
THE SENATE DEBATES

(UNOFFICIAL REPORT)

PARLIAMENT 2008 – 2013

THE SENATE

Friday, March 28, 2008

RESUMPTION

Madam DEPUTY PRESIDENT: This Sitting is resumed.

SENATOR the Hon. A. B. WALTERS: Madam Deputy President, fellow Members of Cabinet, Honourable Senators, this is my first opportunity to speak as an Honourable Member of the Senate, and I wish to thank God for this opportunity to make another contribution to my nation. I also wish to thank Gordon and Cordelia, my parents, for believing in me even in my most trying times.

Madam Deputy President, I am proud to be part of a Chamber that would have produced such in-depth and high quality Debate in its first Sitting. Over all, the pattern that is emerging is one of genuine concern for this beautiful country we call home.

Madam Deputy President, when one shifts through the various social, political and economic arguments advanced in this Chamber over the last two days, and indeed in the Other Place last week, there is a general consensus on how Barbados can and should proceed towards its further development or first world status.

The clarion call today is for our leaders to harness the collective talents, energies and resources of the various constituencies towards the good of all.

Several cogent arguments were advanced in support of the promotion of the various sectors, but a common thread in the respective formulae for success was the effective development, deployment and utilisation of our human resource. If one clinically examines each perceived hot potato Department, or sector of governmental activity, it would become apparent that the root cause of the

majority of problems in health, education, agriculture, and the social services, is human resource related.

Madam Deputy President, it is normal to look at enhanced productivity, better attitudes, a commitment to being NISE, and in the public sector, a thrust towards achieving social cohesiveness and a better social dialogue within the workplace and in our broader communities. It is for this reason that I believe the Prime Minister, the Honourable David Thompson, should be congratulated for stepping outside of the mainstream of partisan combative politics to reinforce his enlightened Cabinet of Ministers and individuals whose record of scholarship, training and professional endeavour recognises the importance of the effective harnessing and utilisation of human resources as well as the encouragement of a stable industrial relations environment.

Madam Deputy President, I am honoured for this opportunity to serve my country in so esteemed a role at this crucial juncture in its development. I consider myself fortunate to be working alongside the likes of Senators Maxine McClean and Darcy Boyce and the entire Cabinet, together with the broader Parliamentary group of this Democratic Labour Party Administration. I am confident that together we will carry Barbados forward and closer to its goal of developed status leaving no one behind in the process.

Madam Deputy President, the strategy of spokespersons of the Opposition, both in this Chamber and in the Other Place, had been to trace all issues to arithmetic or an economic conclusion. The efficacy of all policies was assessed on the basis of fiscal impact and whether such was provided in the Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure before us.

My own training and experience have brought me into contact with a variety of social policies and Administration and social economic policy formulation in such areas of poverty studies and employment related

issues. The focus of my opening statement in this Chamber would concentrate on employment rights and employment relations, both in the private and public sectors.

Madam Deputy President, I wish to draw to the attention of this Honourable Chamber that pages 32 to 37 of *A Pathways to Progress* published by the Democratic Labour Party - and I gladly at this time make this a document of this Honourable Senate - set forth a national industrial innovation policy that encompasses among other issues, employment and enterprise, opportunities and rights for all, and securing the rights and dignities of workers.

These policies articulate a novel approach to issues of enterprise, employment, industrial relations and the Social Partnership. It points to an enlightened perspective on labour and employment issues that would see in the not too distant future the enactment of a comprehensive national employment rights legislation along with the revision of some of the 1940s labour legislation to bring Barbados into the 21st Century to deal adequately with the new international trading arena.

Madam Deputy President, as an ordinary voter, I read this proposition and embraced it. Today, as a Minister of government and a Member of this new Democratic Labour Party Administration, I wholeheartedly endorse this approach and unconditionally applaud the Honourable Prime Minister on his forward-looking outlook to issues of labour and employment legislative reform in Barbados.

Senate A2 Sequence 75

10.10 a.m.

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SENATOR the Hon. A. B. WALTERS: Madam Deputy President, we meet today against a backdrop of widespread dis-satisfaction and unease with the industrial climate that has developed, or more appropriately, systematically deteriorated over the years, with our failure to review and revise substantial portions of employment rights and labour relations legislation.

Madam Deputy President, in the two months I have had the opportunity to interface with several of the key stakeholders of the Social Partnership in Barbados, I am satisfied there is still very much the desire to move the process forward, but one senses an absence of a master plan to drive the initiative forward. Madam, employment rights have, for too long, been relegated to the back-burner and treated as a stepchild of Governments policies.

We need, in Barbados today, a full suite of employment rights legislation to protect both employers and employees. The new Administration is, therefore,

committed to enacting this legislation at the earliest opportunity, since there has been wide consultation since 1999.

The Manifesto of the Party states clearly that there will also be revised legislation on Trade Unions, which includes the recognition procedures and the enforceability of collective agreements, etcetera. In the Ministry of Employment, Labour Relations and Social Partnership, we are busying ourselves with the task of preparing for public discussion and ultimate Parliamentary approval, a legislative framework as outlined in *A Pathways to Progress*.

Madam Deputy President, the legislative agenda includes, but is not limited to:

a. Revisions to the Labour Department Act, to enhance the duties and powers of the Chief Labour Officer and to make improvements where possible, through our dispute resolution machinery, especially in relation to collective disputes.

Madam, this piece of legislation is certainly 60 years old and coming into the 21st Century, we should be prepared to make a number of revisions to this Labour Department Act.

b. Revisions to the Trade Union Act to include other provisions and to strengthen section 40(a)",

Madam, section 40 (a) speaks to the dreaded question of having Membership of a trade union and an employer seeking either to alter the terms of employment or dismissal, because that person is a Member or an officer of a trade union. This matter has not been tested as yet in the court and one would hope that between the Labour Department and the Attorney-General's Office, they would make some attempt, when there are those breaches, that we move to a position of prosecuting.

c. The enactment of an Employment Rights Act wuty provisions for tye protection of employees who can make claims to an Employment Rights Tribunal, where it is alleged that the employee has been unfairly dismissed.

d. The provision of a Statement of Particulars of employment, including a disciplinary court and procedure, along with a grievance handling procedure within the context of the Statement of Particulars.

e. The right not to be unfairly dismissed.

f. The right of the employee to firmly lodge complaints with the Chief Labour Officer, prior to proceeding to a hearing at the Employment Rights Tribunal.

g. The rights to receive an itemised pay statement.”

Madam, I would have thought that in 2008, every employee in Barbados should be receiving a pay statement setting out the rates of pay and any deductions that are made.

h. The right to be consulted prior to being laid off or being made redundant.”

Madam Deputy President, this is still a sore point. Although we have had the Severance Payment Act in Barbados for at least 35 years, one would have thought that certainly the employee or the employee=s representative, when dealing with positions of redundancy, part of the international position has been that those parties are consulted prior to being made redundant.

Madam, even in our Protocol Five documents and in other protocols, we have had situations where the protocol document does, in fact, say where there are more than 10 per cent of the working population that is going to be made redundant, then you had to give an additional two weeks for the consultation period to take place.

The Employment Rights Bill will certainly introduce a number of changes to the practice of employment relations and dispute resolution in cases of determination of individual employees in Barbados. The concept of a tribunal made up of an attorney, an employee=s representative and a Trade Union representative, is not new to Barbados, as Tribunals currently exist in the determination of National Insurance and Severance Payments claims, the Tribunal will have powers to award compensation, in some cases, to order reinstatement or re-engagement to an employee who has been unfairly dismissed.

