# THE

# SENATE DEBATES

## (UNOFFICIAL REPORT)

PARLIAMENT 2003 – 2008

## THE SENATE

*Wednesday, May 23, 2007*

The Senate met in the Senate Chamber, Parliament Buildings, on Wednesday, May 23, 2007, at 11.10 a.m.

PRESENT

His Honour Senator Sir Fred GOLLOP, K.A. J.P. (President) Her Honour Senator Dame Patricia SYMMONDS, D.B.E., G.C.M. BA (Hons) (PG CE), J.P., (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 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, Dip. Theology, B.A., M.ed., Ed.D.

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

Senator Sir JOHN STANLEY GODDARD, K.A., G.C.M., B.Com., F.C.A. (Hons.), LL.D. (Hons.) (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 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. Ministry of Finance - Half Yearly Report on the Revenue Collection Departments for the period April 01, 2006 to September 30, 2006;

2. Annual Report of the Barbados Tourism Authority for the period April 01, 2003 to March 31, 2004;

3. Annual Report of the Barbados Water Authority for the year 2004 to 2005;

4. Report of the National Insurance Board for the year 2004;

5. Report on the Operations of the Unemployment Fund for the year 2004;

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6. Report on the operation of the Severance Payment Scheme for the year, 2004;

7. Report on the Sugar Workers' Providence Fund for the year, 2004;

8. Report of the Judicial Council for the year, 2005;

9. Duties, Taxes and Other Payments (Exemption) (Barbados Tourism Investment Inc.,) 2007;

10. Annual Report of the National Assistance Board for the year, April 01, 2004 to March 31, 2005;

MOTIONS RELATING TO THE BUSINESS OR SITTINGS OF THE SENATE AND MOVED BY A MINISTER

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS

SENATOR the Hon. E. R. GRIFFITH: Mr. President, I beg to move that Standing Order 45(2) be suspended for the remainder of this Sitting.

*The question was put to the Senate and agreed to.*

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

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

1. Resolution to approve the draft Electoral and Boundaries Commission (Review of Boundaries) Order, 2006.

2. Resolution to approve in accordance with Section 5 of the Crown Lands (Vesting and Disposal) Act, Cap. 225, the vesting in the National Housing Corporation of a parcel of land, the property of the Crown, situate at 1st Avenue Long Gap, in the parish of St. Michael, in this Island, for disposal by way of sale for residential purposes.

3. Resolution to approve in accordance with Section 5 of the Land Acquisition Act, Cap. 228, the compulsory acquisition by the Crown, of parcels of land situate at Arch Hall, in the parish of St. Thomas, in this Island, for the public purpose of providing uninhibited access to the Fire Station and the housing development.

*The question was put to the Senate and agreed to.*

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

1. The Customs (Amendment) (No. 2) Bill, 2007;

2. The Stamp Duty (Amendment) Bill, 2007;

3. The Representation of the People (Amendment) Bill, 2007;

4. The Representation of the People (Amendment) Bill (No. 2) 2007.

*The question was put to the Senate and agreed to.*

SUSPENSION

SENATOR the Hon. E. R. GRIFFITH: Mr. President, at this stage, I wish to propose that this Sitting be now suspended until 1.00 p.m., and that we have Lunch from 12:00 noon to 1.00 p.m.

Mr. President, this proposal is being submitted, in order to facilitate those persons who are attending the funeral of the Prime Minister's daughter. We will resume at 1.00 p.m. and will continue with our Business for the rest of the day.

*The question that the Honourable Senate be now suspended until 1.00 p.m. was put to the Senate and agreed to and MR. PRESIDENT suspended the Senate accordingly.*

11.24 a.m.

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(EDITED 05/05/09)

RESUMPTION

MR. PRESIDENT: This Sitting is resumed.

OBITUARY SPEECHES

SENATOR THE HON. E.R. GRIFFITH: Mr. President, before we proceed with Public Business, I would like to take this opportunity to pay tribute to the late Reverend Leonard Rock, who served in this Chamber from February 1999 to 2003. We learnt of his passing some months ago and it was with deep regret that we received that sad news.

