . . . 49

Senator the Hon. E. R. Griffith, 49, 63; Senator F. J. Stuart, 51; Senator R. O. Marville, 53; Senator Dr. F. L. Chandler, 53; Senator I. St. C. Linton, 54; Senator A. A. Bynoe, 55; Senator G. P. B. Nicholls, 56; Senator R. W. Grant, 58; Senator Dr. D. S. Lowe, 61.

ORDER NO. 7 – RESOLUTION TO APPROVE THE GUARANTEE BY THE GOVERNMENT IN FAVOUR OF BOMBARDIER SERVICES CORPORATION OF THE PERFORMANCE BY LIAT (1974) LIMITED OF AIRCRAFT MAIN-TENANCE, RETURN CONDITION OBLIGA-TIONS AND REPOSSESSION CONTAINING THE TERMS AND CONDITIONS 65

Senator the Hon. E. R. Griffith, 65.

ORDER NO. 8 – RESOLUTION TO APPROVE THE GUARANTEE BY THE GOVERNMENT OF THE PAYMENT OF THE PRINCIPAL SUM OF $22,000,000 AND INTEREST THEREON IN RESPECT OF A BOND ISSUED BY THE TRANSPORT BOARD TO RBTT MERCHANT BANK LIMITED 65

Senator the Hon. E. R. Griffith, 65, 87; Senator Dr. D. S. Lowe, 69; Senator G. P. I. Gooding-Edghill,70, 82, 86; Senator Sir John Stanley Goddard, 72; Senator the Hon. Miss L. V. Eastmond, 72; Her Honour Senator Dame Patricia Symmonds, 75; Senator Miss P. E. Parris, 75; Senator I. St. C. Linton,76; Senator Dr. F. L. Chandler, 77; Senator T. E. Barker, 78; Senator A. A. Bynoe, 80; Senator R. O. Marville, 81.

ORDER NO. 9 – THE TELECOMMUNICATIONS (AMENDMENT) BILL, 2006 87

Senator the Hon. E. R. Griffith, 87; Senator F. J. Stuart, 88; Senator Sir Allan Fields, 89.

SUSPENSIONS 14, 44, 56, 80

ADJOURNMENT 91

Senator the Hon. E. R. Griffith, 91; Senator F. J. Stuart, 91; Mr. President, 91.

SPEAKERS IN THIS ISSUE

BARKER, Senator T. E.
BYNOE, Senator A. A.
CHANDLER, Senator Dr. F. L.
CRICHLOW, Senator the Very Reverend H. E.
EASTMOND, Senator the Hon. Miss L. V.
FIELDS, Senator Sir Allan
GODDARD, Senator Sir John Stanley
GOLLOP, His Honour Sir Fred
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.
NICHOLLS, Senator G. P. B.
PARRIS, Senator Miss P. E.
STUART, Senator F. J.
SYMMONDS, Her Honour Senator Dame Patricia