This change may warrant the parties to be retrained in presenting cases to a dispute resolution panel. The Tribunal may have an easier task, since a lot of the uncertainty over the determination of a contract of service has been removed by the recent High Court declaration in the case involving Sagicor. Sir, that should make essential reading for most employers and, certainly, employees.

It is important to note that this proposed Bill widens the employment rights safety net by offering all employees covered by the Bill, whether they are individually employed on a contractual relationship, or are within the boundary of a collective agreement, since the starting point is that all employees are covered first and foremost in a contract of employment.

Madam Deputy President, the revision to the Trade Dispute Arbitration and Inquiry Act, which currently allows for the Governor-General to intervene in collective

disputes to convene arbitration tribunals, has not found favour with either employers or trade unions over the last 60 years. May be the time has come for some creative thinking in this area of our employment relations.

Having been involved in labour relations and human resource management over the last 30 years, it is now becoming clear that the provisions of the Labour Department Act, using the Chief Labour Officer in a role of a conciliator, has served us well. However, there is now a level of sophistication as new concepts and theories now dominate employment relations.

Madam, the Democratic Labour Party=s Manifesto contemplates that alternative dispute resolution techniques will be put in place to resolve a number of these collective disputes, and maybe a system of tribunals similar to the ones suggested in the Employment Rights legislation, may be appropriate, if the change process is properly managed.

The enactment of Sexual Harassment legislation in the workplace.

This legislation has been in draft for some time and a critical review will be undertaken prior to enactment.

10.20 p.m.

Friday, March 28, 2008

SENATOR the Hon. A. B. WALTERS: There are a number of issues surrounding sex, gender and race discrimination, which will be dealt with within the Employment Rights Act.

We need to revise aspects of the following Acts: The Holiday With Pay Act. There are a number of issues arising with the Holiday with Pay Act in the 21st Century that require urgent consideration, including a re-look at the whole concept of what is total remuneration.

Madam Deputy President, the Shop Amendment Act. We need to look again at some aspects of the Shop Amendment Act.

Madam, my memory of this Act sometimes have been troubling. When it first came into Parliament in the 1980s, it came to Parliament and went out of Parliament without the stakeholders having any consultation on it. In 1996, when the amendment came into place, it went into Parliament and came out of Parliament almost in the same manner, so that there has been some controversy surrounding some of the provisions in the Shop Amendment Act.

Madam Deputy President, one of the things that we are now considering is to move into the 21st Century and to

look at some improvements and certainly in terms of our 24-hour workday concept for large supermarkets, but that is also going to bring some challenges with it. Among the challenges that would be brought would be the payment system that we are going to use between 10:00 o'clock and 7:00 o'clock in the morning and the challenge of security. As we know, in the present circumstances, the petrol stations, which open on a 24-hour basis, 365 days a year are having some issues with their security late in the mornings and that is an issue which we have to take into account.

Madam Deputy President, the Severance Payment Act is in need of some revision. It is now about 35 years old. There are a number of issues which, certainly will have to be rescinded and a number of issues which have to be revised within the context of the Severance Payment Act, as soon as we bring the Employment Rights Act in place. Sir, those discussions are currently taking place.

Enact the Safety and Health at Work Act, 2005.

Madam President, the Ministry of Labour is currently completing work and revising Section 104, a most troublesome Section, because it speaks to the refusal to undertake dangerous tasks and that particular Section needs some re-writing, to put it mildly. There are still a number of challenges associated with proclaiming this Act. Among those concerns is that the Crown might not be able to comply with a number of basic provisions, including the provision of safe premises and place of work for its employees.

Madam Deputy President, there is no point trying to put a comprehensive piece of labour legislation in terms of the Safety and Health at Work Act on the Statute Books and the major employers in Barbados then have difficulty in complying with the provisions.

Madam, that is an issue that we certainly need to pay some attention to. I have been advised by my colleagues that we are going to look very seriously, starting in this Budget year, at some of the public- owned buildings and to see if we could do either preventive maintenance, refurbishing or whatever is required to be done to bring our own places of work into the 21st Century, so that we can comply with the Safety and Health at Work Act.

Madam Deputy President, the other major challenges include the provision of information to employees.

One of the things that I have found over the years in dealing with safety and health is that sometimes employers still treat the provision of information on safety and health as if it is private information.

Madam, it is public information and once we have moved into the 21st Century and we begin to understand that there is the concept of the duty of care for employees, then we are talking to the business of public information, which is necessary for the safety and health of employees.

Madam Deputy President, the other area is Section 103 of the Act, where employers are required to fully consult with employees and employees= representatives, inclusive of implementing the recommendations of safety Committees, if practicable, what we probably need to do, in terms of the safety and health legislation, is to go for a comprehensive public education strategy aimed at both employers and employees.

Secondly, we probably need to go for a complete training avalanche targeted towards employers; targeted toward senior managers and targeted towards supervisors, who quite frankly, sometimes do not begin to understand the role they play.

Madam Deputy President, I have normally said to students, because I have a larger than life interest in this area, having written the Draft National Policy on Safety and Health in Agriculture, I am sure that both Senator Chandler and Senator Hutson may not like some of the things I have put in it, but I tried, as far as possible, to take into account that there were cultural difficulties that we would have to overcome, but to look at the international standards we also had to meet.

Madam, among the things I normally say to students in dealing with this particular area is that if I were a much younger man, I would not want a job as a supervisor, if you had to deal with safety and health.

Madam, before you put a person as a supervisor, within the context of this particular Act, the person has to be competent. That person has to be able to fully instruct employees about the work they are going to do. They have to point out the dangers associated with that work. They have to point out the precautions to be taken in doing particular jobs and then they have to properly supervise that employee.

Madam Deputy President, there is a case I normally use quite effectively, so that people could begin to appreciate. There is a case called Erica Hurdle v. Allied Metals in the 1970s, where a 16-year-old young lady went into a firm on the Harbour Road and within two weeks of going into the firm, she lost a hand and this is what she said in the report: AThe Supervisor said to me, sit down there, watch me do and what you see me do, do.@

Madam, that has taken less than 10 seconds for me to say to this Chamber and if that is all the training and supervision given to the young lady, certainly, in today=s

terms it has nothing to do with competency of the supervisor and he certainly did not provide training or instructions, and if he had provided any, it was not enough.

Madam, the supervisor got up and left her and, Madam, the next time he went back to the young lady was when she lost her hand within two weeks.

10.30 a.m.

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SENATOR the Hon. A. B. WALTERS: We really do not need that kind of difficulty appearing out of safety and health, *Erica Hurdle v Allied Metals*. The Employment Rights and Legislative Programme will mean that the Ministry of Labour may have to re-focus its mandate to meet the needs of its customers, employees, trade unions and employers.

Maybe the time has come for us to re-visit the Labour Department. May be the time has come for us to revisit our voluntary industrial relations system, because there are challenges being thrown up daily, not only by indigenous employers, but those challenges being thrown up by transnational and multinational companies, who, when they come to set up business in Barbados are asking question: where is the legislation that guides me in relation to employment rights and employment relations? If they do not see anything in writing, they are not necessarily going to abide by whatever the trade unions may wish to call custom, practice and tradition. That is not going to play in the 21st century.

Madam, we also have to think about the new international trade arrangements. The persons that we are trading with are now asking some very awkward questions in terms of their audits. The one that I know best is where we produce sugar for local consumption, bulk sugar that goes on the floor in the harbour, and special sugars which we ship away as Muscavado, Plantation Reserve and the like. The purchasers of that product are now asking questions on our safety and health regime, and our bargaining and collective process regime.