The late Reverend Leonard Rock, as those of you who were familiar with him know, had his early education at St. Giles School and then went on to Combermere School. On leaving school, he worked for a while at Pan Am until he journeyed to Jamaica in 1961, accompanied with his longstanding friend, Keith Gray, and entered The United Theological College, where he studied theology. Subsequently, he did further studies at Kew University in the United States of America and then moved on to his first assignment in the Methodist Church in the San Fernando Churches and it is there that his superintendent, at the time, the Reverend Philip Saunders, spoke of the challenge which confronted him and how, with his youthfulness, he overcame those challenges and showed the mettle, as it were, of which he was made. It was during his stint in that circuit that he met Linda Durrety, who subsequently became his wife and who eventually bore him one son. They were married on December 21st, 1967, according to the information, which I have seen.

Mr. President, the Reverend Leonard Rock was well-known for his sermons that were broadcast over the radio. I have heard him many times on the radio either in the morning service that comes on the radio at 5.45 a.m. or on occasions at various other services and I can say that he was an outstanding preacher, but the records of this Chamber demonstrates that he was very committed to social improvement and that he spoke out on social issues from this Chamber.

Mr. President, during his lifetime he was also a teacher at some point in time and he served as well as the chaplin for the Defence Force and, therefore, had an opportunity to influence a number of those persons, who were in the Cadet Corps and those who kept in contact with him.

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SENATOR HON. E.R. GRIFFITH: They speak about the counselling which they received, and the good advice that has helped them.

Sir, it is true to say that when we exam all the aspects of his contribution to this country, it has been an outstanding one, not only in the church, but also to the educational system. In addition to the contribution, which he made from this Chamber, those of us who are left behind would do well to cherish his legacy and to follow in his footsteps, so that we too can, through our contributions, touch the lives and citizens of our country in the same manner.

Sir, I wish, on behalf of the Honourable Members on this side and myself, to extend our deepest sympathy to his wife, son, relatives and friends, and pray that his soul may rest in peace.

I thank you.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Senator Sir John Goddard.

SENATOR Sir John GODDARD: Mr. President, I had the privilege of serving in this Senate Chamber and on the Constitution Review Commission, with the late Senator Rock. As has been said, he spoke forcefully on social issues. I remember that he did not speak often, nor did he speak for any length of time when he made a presentation, but it was always to the point and he always had the attention of everyone in this Chamber. Sir, I can say that he was an important Independent Member of this Senate and served the Senate and Barbados well. I shall miss him. May his soul rest in peace.

I thank you.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Senator Dame Patricia Symmonds. SENATOR Dame Patricia Symmonds: Mr. President, one of the things which impressed me most about the late Reverend Leonard Rock, is that he was a very good preacher. He was also a very charming friendly person, very popular with his congregation, not only at James Street Methodist Church, where I was brought up, I could almost say, but of Bethel. He was a very caring person, and even when he was unable to visit in person, he kept in touch by telephone with some members of the congregation. As Reverend Marlene Britton-Walfall said, when she gave a very moving eulogy at his funeral, he empathised with people and became immersed in the lives of those around him.

Sir, not surprisingly, he was a great lover of cricket, and he had been looking forward very much to the World Cup, but he died just a few weeks before it started. From as early as twelve years of age, he was sure of his calling to be a Minister of Religion, and that cannot always be said, because I find that some students, even at university are not always sure of what they are going to do, but from an early age he knew what he wanted to be.

Mr. President, family meant a great deal to him and his love for Linda, his wife, and their only child, Paul, was very evident. Paul attended the St. Michael School, and so I was in a good position to witness his devotion to his son. He was fond of music and loved to sing. He gave Linda much support and encouraged the establishment of the "Bethel Chimmers", which I am sure that some Honourable Members here have heard, and when it started, it was unique in Barbados and a source of much delight to people.

Mr. President, Reverend Rock never held against me that I was not as frequent churchgoer as he would have liked, but he always made me feel very welcomed whenever I attended. He believed in ecumenism and wherever he served, he fanned his flames. He was a member of numerous organisations related to his Ministry, and served with commitment and distinction. He was always, I understand, supportive of educational programmes.

Sir, having been appointed to the Senate in 1999, he spoke, as Sir John said, with eloquence, conviction and thought. You always felt that he had given great thought to what you were saying. The Hymns sung at his funeral reflected his fervent and deep love for Methodism, which has been described as being born in song, and the faith and profound belief in the power of prayer, were two of his guiding principles.

Mr. President, therefore, I consider it appropriate, not only to again extend sympathy to his wife, Linda, son

and family, but to end with the words of one of those Hymns, which he would surely have affirmed.

"I know not where his islands lift their fronded palms in air,

I only know I cannot drift beyond his love and care."

May he rest forever in peace.

I thank you.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Senator Dr. Lowe.

SENATOR Dr. D.S. LOWE: Mr. President, on behalf of the Democratic Labour Party, I would wish to stand and join my colleagues in this Chamber in paying tribute to a great Barbadian, who distinguished himself as a man of faith, and a great shepherd in the Methodist Church. He was also known as a very eloquent and distinguished preacher, one who sought to antagonise the truths of the Word, so as to bring light to the hearts of those who listened far and wide, to the message of the Gospel.

I did not have the honour of sharing this Chamber with the late Reverend Leonard Rock, who, as I understand it, served from 1999 to 2003, but from some of his speeches and utterances in this Chamber and other places, there are those moments, that stand out in the mind, not only of myself, but the minds many others who would have heard him from time to time.

13.20 p.m.

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*Senate 68, sequence 06, 1.20 p.m.*

Senator Dr. D.S. LOWE: I had the privilege of meeting him once or twice and sharing with him. I agree that he was a very charming individual, a gentleman who knew how to bring you into his social space and in one way or another, try to test whether or not your salvation was sure, and proceeded to share his journeys in and out of the region, as it related to his Ministry.

He is known, Mr. President, for his interest in social issues and that interest was mostly borne out in many of his speeches and talks to young people, in and around the country, on matters related to life and living, on matters related to lifestyle and life choices. Many great men have walked the earth and the footprints of their journeys have been left behind. This great man has not only left the imprints of his footsteps, but has left an indelible message for all Barbadians to embrace.

I join my colleagues, Mr. President, in extending our deepest sympathies on behalf of my Party, to the family of the late Rev. Leonard rock.

I thank you, Sir.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Senator Linton.

Senator I. St.C. LINTON: Mr. President, I would like to make a tribute to one whom I regard as a great man, not only as a priest and a teacher, but as a family person, but more so to the period of the two years that we spent together on the Constitution Review Commission.

Indeed, his breadth of knowledge, in regard to matters of State, you may not know but I know. Sir, like all of us, it is a wonderful thing to pass life's way and be of purposeful use to mankind as he was.

He looked forward, as I still look forward, to see many of the provisions recommended in that Constitution Review, and he would have longed to see many of the things that he spoke to come to pass, but in all things, we do not know when our will come.

Mr. President, I want to offer my sincerest condolences to his family, his friends and to the Methodist congregation.

May he rest in peace.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Like Senator Sir John and Senator Dame Patricia, I had the privilege of serving with Rev. Leonard Rock in this Chamber, between 1999 and 2003. During that period, the late Reverend made a sterling contribution to debates in this Chamber.

As has been said, he had a passion for social issues, particularly, the interest of the less fortunate, and in his contributions, he drew on his pastoral experience and, of course, his deep knowledge of theology.

The Reverend Rock had a certain gravitas, so whether it was in the Pulpit, in this Chamber or elsewhere, he commanded attention. We have heard of his contribution to the teaching profession and also of his service on the Constitution Review Commission. I think that we are all the poorer for his passing.

I would like to extend sincerest condolences to his widow, his son and I believe his mother is still alive, but to all members of his family, we extend deepest condolences.

I will now ask all Honourable Senators to stand for one minute, in silent tribute to the memory of our late colleague.

One minute's silence was observed.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Thank you.

PUBLIC BUSINESS

ORDER NO. 2 – CUSTOMS (AMENDMENT) (NO. 2) BILL, 2007

Senator the Hon. E.R. GRIFFITH: Mr. President, both the Customs Amendment, No. 2 Bill and the one that follows later, the Stamp Duty Amendment Bill, 2007 are the result of a change in the type of technology, which is being used by the Customs Department.

As you know, over the years, the Customs, in seeking to improve its efficiency, and the speed with which it is able to process the entries that are submitted by the importers, moved to develop the computer facilities and they installed the ASYCUDA System. Sir, that system has been upgraded from time to time and they have now reached a stage where they are using what is known as ASYCUDA PLUS/PLUS. This System facilitates the processing of documents of entries, in a manner that no longer requires people to be present at the Customs to have their transaction executed.