Madam, one of the questions that always put us in some difficulty, certainly within the last three years or so, within the sugar industry, is when the question asked is: Have you done a risk assessment of your company process? That is a major challenge.

In the current Factories Act, assuming that we do not have any provisions, we do not have an Act which has been proclaimed called "The Safety and Health at Work Act", which allows at Sections 6.1,2 and 3, for the conduct of

risk assessments. If you are bringing in new machinery, if you are working with new substances, hazardous materials and the like, you then have to conduct a risk assessment before you actually put these things into operation.

Madam, the overseas purchasers of our goods are asking these questions. The overseas purchasers are also saying to you, that you are sending a product to me, is it a HACCP standard? Either you say: "yes", or you say "no". If you say "no", the possibility is, your product will not go anywhere near that destination.

Madam, do not think that you can just sit down and rest on your laurels, because part of the difficulty is going to be that after you have completed that questionnaire, and sent it back to the people who are buying the stuff from you, they are going to send their auditors in to make sure what you say is correct. That is a challenge for Barbados, and certainly in relation to our new arrangements with the Europeans. It is something that we need to work on steadfastly and to make sure that we get our standards up to a world marketplace.

Madam, the Ministry is not only involved in employment relations. Its remit spans to the work of the Labour Department. The Labour Department, certainly out of the 1940s, would have specialised in works in the shops and factories. That remit has broadened, certainly in the last number of years, the section of the Manpower Research and Statistical Unit, where that Unit supplies a number of statistical data for good operation of the country, in terms of labour statistics.

The National Employment Bureau is an area that I want to spend a few minutes on. In the first instance, I would just like to change the image of what we consider to be the National Employment Bureau. I would like it located in a prominent place on a ground floor and attractive, so that young persons, old persons, and unemployed persons may feel comfortable and at ease going to an Employment Bureau. I suspect that we are still living somewhere back in the 1960s and 1970s.

In 1968, I had the fortune of having to go to Herbert House, Fontabelle, to be recruited to go to England. We are probably still using some of the same methods. I think that we need to modernise our Employment Bureau.

Madam, we have concentrated heavily out of the 1960s and 1970s, on recruiting persons to and for the London Transport, the Post Office, Lyons Tea Shops and the like. In recent times we have gone to the United States Farm Labour Programme, and within recent times we have gone to a Canadian Hotel Programme and a United States Hotel Programme, the numbers though are small. They are small in comparison with the kind of attention that the Jamaicans or the Mexicans are getting. One thing we need

to impress upon those persons, who have been employed on those Schemes is that they need to behave as ambassadors for Barbados when they go overseas.

Madam, in a number of cases, the pay is not that bad. I have had one or two instances where persons have been able to say, they have been on the Programme for the last 10 or 20 years, and they have been able to make a living out of those programmes. We need to pay some attention to those programmes in the near future, so that we could have some benefit from them. Certainly, the Hotel Programme would begin to attract a number of young people who could go through the Hospitality Training Institute, and then go on to other positions.

Madam, also under the Ministry of Labour, is the Barbados Vocational Training Board. The Training Board's mandate relates to providing training, both Skills Training and Apprenticeship Training. They are still involved in Apprenticeship Training. The numbers are not as large as one would like, but that is a useful programme for people coming out of the secondary schools and going into technical training.

Madam, the one concern that I may have would be the Vocational Training Board. At this point, we need to upgrade some of the processes within the Training Board, where the equipment is becoming obsolete. We need to change that equipment and begin to train persons on equipment and machinery that is up-to-date. The one thing that you do not want to be doing in 2008 is to be training anybody on an old Ford or Bedford, because when you look at the car that you now have, and you look at the car you had 25 years ago, they are two different pieces of machinery. One is relying heavily on plastics and electronics. I think that is where, certainly in

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Estimates - Senate A2, sequence 79, 10.40 a.m.

SENATOR the Hon. A. B. Walters: terms of the Samuel Jackman Prescod Polytechnic and the Vocational Training Board, they need to upgrade those kinds of machinery.

Two, we are into fuel injection systems. We are into electronic diagnostics. When your car breaks down and it goes into Simpson Motors, Courtesy or one of the other garages, the first thing the technician does is to plug it into a diagnostic machine that indicates what is wrong. Half of the time, what the technician does, is pull out one part and

put the next in. He does not repair it anymore. He does not need a hammer and a chisel anymore.

Madam, that may be something we have to pay some attention to and I would certainly ask that in the Estimates for the Vocational Training Board and the TVET that they pay attention to these issues in terms of improving and enhancing our human resource base in Barbados.

I want to spend a little time on the Civil Service and then turn to the Social Partnership. One of the areas in the Civil Service that I want to concentrate on, is the whole business of the training of our public servants. In the Work Programme for this year, it is expected that 2 111 persons will be trained and, to my mind, that is too low a figure for a civil service of about 28 000 persons. I am going to have to tug at the arms of the innkeeper or the banker, the Senator on my right, Senator Boyce and make the point that we must have a much more enlightened Public Service, and it has to be well trained, not only in the technical aspects of a job but in the soft skills of the job.

Madam, I think we must get to the place in the Public Service where - and this is a notion that sometimes I do not understand how the Barbadian work ethics have deteriorated. If I say to you that you have a contractual obligation to get to work at 8:00 o'clock in the morning, I expect you to be there by 7:55 o'clock in the morning, ready and willing to work.

Asides.

SENATOR the Hon. A. B. WALTERS: Sir, when you walk across the road here at the Royal Bank and Royal Bank tells me that they are going to open at 8:00 in the morning, those cashiers have to be in there by 7.45 a.m., so that when the guard opens the door at one minute to eight, business starts.

Madam Deputy President, there are some areas that certainly we have to pay some attention to and among those areas would be, in my mind in the short-term, to look at the supervisory management in the Public Service first and foremost, and to spend some time both at the orientation and induction stage, and in the level of training in supervisory management.

Maybe, there is some hesitancy out of persons to manage these days. Maybe, as a youngster, I never quite appreciated why the late Right Excellent Errol Walton Barrow made the statement that, to him, the Public Service appeared to be "an army of occupation."

I have only worked in the Public Service for about one year in my early life, when I was 18 or 19 years old. I made sure that when I was in that period, there was still an

ethic which said that if you had to go to work at 8.00 a.m., get there at 8.00 a.m.

Madam, we had some supervisors, who lived in the village, who might have had cars and were going in the same direction as us, but if we missed the 7.00 a.m. bus, they did not offer us a ride, and when we arrived at work, we were marked, late.

Madam, we have to look at the whole business of the management and leadership of the Service to be able to make some improvements in that area.

I have a position which says that if I am going to pay you good money to come and do some work and deliver a particular service, come and do what you have to do. When you are on your own time, you do whatever socialising you need to do, but when you come to do my work as a professional person that is the expectation I have. You come in at 8.00 a.m., conduct the Government's business in the manner in which it should be conducted, and when you leave, then you have your time to go and do what you have to do.

I think although we have had the GIFT Programme in place, and the GIFT Programme is probably having some results. In the Ministry of Labour, we just had our Second Annual Awards. It was quite an exciting affair to see that there were numbers of people, who still give of good service in the Public Service.

Madam, one of the areas certainly that we should have paid some attention, and we are probably going to pay much more attention to, in the next year, is the Office of Public Service Reform. When I did audits of the various activities, I found that the number of persons who are being captured by these officers, both Training Administration, Office of Public Sector Reform and the like, are small.