Mr. President, I well remember the days when you used to have long lines in the Customs Department, in what we used to describe as, the indoor section. Mr. President, by that you would realise that at some point in time in my life, I was a Customs Officer, so I am speaking with firsthand information. There used to be long lines in the Section, with all the Clerks who came to have their applications processed.

Over the years, as business increased, there became greater congestion in the department and, in spite of the fact that the department over time, tried to give the time frame within which applications would be processed, assuming that there were no errors on those forms, there was always still some issue about the length of time it took to get the transactions processed.

The Customs then sought to make improvements to its operations. I remember well, when we in the Ministry of Finance at that time, looked around to find the type of software, which could be used at the Customs, that we had great difficulty in obtaining an appropriate package. Sir, in those days, it was not so fashionable to find software on the shelves. Now, you can get a package off the shelve for anything, even if you have to make some adaptation to it, but in those days it was difficult.



SENATOR the Hon. E. R. GRIFFITH: Mr. President, at one time we had an offer out of Martinique but that did not materialise. We then had an offer out of Canada, but it was a bit expensive and we were not able to pursue it. Eventually, I found a package which had been developed by UNCTAD and was being used in an African State, and we obtained that package for use at the Customs Department. Mr. President, it turned out that the package was a bit elementary, as it were, and that the applications which we needed to make were a bit advanced in relation to those persons who were using the package.

Mr. President, that served as a good opportunity for us to work with UNCTAD and to have the package developed to handle more sophisticated entries. Mr. President, one of the officers who was put in charge of this project was able to give feedback to UNCTAD about the difficulties this package could not handle and the need for the adjustments. As a result of working with them, we were able to make a contribution to the development of the package which we have now and which is used by countries around the world.

Mr. President, this is not something that would normally be known. I know about it because I was involved in it. Mr. President, we did make a contribution towards the development of the package.

Mr. President, we have now reached the stage where the ASYCUDA Plus Plus could facilitate transactions online, therefore, it is not now necessary for persons to be there in the same numbers as was the case in the past. Mr. President, when you took your entry to Customs, you were required to pay stamp duty on the entry according to the provisions of the Stamp Duty Act, Chapter 91. The proposals before us then, contained in both pieces of legislation, is that in order to accommodate the transactions that are going to be done online, that we move from the system of charging stamp duty as was done previously.

Mr. President, in case of the Stamp Duty Act, Annex 1, under the heading Ship or Aircraft, as it stands now, each entry or clearance of a ship - and a number of items are set out there - under 500 tonnes net registered, you will have to pay $25 in stamp duty; for ships 500 tonnes or over, $100; general declaration for an aircraft, $10 in stamp duty; landing certificates, $10; and transhipment shipping bills, $10. What is being proposed now in both pieces of legislation, the Customs (Amendment) Bill, and the Stamp Duty (Amendment) Bill, is that a processing fee of $10 be put in place for the transaction to take place.

Mr. President, in the Customs (Amendment) Bill, you would notice that what is being proposed is that a new section 18 (b) be inserted after 18(a) in Chapter 66. This new section says a processing fee in the sum of $10 or such other sum as the Minister may by Order specify shall be

charged and paid into the Consolidated Fund on every entry submitted in respect of goods imported or cleared out of a warehouse where those goods are intended for domestic consumption. Of course, there is the usual exemption where the goods are for a diplomatic mission; a consulate or international organisation; or a member of the family of a diplomat or consular officer who forms part of the household of that person. Mr. President, the new section 18 (b) in the Customs Act, provides for the charging of a processing fee of $10, which was not the case before. It was left entirely to the Stamp Duty Act.

Mr. President, what is being proposed as the amendment to the Stamp Duty Act, Chapter 91, is that the section in Annex 1, which deals with a ship or an aircraft be deleted, so that there would no longer be a charge under the Stamp Duty Act, it would now fall under the Customs Act in section 18 (b), and would be a processing fee instead of the stamp duty which was charged previously.

Mr. President, these two issues are fairly straightforward. The changes are being made because of the change in the technology which the department is using. It is not an additional or new charge, it is just to replace what was under the Stamp Duty Act and to place it under the Customs Act and be able to charge it as a processing fee instead of stamp duty as was before.

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

SENATOR Dr. D. S. LOWE: Mr. President, we on this side are fully supportive of the business before us. It makes a lot of sense that if we are indeed seeking to move the country to a status where it can be competitive globally and where how we do business domestically has some relation to the global demands for doing business, that it would be important for us to continue to look at the systems we use relative to doing our business, in this particular case, the Customs related business, by increasing the accounting efficiencies and reducing the cumbersomeness of doing business with Customs as it is known.

Mr. President, the Honourable Minister pointed out the fact that there are times when the lines are extremely long and the wait is arduous, therefore, it would be important that we continue to review how we do our business and improve upon systems that are necessary for the delivery of that business, thereby increasing our efficiency and making it a lot easier for those persons who are doing business with the Government and the systems of Government to be able to execute those business transactions with a minimal amount of frustration.

It is also important as we see it, Mr. President, that there needs to be the continued journey of technological advancement in terms of how we deliver our processes and our practices as it relates to doing key elements of business, such as the one that is before us. There must be some harmony between the technology and how the business practices are delivered. Therefore, we see this as most appropriate as we continue to seek to advance the status of the business practices of the country to make sure that there is synergy between what technology drives and how people practice the delivery of services driven through that technology. Therefore, Mr. President, we find no objection with this business before us and we render our full support in that regard.

SENATOR the Hon. E. R. GRIFFITH: Mr. President, I beg to move that this Bill be read a second time.

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

*Senate 68 Sequence 7*

1.40 p.m.

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

COMMITTEE

Madam DEPUTY PRESIDENT: This Senate is now in Committee.

*Clauses 1 - 2, inclusive, were called and passed.*

*On the motion of SENATOR the Hon. E. R. GRIFFITH, Madam DEPUTY PRESIDENT reported to His HONOUR the PRESIDENT, the passing of the Bill in Committee and Mr. PRESIDENT resumed the Chair and reported accordingly.*

On the separate motion of SENATOR the Hon. E. R. GRIFFITH, the Bill was read a third time and passed and cited as the Customs (Amendment) (No. 2) Act, 2006.

ORDER NO. 3 – SECOND READING OF THE STAMP DUTY (AMENDMENT) BILL, 2007.

Senator the Hon. E. R. GRIFFITH: Mr. President, as I said a moment ago, this Bill is the result of the change in technology at the Customs Department, which gave rise to the amendment to the Customs Act. Therefore, I do not think we need to get involved in any extended discussion, since it is for the same reason as the earlier Bill.

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

*The question was put to the Senate and agreed to.*

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

COMMITTEE

Madam DEPUTY PRESIDENT: This Senate is now in Committee.

*Clauses 1 - 2, inclusive, were called and passed.*

*On the motion of SENATOR the Hon. E. R. GRIFFITH, Madam DEPUTY PRESIDENT reported to His HONOUR the PRESIDENT, the passing of the Bill in Committee and Mr. PRESIDENT resumed the Chair and reported accordingly.*

On the separate motion of SENATOR the Hon. E. R. GRIFFITH, the Bill was read a third time and passed and cited as the Stamp Duty (Amendment) Act, 2007.

ORDER NO. 4

RESOLUTION TO APPROVE THE GUARANTEE BY THE CROWN OF THE PAYMENT BY THE NATIONAL PETROLEUM CORPORATION OF BDS. $14.4 MILLION AND INTEREST THEREON, TO THE BANK OF NOVA SCOTIA, FOR THE PURPOSE OF DISCHARGING A DEBT OWED BY THE NATIONAL PETROLEUM CORPORATION TO THE BARBADOS NATIONAL BANK.

Senator the Hon. E. R. GRIFFITH: Mr. President, as you know, the National Petroleum Corporation, which was set up by an Act of Parliament under Cap. 280, has the responsibility of providing, distributing and transmitting natural gas to domestic and commercial users in the country.

Mr. President, over the years, it has built up a fairly enormous amount of infrastructure, by way of pipelines and distributions lines. In fact, it now has to maintain over 300 miles of distribution or transmission lines. That, in itself, is a fairly heavy responsibility because it runs into various parts of the country and therefore requires a fair amount of money, in order to maintain and to keep it at a high standard.

Mr. President, some time ago, the corporation borrowed a sum of money from the Barbados National Bank, which is has been repaying. In fact, at the time, it borrowed about $l5.6 million, in order to undertake an expansion programme. The interest rate, as you will see in the Addendum to the Resolution, was 6.45 per cent at the initial stages but over time, it increased to 9.45 per cent. Therefore, the monthly payment of interest and principal amounted to approximately $l65 000 to the corporation.