We are still into the business of pilot projects. I do not understand how after 10 years, you could be still in the business of being in pilot projects. Madam, even the business of the Performance Appraisal Scheme that is still into a pilot stage.

I have asked the persons involved in that particular section to look at training, and make sure that they get the managers in a room and begin to train them, so that they can properly consult and understand clearly that if they are going to get on a Performance Management System, what are the expectations.

When we looked at the training, the first morning I went and looked at the Estimates, I was so dumb-founded that I told the persons who were presenting the Estimates for Training and Development to take them back and come back to me with a new plan, which shows that you have

some appreciation that there are certain critical needs in this Public Service for some training.

Senate A2, sequence 79

10.50 a.m.

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SENATOR the Hon. A. B. WALTERS: we are going to run courses in Supervisory Management, Human Resource Management, Industrial Relations, Strategic Leadership for Executives, Strategic Leadership for Senior Managers, Counselling and Coaching Techniques. Maybe one of the areas we probably need to spend some time on is the whole business of coaching and training. We need to get into the business of "Train the Trainer" courses so that we would have a cadre of people who are able to put across the position. There are also going to be some courses in Public Sector Human Resource Management. On top of that, we are going to do some courses in Orientation and Induction for junior officers, administrative officers and trainers of trainers. One of the areas that we probably need to spend a little more time on is Event Management. We are always into exhibitions and the like, so we need to have persons within the Public Service who are trained Event Managers. We are going to run 22 courses this year of 30 persons each in Public Service Excellence. That might not be enough, but that is a start.

Health and safety at work is one of my pet peeves, because if we are going to go anywhere near enacting the Health and Safety at Work Act, we need to have competent managers and supervisors who have to have full appreciation of health and safety management, therefore we are going to run a number of courses in that particular area.

There is a sum in the Estimates, and this should please Senator Symmonds, for Departments specific training, at about \$1.3 million. I listened to your concern.

In terms of Personnel Administration, one of the things I wish to say to you is that we are currently working through the Public Service Bill. There are a number of good points about that Bill. It would present some challenges for the senior officers in the Public Service to implement some aspects of the Bill. The one area certainly that we would probably have to do some training on is the area of disciplinary procedures, processing and grievance handling.

Madam Deputy President, what I have found over my last 30 years back in Barbados is that one of the deficiencies in the management system, both in the public sector and the private sector is that people who are placed in supervisory and management positions sometimes are

not able to handle grievances at their level. Part of the problem is that sometimes people do not listen.

Madam, because ours is a small community, sometimes people have all kinds of old fights that emanate in the village and among families and they take those fights to work. If you and your boss do not drink in the same rum shop or whatever, you have a problem.

Madam Deputy President, when I first came home, I found these phenomena, something I could not understand. I was working at the Transport Board as the Human Resource Manager and every morning I turned up to work I would have about 15 people waiting to see me. I would ask them if they had personal problems and they would say the problems had something to do with work, but they could not talk to the supervisor.

I told them to go to the supervisor and lay their grievances with him, because even at that time I found that the Barbados Workers' Union and the Transport Board had one of the best grievance procedures in place, which set out very clearly how you were supposed to process grievances, but it was more than that.

Madam Deputy President, if you were a young man walking into the Transport Board at that time and you did not understand the dynamics or the culture of the Transport Board, you would always have a problem. The older guys were able to work the system and work probably 80 hours a week. The younger guys could barely get 20 hours a week, because you had to learn how to throw the matchbox.

I see that Senator the Very Reverend Harold Crichtlow does not understand about the matchbox. Madam Deputy President, you had to put some money in a matchbox and throw it at the supervisor, otherwise you would not get any work. You do not understand that those systems exist in Barbados?

Asides.

SENATOR the Hon. A. B. WALTERS: Madam Deputy President, the supervisor was not necessarily in any position to handle the grievances that might have come before him, because he had allegiance to some other people. Sometimes we have that kind of position existing in a number of our workplaces.

Among the issues, certainly within the Public Service, arising out of the Public Service Act is going to be how are managers going to deal with the whole disciplinary process. My suspicion is that because you have come out of an old General Order situation and you are now moving into a new modern type human resource situation in relation to dealing with grievances and discipline, that we are going to have to put on specific training.

One of the most difficult things we do not want to have to deal with as a HR or IR person is for a supervisor to say to you, one of my employees has just breached a rule, but he is not prepared to come and put the case properly before a tribunal and because you are not prepared to come and put the case properly, chances are you are going to lose that particular case. Therefore, we have to train our people, when we put them in supervisory and management positions, both in the public sector and the private sector. They have to recognise they would need to deal with the IR problems and the employment relation problems, and that they may come to a place on occasions when they have to properly present their case.

As my time is drawing nigh, one of the Honourable Senators is reminding me that I only have five minutes.

Let me spend a few minutes looking at the concept of the Social Partnership. The Social Partnership was born in 1993, when the Democratic Labour Party Government forged an alliance with the private sector and the workers' representatives as an instrument for promoting national and economic stability.

Senate A2 Sequence 80

11.00 a.m.

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SENATOR the Hon. A. B. WALTERS: This alliance evolved into a permanent institution - the Social Partnership, hailed by Barbados and the outside world as a model institution for the promotion of tripartite consultation and social dialogue, and as an instrument of social and economic re-engineering.

Madam Deputy President, I am one who firmly believe that we need to review the functions of our institution from time to time, to ensure the optimum performance. My vision includes the following:

a. The return of a serious macro-economic agenda agenda of the Social Partnership. Among other things, I wish to see a regular examination on prices and incomes and the effect on the economy and the population.

b. Strengthening of the Secretariat. The Secretariat is in dire need of research capacity. The Social Partnership can only address issues in a meaningful way if it is supplied with information based on hardcore research.

Madam, we will put everything in place to make sure that the Social Partnership has the capacity.

c. We need to have in place a consistent plan of action for the Social Partnership, to ensure the following decisions are taken.

While I say that, I also have to sound a warning to some of the stakeholders in the Social Partnership. Over the last five or six years, what has happened is that you could go to a sub-committee of the Social Partnership and there would be approximately four persons representing the private sector.

Madam, one of the things I would want to implore Sir John Goddard and some of his colleagues who have some influence in the private sector, is that if we are going to be speaking to the issue of tripartite consultation, the private sector must come to the table on a regular basis and must participate meaningfully in these consultations. There is no point in one portion of the exercise for the private sector to say it now has control of that portion, while on the Government=s side, Government is saying that it now has control of that portion.

Madam, I would say to those persons who need to be at the meeting, that when a meeting is scheduled and called, unless the person die, they should get there. Sir, I shall certainly do that.

d. Finally, an effective public relations campaign to heighten the awareness of the Social Partnership in a first step towards extending the concept of social dialogue and consultation at the level of the enterprise.

Among the things I promised to do faithfully in my role as Minister of Employment, Labour Relations and Social Partnership, is that we will look at a range of Employment Rights issues and that it is certainly not business as usual, as we seek to confront a number of formidable changes sitting on the horizon, which are being propelled by the international trade agenda.

Madam Deputy President, I thank you for affording me the opportunity this evening and I certainly support these Estimates.

SENATOR the Very Rev. H. E. CRICHLow: Madam Deputy President, I should first like to congratulate Senator Dr. Brandford Taitt and Senator Miss Kerryanne Ifill on being elected President and Deputy President of the Honourable Senate respectively.