Mr. President, the corporation now has more than 600 commercial clients and in excess of 16 000 domestic clients. If you would look at the accounts of the corporation over time, you would notice that because of the price of natural gas, in relation to the price of LPG, the corporation hardly makes money from its domestic suppliers. It makes more money from its commercial suppliers, than it does from its domestic suppliers. Sir, in my view, as the price of oil continues to rise, the corporation is going to have to look at that matter and deal with it.

1.40 p.m.

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(EDITED 05/05/09)

SENATOR THE HON. E.R. GRIFFITH: I know for a fact, having dealt with the matter over the years when energy fell within the purview of Ministry of Finance that, certainly in those days when we were responsible for energy matters, the corporation made more money from supplying the gas to commercial activity than it made from supplying the gas to domestic usage.

Mr. President, I always remember the discussion which took place when the gas was carried to Six Cross Roads to a commercial activity there and people were claiming that it bypassed houses and went to this commercial entity because we favoured big people rather than small people and so on and, Sir, that was far from the truth. Sir, it is by connecting to commercial activity that the corporation is able to accommodate domestic supply, which does not earn much money and the more commercial activity you have, the better it is for the corporation to attach to them and, at the same time to carry along the domestic users, who currently, in my view, are getting more than a better deal with the corporation.

Mr. President, the corporation continues to expand its pipeline so as to facilitate more and more domestic users. This loan, which was obtained from the National Bank around 2002 was, for that purpose. The intention was to expand into some new areas and to allow additional persons to make use of the facility. In fact, at that time the plan was to connect another 2 540 homes and it would have covered areas in Christ Church, St. Michael, St. James, St. Philip and St. Peter. The sum of $15.6 million was used to repay $7.1 million of a previous loan and the remaining $8.5 million was to be used to carry out this 18-month programme in the parishes that I have mentioned not long

ago. The intention at that time was to lay a further 94 068 feet or some 17.81 miles of gas main at a cost of $6.5 million. The remaining $2 million was to be used to facilitate the connection of metre installation and it would have included the cost of other services.

Mr. President, part of the problem which the corporation has, in spite of the fact that the gas is 40 per cent cheaper than LPG, it goes into a district, after having carried out the appropriate survey and while a number of people are quick to put down their names, when the appointed time arrives, they are not always so quick to put their monies, where they have put their mouths. They say that the amount of money they have to pay for the installation is high. They do not take into account the fact that for decades to come they would be getting the gas much cheaper than if they buy the LPG or that they do not have to run around with a small bottle every now and then or call for a supply if it is a large bottle.

Mr. President, the corporation encourages people to connect because the more connection it has to the line, the better for them and better still if it has some commercial activity along the way. The corporation has developed schemes that would enable people to make the installation, it covers the cost and over time, the cost is repaid but in spite of that, it is unusual for them to get more than a 40 per cent hookup when they put down new lines immediately. Sir, this $8.5 million remaining from the original sum of $15.6 million is to be used to do that.

Mr. President, so far, of the 19 000 applications, which were received when they did the survey, they have been able to connect 1 664 new customers to the network. This is good because it represents about 88 per cent of the applicants. Sir, the corporation has done well in that time although I am not able to tell you the length of time it took them to do that.

Mr. President, the programme is almost instituted and they are repaying the funds. However, since the interest rate has increased significantly over time, the corporation has, in a bid to keep its cost down, particularly since the price of oil continues to rise, purchased the gas from the National Oil Company because the gas is also available when you drill for oil. In fact, our experience has always been that we tend to get more gas from a well than we got oil, so that our supply of gas comes from BNOC as they do their exploration. The extent of the gas, which we have, will always depend on the extent of the exploration which is done. They continue with their exploration but, as the price goes up and down, they will adjust their programme to suit.

Mr. President, hopefully, as they continue to do their exploration on land and hopefully, as we are able to go off land, we would come up with greater supplies of natural gas so that we can continue to expand the facilities across the country and also be able to guarantee, in a sense, that we would have a supply of gas for quite a long time.

Mr. President, therefore, the corporation, in an effort to keep down its cost so that it could continue with its expansion programme beyond this one, has gone out and made contact with various financial institutions to seek to find some refinancing opportunities and this is what is before us. Sir, it is really an effort to refinance the loan, which was taken from the Barbados National Bank in the sum of $15.6 million. They have received from the various entities offers and the one which is before us from the Bank of Nova Scotia, is one which gives them a lower interest rate and which will enable them over the remainder of the life of the loan to save close to $2 million.