In January this year, the people, especially the younger people of Barbados, experienced something of the power they have in their own hands, the power to choose whom they want to look after their affairs, the sacred trust with which they have empowered the Democratic Labour Party after the three terms they gave to the Barbados Labour Party. I congratulate the new Prime Minister and

his Team on their victory and hope that the Opposition Party would provide the critical support for the good of Barbados.

Madam Deputy President, the Barbadian electorate believe in gradual and not revolutionary change, and this is why all those young Barbadians, who have returned to Barbados with revolutionary ambitions, have had to settle aside and become part of the main established liberal parties. More has been achieved in this way.

Madam Deputy President, every new Government has built upon the foundation laid by its predecessor or predecessors. The former Government has served this country well and no amount of denial of this will change the situation. The current Government will, I am sure, add to that progress and after time, hand it over to others.

Madam Deputy President, at the beginning of this Debate on the Estimates, we had two very kind speeches, one given by Senator the Hon. Miss Maxine McClean, the Leader of Government Business in this Honourable Chamber, a new-comer to Parliament, and a seasoned Parliamentarian Senator Elizabeth Thompson, who served in at least three Ministries as Minister. She gave of her vast experience and warned the new Government of the obstacles that lie ahead.

Madam Deputy President, all that Senator Thompson said was true. I thought it was very pleasant and an unusual approach in our adversarial Parliamentary life, until she ended in a way that showed her insincerity. I expected her to say, after all this, I wish you well. Instead, she hoped that they would perform in the worst possible way. She made remarks about our West Indies Cricket Team on the worst day of its performance. That made me very sad.

Madam Deputy President, I am glad that Senator McClean emphasised the place of persons in the new Government=s programme. It was refreshing to hear this. I know that my former colleague, who is now Attorney-General, would always remind me of this very important point that we are talking about. It was about economics, and in the last stages when the Leader of the other Party said that the Government Members and the Honourable Senators started to talk about persons - but we are all persons and all that we are doing here is for the development of persons. Barbados does not have a vast landmass, but when we speak of Barbados, we are speaking of people who live here, whose whole personality have to be developed, so that they must not think that it is only bread that they live by.

11.10 a.m.

Friday, March 28, 2008

SENATOR the Very Rev. H. E. CRICHLAW: These elements in their personalities have to be developed, because the whole personality has to be developed. I hope that this new Government will continue to think of their main task as developing persons.

Madam Deputy President, we are here to give permission to the Government's Estimates needed for the development of this island for the new term. We have all the money that will be spent and that will be paid to persons in the various Departments, Ministries and so on.

I would like to appeal for a change in our work ethics. I know this is an old subject and it will not be achieved overnight, but I think that every Government coming to office ought to explain that if Barbados is to continue to progress that we all need to work. Many people are getting the impression that all they have to do is to look to Government.

Madam, this is done, not only in the lowest brackets, it is done in every bracket. People think that Government is there to give them things. It will be done in a more sophisticated way by groups in higher income brackets, but it is the same thing of trying to milk Government at every stage.

Madam Deputy President, work is something that people want to get away from. If it were possible for people just to go to work on mornings, sign in and go back home and relax every day, they would like that.

Madam, just like pupils going to school, if they heard, as soon as they got to school, that the school is having the day off and that they can play all day, they would like that. I suppose after a time, they would get fed up.

I think a lot of people have been influenced by the biblical saying that it is by the sweat of man's brow that you should eat bread and they do not like to sweat, so that if they could do without sweating, but they could get the money, that is what they want. Madam, that is unfortunate, because work is necessary for the human being. It is healthy and we should all have a desire to work. Madam, if we cannot love work, then we should have a desire to work.

Madam Deputy President, I am serious about this, because we are going to be spending a lot of money on salaries, wages and so on, not only in the public sector, but in the private sector as well. It is not only Government and big businesses that will be robbed of time, but even when it comes to poor people, a lady might want her galvanise sheets put on, but the prices that are charged are so huge.

Madam Deputy President, I like to support the small man, but the small man does not know how to charge and sometimes you pay five or six times the amount that you should have to pay for having a small job done and a big one as well.

Madam Deputy President, we need as a people, to do something about our attitude to work. I know our social history is not pleasant and I know why people hate work, but we have to overcome it and have a new approach to work. We should give work for the money we are paid.

Madam, at the same time, I say to those who are paying, they must remember that those who work for them need to be paid well and not just that those who are paying should concentrate on making a profit without thinking about the needs of the workers. I know it is not easy.

The whole business of value, of how much a thing is worth that is very difficult. I know, but between the workers, the employers and Government, we need to work out something that would be satisfactory to all three groups. I would like to think, as Christians we ought to think of work as something they are doing for God as part of their worship and service of the Almighty God.

That is how Christians think of work. They do not watch the clock. They work because this is part of their Christian duty. It does not only apply to Christians. It applies to everybody. We should work with a will and put as much as we can into our work. It is no point doing an inefficient job, because that inefficient job may cause lives.

Madam Deputy President, Barbados has changed its Government but, as a whole, it has to support that Government by the quality of work it does. We must not think that a Prime Minister, Cabinet and Members of Parliament can do much without the help of the whole of Barbados.

Mr. President, I want to look specially at education. Senator McClean dwelt on this and told us about some of the problems with education.

Madam, education is the second item on the list of the various grants. Health is taking \$351 million and education is \$280.6 million, so you can see how very important education is. Sir, we in Barbados have always prided ourselves on loving education and seeing our children do well at school because that is the way that has been, and still is the way to move from the lowest income bracket to higher income brackets. Madam Deputy President, we are right to do that because many countries do not have that kind of vision.

11.20 a.m.

*Sequence 82**Friday, March 28, 2008*

SENATOR the Very Rev. H. E. CRICHLLOW: In some countries children have to work in their families=plantation, store, or whatever it is, but they are given the time to go to school. In some other countries there is no money to provide for schools, teachers, and so on.

Our children are very fortunate in being able to go to school. Many of them would not know, for example, that at one time their grandfathers or great grandfathers and mothers, had to pay a penny a week to go to the Elementary Schools, and others would not know that to go to the Secondary School you had to pay sometimes, I think, \$6, \$8, \$12 or \$24, according to school but, even at that time, education was very difficult for a parent to find \$6, \$8, \$10, \$12 or \$24. At that time secondary education, which was paid for, many received it because of their station in life, their parent's occupation, social status, and so on. Now the situation is very different. Everything is free, even up to university education is free. Even some of the richest countries cannot afford that. Madam, America, Canada, or the United Kingdom cannot afford that, but Barbados can. Madam, it is expensive here in Barbados, within our context, as it is there in those developed countries.

We need to get it across to the society that these carry very heavy costs, so they have to take the whole business of education more seriously. I know that they will have fun at school. As a matter of fact, that is the only time they will be able to have a lot of fun.

Sometimes I think it is wrong for children of 16 and 17 years old to be burdened, especially girls, with two or three children, certainly by the age of 20, four children. That has really wrecked their teenage years. You cannot enjoy your teenage life if you are burdened with three or four children, and we are seeing too much of that in Barbados.

Madam, I have looked at the various schools and how much money we are spending on each in staff, etcetera, and I will draw certain conclusions from that.

First, let me go to the Nursery Schools. At one time we did not have nursery schools, or if we had them they were only for the well-to-do.

In the 1970s, I sat on a Committee, chaired by Dr. Leonard Shorey, to review the transfer from Primary to Secondary Schools. At that time, we found that most of the damage was done before children reached Primary School at age five. Between two and five, or two and four and a half, nothing as far as their mental development was done.

Many of our children lived in pitiful conditions. In most cases, their mother was so over-burdened with care and anxiety about food and clothes for them, they could not really give them the encouragement they needed to learn. Sometimes all they would hear would be their mothers cursing and swearing. That was about all they knew. There was nobody to read or talk to them, so their brains were not being used until they went to school, and by that time the damage was done. It is very difficult to try to correct that if all those very good years were wasted.

Madam, when they got to Primary School, this is now at the time when secondary education was free, the brighter ones would be selected to study for the Common Entrance, because the Primary Schools got their honour or glory from the number of children that got into the Grammar Schools, at the time, so the weaker ones were then set aside. Sometimes they were given the weakest teachers and so on. We saw that as we went around to the various schools. There again, they were rejected when they went into the primary schools.

Madam, you can see that with a life of rejection from birth, almost, what those children had to suffer. Sometimes we wonder why teenagers and young adults could be so anti-social and so on. It is that they have been rejected for so many years, that really they have nothing to be proud about, so they are not proud of their country or so.

Madam, we have come a long way in our education, and we ought to be very careful how we tamper with it. Of course, we should change things, but it is not as easy to change an education system as it is to put in a housing area and facilities. This takes a long time, and we should be very careful how we go about it, but we do need changes.

We had asked in the 1970s, that Nursery Schools be attached to every primary school. That only took place within recent years, and it is not even complete yet. In Barbados it takes about 20 or 30 years before we can have change that is really change. It takes a very long time in Barbados, but we have shortened that time as much as we can.

Madam, now that we have most of our children in Nursery Schools, we are getting better Primary Schools. Sometimes those people who wanted their children to go to a Secondary School would have to send them to private lessons. There was a later time they saw that some primary schools, mainly the ones in Bridgetown, or in the suburbs, would be getting good results and they stop sending them to private schools where they had to pay for them, and now many of them are sending them to schools near the City.

Madam, we hope that this will change and they will see every Primary School in the island with the necessary staff and equipment to provide first-class primary

education, so that you do not have this imbalance, where schools are over-crowded.

11.30 a.m.

Sequence 83

Friday, March 28, 2008

Estimates - Senate A2, sequence 84, 11.30 a.m.

SENATOR the Very Rev. H. E. CRICHLow: Madam, some primary schools are overcrowded. People are coming from all parts of the country to them. This is in order to get into the secondary schools, and those country schools are disadvantaged.

Then, in the 1970s, we said that we ought to change what happened in the secondary schools. The Common Entrance Examination gives the pecking order and so the brightest children go to certain schools and so on, right down to the lowest and that is not good for a society.

Madam, over the years, those who were working with the very weak children, complained that it was not fair to them. In the first place, they were not trained to teach remedial pupils. Nowadays, remedial teachers are in some schools. I think we see that it is necessary to have this kind of teacher, but it was not always so, and that is why we were getting the poor results.

Madam Deputy President, although people knew of the selection, and they knew that their children were at schools that were weaker than others, many people still compared the results at the CXC level of the weakest school, with the strongest school. Madam, that was not fair.

However, we have come a long way from that period, mainly because of the appointment of graduate teachers now at the secondary schools. I am sure that between the next 15 to 20 years, all the teachers at the primary schools will be graduates as well. I know it will entail more money, but after all, they are doing the same kind of work now for a little money, and there is no reason why they should not improve themselves to get better salaries.

Madam, if you look at the schools now, you will see that we are spending about the same amount of money at the weaker schools, as at the brighter ones and that should tell us something. A school is mainly its staff and equipment. Some schools have long histories and great traditions, but other schools that are young now will one day become old and they will also have traditions.

Madam, now that there is almost equality of staff at all the schools, we should expect better work. Of course, I

am aware that this depends on the kind of students they receive. I have always been against the pecking order. I feel that we should distribute some of the good material among all the schools and then we could have fair competition. If we put all the brightest children at one or two schools, and the weaker ones at the others, then that is not fair competition. Therefore, I think we are now at the stage where we can do that, Madam, because at one time, only a few schools were able to have qualified staff. Now, all the schools have qualified staff or a very large percentage of them.

For example, \$4.3 million has been allocated for the Alexandra School, with a teaching staff of 49, and the staff costs \$2.9 million. Alleyne School \$4.5 million, with a staff of 49, costing \$4.7 million. The Alma Parris is slightly different, \$1.7 million and the teaching staff \$1.1 million, 17 Members. The Christ Church Foundation School \$5.6 million, and the staff costs, \$3.5 million and there are 65 Members of staff. Coleridge & Parry \$5 million, 3.5 million on the staff of 58 teachers. Combermere \$6.2 million and 64 Members of staff, getting \$3.6 million. Harrison College \$5.7 million, with a teaching staff of 60 plus or minus, and those were not entered in the statistics and the staff is paid \$3.6 million. Lester Vaughan, \$6.0 million, a staff of 69 getting \$3.9 million. Lodge School, \$6.9 million, staff of 63 getting \$3.7 million. Parkinson \$8.7 million, \$3.4 million for a staff of 63 Members. Princess Margaret \$4.9 million, \$3.0 million for 58 Members of staff. Queen's College \$5.4 million, \$3.5 million for a staff of 61 Members. St. George, \$5.7 million for a staff of 58, getting \$3 million. St. James \$5.4 million, staff of 67, getting \$3.8 million. St. Leonard's Boys \$5.9 million, a staff of 60 being paid \$3.5 million. St. Lucy \$8 million, there are other charges of \$3.6 million, but the staff of 60 being paid \$3.3 million. St. Michael School \$5 million, \$3 million for a staff of 47 Members. Springer Memorial \$5.8 million, \$4.1 million for a staff of 71 Members. The community College \$24 million, \$10 million spent on staff of 207 Members. Erdiston Training College, \$3.7 million, \$1.4 million on the staff of 24 Members. The Samuel Jackman Prescod Polytechnic \$13.3 million, \$5.2 million on the staff of 89 Members.

Madam, you will see from those figures that the whole school population is properly looked after, according to the staff. Of course, we can never pay teachers what they deserve. Sir, a person wearing a Master's gown, in the English set up, has a long sleeve dropping down almost to the ground and there is a hole there, and people used to drop coins in, because teachers were looked on as charity, so to speak.

Asides.

SENATOR the Very Rev. H. E. CRICHLow: I am glad to hear that in the new Administration, teachers are going to be looked after, just as policemen and nurses.

Senate A2, sequence 84, 11.40 a.m.

Friday, March 28, 2008

SENATOR the Very Rev. H. E. CRICHLow: I think that those three classes really need to be treated in a special way, because we cannot do without them. Madam, because they are a lot in number, we must not use this argument to pay them small amounts. There could only be one Public Librarian or one whatever it is, but we have to have all these teachers, nurses and policemen. I support all those who have said that we really need to look after the teachers, the policemen and the nurses.

Madam Deputy President, because of the proper staffing of the schools, all of them, except the ones that are special schools, could go up to sixth form. We should not only have four sixth form schools. For years, we have had only three sixth form schools, Harrison=s College, the Lodge School and Queen=s College.

The reason Combermere was allowed to have a sixth form was because they were changing the exams, and the headmaster at the time, Major Nook, said that if you are changing from the Cambridge School Certificate which allows a person to get matriculation, that is, to get into a university, and you are replacing that by the "O" level, you have to provide a way that the pupils would still be able to get matriculation requirements. The way that you matriculate nowadays or at that time, was at least two "A" levels and five or so "O" levels. That was the argument Major Nook used. That argument should have been used with all of the other schools, like Foundation, Alleyne and Alexandra. They were not as many as they are now, but the same principle should have been used.