*S68/14:00*

*Sequence 9*

*Wednesday, May 23, 2007*

SENATOR HON. E.R. GRIFFITH: Sir, to a corporation of the nature of the National Petroleum Corporation, $2 million is a lot of money, but for the conglomerates around us, $2 million is nothing. Therefore any effort to enable them to save that amount of money, we should support. Sir, it will not only allow them to service this loan, but to make savings they can use for further expansions, ensuring that persons across Barbados, who do not have natural gas, will at some point in time gain access to gas. Sir, if they have reviewed their prices, which I am sure they will at some point in time, it would still be more beneficial to use that facility, without the hassel currently experienced with others. Therefore, I feel this is a matter that deserves the support of all persons in this Chamber.

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

*The question was put to the Senate and agreed to.*

ORDER NO. 5 – RESOLUTION TO APPROVE THE COMPULSORY ACQUISITION BY THE CROWN OF THE PARCELS OF LAND SITUATE AT FONTABELLE IN THE PARISH OF SAINT MICHAEL IN THIS ISLAND FOR THE PUBLIC PURPOSE OF FACILITATING THE EXPANSION OF THE EXISTING WASTE WATER TREATMENT PLANT UNDER THE AMBIT OF THE WEST COAST SEWERAGE PROJECT.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Senator Griffith.

SENATOR HON. E.R. GRIFFITH: Mr. President, as this Resolution indicates, the Government is seeking

approval to acquire three parcels of land in Fontabelle, to facilitate the construction of a new Waste Water Facility, to accommodate the construction of the West Coast Sewerage System. We all know of the benefits the country has received, so far, from the setting up of the South Coast Sewerage Project.

I hear people, who are my seniors, speak about the days when what is now the "Band Stand" at Bay Street, near Government Headquarters, was a beach and the sand stretched to where the road is now. I do not know of those days, but I heard people speak about those times, when all that area was a beach and so on. It is now road and mud.

Mr. President, the point is, the erosion that has taken place around the country, and along the south coast over time. Sir, contamination that took place on the beaches and water around there, because of the sewerage and other contaminants that were allowed to get into those areas. There is a similar experience taking place along the west coast. There is erosion and some degree of contamination, from time to time, of the water because of the need for improvement in the treatment of sewerage and the way in which it is handled in those areas.

Mr. President, as you are aware, a number of those areas also fall within the Zone 1 area. That is another reason that it is absolutely necessary that the Government should proceed with the West Coast Sewerage System, not only to facilitate further development of the tourist industry, in terms of capturing the waste from the hotels, but also making sure that the beaches are kept clean, so that locals and visitors can bathe in those waters in comfort and with no need to worry about any problems. Sir, it is also to facilitate any establishment of waterborne facilities that would take place from construction in the Zone 1 area. It is obvious that there are benefits to be gained by the construction of a sewerage system along the west coast. The design, as it appears now, is for a system that will see the West Coast Sewerage and the effluent coming into an area, where it will join with what now comes from the west coast. It is in that context, it is found necessary to acquire some additional land.

Sir, the Government earlier acquired a number of other sites, about six other parcels, and these remaining three parcels will be added to that area, to create a wide enough space, to allow the construction of a new waste water treatment facility, while allowing them to deal with the existing one, and create an appropriate buffer to protect persons who remain in the area. It is in that context that this Resolution comes before us, for the acquisition of those three parcels of land.

Mr. President, on that basis, I beg to move that this Resolution do now pass.

*The question was put to the Senate and agreed to.*

ADJOURNMENT

SENATOR HON. E.R. GRIFFITH: Mr. President, we have come to the end of our business for the day, and I wish to thank Senators for dealing with the business so expeditiously, to bring it to an end without unnecessary delay. I therefore beg to move that this Sitting be adjourned sine die.

Thank you.

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

14.10 p.m.

*Sequence 10*

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(EDITED 05/05/09)

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## EDITORIAL NOTES — NOT PART OF THE REPORT

*Prepared with the transcript; for checking against the recording and the Minutes.*

### EDITORIAL QUERIES

*Points noted while preparing this report from the edited transcript. The text has not been altered except where stated.*

**Q1.** *Masthead.* The session is not stated in the source, so no session line is printed.

**Q2.** *Obituary Speeches, Senator Dame Patricia Symmonds.* Senator Dame Patricia Symmonds's tribute (about 520 words) is run into Mr. President's call 'Senator Dame Patricia Symmonds.' and so prints under the heading 'Mr. PRESIDENT'. Printed as in the source; the speech should probably carry her own heading. Please confirm.

**Q3.** *Order No. 2, third reading.* The Bill is the Customs (Amendment) (No. 2) Bill, 2007, but it is cited at third reading as the 'Customs (Amendment) (No. 2) Act, 2006'. Printed as in the source.

**Q4.** *Introduction of Bills.* Notice of three Resolutions is given under the heading 'INTRODUCTION OF BILLS', followed by 'The question was put to the Senate and agreed to.' Printed as in the source.

**Q5.** *Papers, item 9.* The title reads 'Duties, Taxes and Other Payments (Exemption) (Barbados Tourism Investment Inc.,) 2007', without the word 'Order'. Printed as in the source.

**Q6.** *Headings '(EDITED 05/05/09)'.* The source carries the editorial note '(EDITED 05/05/09)' as a heading in two places, at the resumption and within Order No. 4. Printed as in the source.

### DEBATE SUMMARY

*(Editorial summary — not part of the record.)*

The Senate met on Wednesday, 23rd May, 2007 at 11.10 a.m., with the President, His Honour Senator Sir Fred Gollop, in the Chair; prayers were led by Rev. Father Errington Massiah. The Leader of the Senate, Senator the Hon. E. R. Griffith, laid ten papers, among them the Ministry of Finance's half-yearly report on the Revenue Collection Departments and the Report of the Judicial Council for 2005. Standing Order 45(2) was suspended and notice was given of three Resolutions, including one to approve the draft Electoral and Boundaries Commission (Review of Boundaries) Order, 2006. Four Bills were read a first time, among them two Representation of the People (Amendment) Bills, 2007.

Senator Griffith then moved that the Sitting be suspended until 1.00 p.m. so that those attending the funeral of the Prime Minister's daughter could do so. On resumption he led tributes to the late Reverend Leonard Rock, a Senator from February 1999 to 2003 and a Methodist minister. Senator Sir John Goddard recalled serving with him in the Senate and on the Constitution Review Commission and his forceful speeches on social issues; Senator Dame Patricia Symmonds spoke of him as a fine preacher and a lover of cricket who died a few weeks before the World Cup; Senator Dr. D. S. Lowe joined on behalf of the Democratic Labour Party; and Senator I. St.C. Linton recalled their two years on the Constitution Review Commission. The President, who had also served with him, added his own tribute.

Under Public Business, Senator Griffith explained that the Customs (Amendment) (No. 2) Bill, 2007 and the Stamp Duty (Amendment) Bill, 2007 arose from the Customs Department's move to the ASYCUDA PLUS/PLUS computer system. He recalled his own days as a Customs Officer and the search that led to a package developed by UNCTAD. Senator Lowe said the Opposition fully supported the Bills as part of making the country globally competitive. Both Bills passed all stages, with Madam Deputy President in the Chair in Committee.

Order No. 4 was the Resolution to approve the guarantee by the Crown of the payment by the National Petroleum Corporation of BDS$14.4 million and interest to the Bank of Nova Scotia, to discharge a debt owed to the Barbados National Bank. Senator Griffith said the Corporation maintained over 300 miles of lines and that the original loan of $15.6 million had repaid $7.1 million of an earlier loan and financed an expansion programme. The interest rate had risen from 6.45 to 9.45 per cent, and refinancing at a lower rate would save close to $2 million over the life of the loan. He added that natural gas was 40 per cent cheaper than LPG but new lines seldom drew more than a 40 per cent hookup. The Resolution was agreed to.

Order No. 5, the Resolution to approve the compulsory acquisition of land at Fontabelle, St. Michael for the expansion of the waste water treatment plant under the West Coast Sewerage Project, was moved by Senator Griffith. He said three parcels would be added to about six acquired earlier to allow a new facility and a buffer for residents, and recalled the erosion and contamination along the south coast before the South Coast Sewerage Project. The Resolution was agreed to, and on Senator Griffith's motion the Senate was adjourned sine die.