Madam Deputy President, I hope you understand what I mean. You could write the senior Cambridge at fifth form level and if you got certain distinctions or credits, there was only one certificate. If you failed English or Mathematics or a language other than English, or you did not have a science subject, you would not be able to get a certificate at all.

We also had the new system of "O" levels where you could sit eight subjects, fail seven and you would still get a certificate in the one that you pass. Some people called that the Dunces Charter, but it was to correct the weakness in the other system whereby you could pass seven subjects and fail in English and you would not get anything at all.

Madam Deputy President, we now have staff to teach sixth form work. We do not have to think that every

school needs to have science laboratories. Some schools can do languages or English and History and Geography and the technical subjects as well. It does not matter.

Madam Deputy President, I feel that all of the schools ought to go up to Sixth Form level, so that even in aesthetics, you would not have people who are 19 and others who are 16 or so. I hope that would be considered really because we have teachers now who could teach at this level.

Senator McClean spoke of the weakness at the university where people are coming in with "O" levels. I think what is happening is that we have moved from an English-based education to an American-based one. The philosophies are not the same.

The American philosophy is that everyone is educable. In the British one, only a few people are educable. If we accept the American system, it would mean that we can take in people with less than the English matriculation requirements of the "A" level.

Madam Deputy President, I feel that the Sixth Form schools equip us better to go to the university. If you have "A" levels and so on here, when you go into the American system, you would be put in the Sophomore year. In other words, you are put in the second year.

Madam DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Senator Crichtlow, if you would take a pause for a second, the President has arrived and he wishes to assume the Chair.

Madam DEPUTY PRESIDENT left the Chair and Mr. PRESIDENT assumed the Chair.

SENATOR the Very Reverend H. E. CRICHLow: Mr. President, the American schools will put people with "A" levels in their second year instead of their first year, because they would have passed their first year. I find that even in the British system, a good sixth form education really fits you to start your first year in the university.

For example, I found that in Jamaica the students are trying to gain a year by going to the university with "O" levels. Rather than spend two years in the Sixth Form, you could go to the university and spend four years. Persons with "A" levels spend two years in Sixth Form and three years at university, so they spend five years as opposed to four years. I agree with the Honourable Senator that you would get a better university student if you had sixth forms. We are ready for it in Barbados.

Mr. President, many people think of the university as simply a place where you go to get a degree to get a better job or more pay. That is unfortunate, because a university is not really for that. A university is for training people to

think and to challenge customs. I remember somebody wrote a letter in the Press saying that people at Cave Hill are just learning to protest and so on.

Senate A2 Sequence 85

11.50 a.m.

Friday, March 28, 2008

SENATOR the Very Rev. H. E. CRICHLAW: Mr. President, student protests did not start with our university. It started with the University of Paris and then spread throughout the world. Mr. President, a student wrote back saying that people were very wrong to think they were at Cave Hill learning a lot of radical things to over-turn society and so on. He said that they were there to get a degree, so that they could get better jobs.

Mr. President, I thought that was sad, because the university is not for that reason. People who go to university should be able to challenge accepted customs. I do not remember who it was who said:

AThe old order changeth, yielding place to new,

And God fulfills himself in many ways,

Lest one good custom should corrupt the world.@

Therefore, people at the university should be challenging norms and accepted customs.

Sir, some of you would remember the saying: "good fences make good neighbours." There is also the poem called AMending Walls@, where these two farmers in England would choose a particular day on which they would mend the wall that separates their land. These are walls made of stones. They would go and pick up the stones and balance them every year.

The wall was necessary when there were pigs being reared on one side and turnips grown on the other, but now carrots are grown on one side and beets are on the other, but these farmers still mend the wall every year. They would not go beyond their grandfathers saying: "good fences make good neighbours." They never ask themselves, why do good fences make good neighbours?

Mr. President, the university is a place with challenge and in our motto here we have:

AOriens Ex Occident Lux@: A light rising from the West.

Mr. President, our university here must reach the position where it could do a lot of research and help us to

understand what is happening in the West Indies. It must be able to look at the illnesses in the Caribbean and give us help with them. Sir, we are presently using the research of people who live in different climates altogether, with different customs, et cetera. Therefore, our university must look at things Caribbean and try to find answers. Of course, there are going to be some of our research students who will look at the international scene, but this is most important. Sir, I think we could give authentic scholarships, if we could look at areas that were never researched before.

I congratulate Professor Hilary Beckles, Pro Vice-Chancellor of the University of the West Indies on the very fine work he is doing there. He has always been supported by the Barbados Government and will continue to be supported. We expect those who come out of the university would be bright, sharp, and would be able to challenge customs and especially, would be able to serve this community.

Sir, most students do not think of serving the community when they leave the university. That was one of the first things we were told at Durham. We were told that it did not matter what we did there, what class of degree we would get. The important thing about university education is what we would do with it when we left there. It was about the amount of service which we were able to give to the community in which we live.

Sir, university graduates are not expected to just come out and get big jobs and glory in the fact that they are above others. The whole point about university education is that you would have broader sympathies, you would be more respectful, more considerate of others, you would respect their opinions and you would be a better person for it, because you would be serving others. That is the purpose of a university.

Mr. President, the story is told of a business executive who gave a talk to university students. He asked them to guess what his company made, and they guessed all kinds of things. He said: "You are all wrong. Our company makes money and if tomorrow we could not make money, we would close the company."

His company was a pharmaceutical company, so let us think of all the pain that was relieved by that company, but the executive was not concerned with peoples pain being relieved. He was concerned with making money and was advising students that they must think in terms of money. Sir, I would hate to think that we would educate our people merely to think of money. Sir, they are here to serve the community. Sir, the more we could get that driven into our students, the better our university would be.

Mr. President, I am happy to support the Appropriation Bill. Sir, in your absence I congratulated you on your appointment to the Senate.

SENATOR R. O. MARVILLE: Mr. President, first let me congratulate you on being elected to the post of President and through you, to congratulate the Deputy President, and all to congratulate Honourable Senators on all three sides of this august body on their nominations.

Mr. President, initially I did not intend to speak about the Public Service, but after what I thought was a very extensive statement on the Public Service by Senator Walters, I thought I would add a word or two. I noticed he called it 'the Public Service' and not 'the Civil Service.' Voltier once said of the Holy Roman Empire that the most remarkable thing about it, is that it is neither Roman, Holy or Empire. I wonder what he would have said about the Barbados Civil Service.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Senator, I draw to your attention that it is very holy.

SENATOR R. O. MARVILLE: Mr. President, be that as it may, I thought that when we were talking about Civil Service reform, we might have been talking about Civil Service revolution, not because there were not valid or vital elements within the Civil Service, but what we were facing was a Civil Service that was meant to serve a colonial purpose, and no matter how much it was reformed, it was still reformed in some ways towards that end. Sir, in the days before the Press decided I was not worthy to write for them any longer, I did an article on Public Service Reform.

S:No. A2(86)12:00 noon.

Friday, March 28, 2008

SENATOR R. O. MARVILLE: We basically need to do something rather radical. I think most people react to a carrot and stick approach and there are several cards that could be given to people who function effectively in the Public Service.

Sir, one of the things that happens is that after a period of years, you automatically rise to another stage in the Service and it would perhaps be best if you only rose a part of that stage unless you deserve it, in which case, you could make a full rise if you were an excellent server. There are ways of monitoring productivity in whatever field you want to talk about.

Mr. President, what I wanted to talk about, and I have talked about it before, is education and, perhaps, education is the basis of everything. Again, once a Minister of Government, a long time ago and I was slightly more

radical than now, asked what would you do about the Ministry of Education and I said: "Abolish it, not immediately, not tomorrow but by a process of attrition and create instead a much smaller body of highly trained experts in all the areas of education who could form a research unit as well as an advisory unit to the Minister with the schools running more or less as they do, on board systems." The point about this was that you would have people who were experts in the financing of education, childhood education, language education, education in sports, music, whatever the areas, the areas that cover the span of human intelligence, and they would be able to feed into the systems, proposals that would make education relevant to now.

Mr. President, our education system has worked for a while, but it is not very relevant any longer. I do not think that we have a programme that is aimed at the people whom we are trying to teach. All of the initial processes, stuffing children. In other words, forcing ideas into their heads and they have to regurgitate it, rather than making them think, making them do projects. That has continued for far too long.

Additionally, with what is called the 11-plus, we have a very narrow range of a test of human intelligence. The end result is, sadly, that you get people at the university, where one of the subjects is English who do not know the first thing about the language, who cannot write it, who cannot read it, who take chunks out of books and when you ask what it means, they do not have the faintest idea.

Sir, this is not good enough. If, on the other hand, we had a system which dealt with continuous assessment and children were not expected at the age of 11, where very few children are actually matured enough to handle this problem, expected to suddenly become brilliant, pass a specific exam, with 30 per cent going to good schools and 70 per cent being rejected as secondary to life.

Mr. President, Government has been talking about extending the education process to age 16 but we could perhaps have a much later separation period where you began by teaching to all the areas of human intelligence, to music, to art, to language, to special skills, not only the minor academic ones that we have become accustomed to, so that you have people who were decent, technical draftsmen, engineers, sportsmen, musicians, et cetera and then, at the age of 13, making a separation, but then we would have to equip our schools differently, because we would have, instead of four sixth forms schools, we would have a number of schools, which were target schools.

Let us say that St. Lucy=s did language, St. George=s did technical drawing, Lester Vaughan was a sports oriented school, so that children could go into areas

where they were better suited and not be alienated by a process, which is very narrowly geared. Also, of course, we would have to get into the process of telling children that it is a matter of thinking and this you could do by putting them through projects, where they have to find things out.

The end result of this, of course, would be that we would be much more likely, with some basic curriculum changes, like having social sciences as something you begin with, so that they have elements of economics, how Government works, entrepreneurship, the basic things in living, so that when they come out of school, they are ready to live. They are not looking for jobs for which they are not properly fitted.

Mr. President, that is why I like the French use of the word, they say *Ainformation@* rather than education, because they are talking about training, they are talking about developing people, not some rather old-fashioned idea of putting sets of ideas into people's heads.

Sir, the point I am making is that this would require considerable change. It would require change in the teachers. Teachers would have to be retrained or additionally trained. I am not suggesting that you do a first degree. You are teaching history, you know nothing about it. You say that there have been some new approaches to teaching history. We want you to do a bit on education. When you have done this, you rise in your salary scale and, Sir, there are other ways. I think teachers are vitally important.

I have had some awful teachers and I have had some excellent teachers in my life and it has made a difference. The excellent ones, the awful ones turned me off completely. I can tell you that. The point is that if they know what they are doing, as a curious child, you learn and if they have a basis structure, which is preparing you for normal, social, productive life in the society, you are likely to do better.

Mr. President, I am particularly grateful, because I went through school and my first degree at university was a scholarship. Sir, I owe this country something and I will be conscious of that at all times. I have taught a lot in all sorts of places. I do not need to go through that detail, but I have been teaching in recent times here at the university and I am a little bit disappointed in some of the standards and problems that we have. If we are going to deal in English, we really need to be competent in that language. We just cannot go on with expressions and spellings.

Sir, I think that children have stopped reading and this is the problem. We have got to get children back into the habit of reading. If their parents do not do it, we have to start Saturday reading clubs or something, where, preferably celebrities from the society can read to children,

so that they get an interest in it, because this is where you start understanding who you are and where you are going.

Mr. President, there are other things that occurred to me on this question of education. Sir, right now we have a system where we talk about free education. Of course, free is from one side, but I think any freeness you receive you ought to consider it as a potential obligation.

Mr. President, one of the things I thought we needed to do was to institute somewhere at the end of the school system a national service system where children, before they went to university had an opportunity to work at something. There are lots of things that could be done in the environment, under the supervision of quasi-military discipline.

I think our small military could handle this particular area quite well. Then they go to university, they are a lot more mature and better to handle where they go. I also believe that anybody who goes to the university without having to pay ought to be required to work for a specific time in Barbados, because what happens very often is that several of our brightest people just get up, leave and go.

12.10 p.m.

Sequence 87

Friday, March 28, 2008

SENATOR R. O. MARVILLE: We spent a few hundred thousand dollars under education, and then we lose them completely. That is not really good enough. I do not mind, of course, if they go to some other part of the CARICOM Region, but not going off to where the pickings are good. It is North America or North Atlantic, quite basically.

Sir, one of the problems that we have arising out of the schools is the question of congestion, transportation. I noticed today, with the schools out, was a simple issue. No problem at all. I do not live that far away, and sometimes when I try to get into town anytime after 8:00 o'clock, and between 8.00 a.m. and 10.00 a.m. it is really a problem.

We need either to look at the possibility of a dedicated school bus system, or a system where we gradually move the town-based schools out of town. It happened to Queen's College, and it could happen to other schools. The point being, you have to free up town a bit. In fact, that leads me into the issue of transportation.

Sir, we have always thought that all transportation has to start at Bridgetown, go somewhere and come back to Bridgetown. This makes it extremely impossible for somebody who lives in St. Andrew to get to, let us say, St.

Philip easily, because there is no transportation that runs in that part of the country at all. Everything has to come into town. We ought to have somebody who looks at the movement of people across the island both, for work and pleasure, and come up with a system which matches that in one way or the other.

There are several things that can be done to it. You can have transfers. In other words, instead of paying a fare of, let us say, \$1.50, if you paid a fare of \$2 and you are coming from Christ Church to town and then going to St. Peter, you could have a transfer of 50 cents, which took you on to St. Peter. This is a system that works very effectively in developed countries, and I think it could work very well here too.

While we are at it, let us look at some of the other little bits and pieces in transportation. I see that Government has promised plastic Drivers' Licences by June 1, 2008. I remember this was promised, I think, October 2007, but nothing happened. I am assuming that it will happen on June 1, 2008. That is one good development. We could go beyond that. The Drivers Licence could combine not only a Driver's Licence, but an ID card which gives all sorts of information.

On health, for instance, if somebody has diabetes or is allergic to penicillin, all of these things could be coded into the card, so that if there was an accident, you pick the card up, the health service person would be able to have it read at the hospital, and know exactly where you are going. Additionally, it would be very helpful for the police, in the case of people who have criminal records, and who are likely to be up to some mischief. This is an added development that I think would be very useful in that respect.

I also think that we need to get out of some of the outmoded things that we have, like stickers on the windscreen of a car. This was a silly system when it started. It is sillier now. I am not suggesting that is only done in developed countries. It is done in Suriname. You have a bright coloured marker, which has a date on it representing the year, another one representing the month, so a police officer from anywhere can see the colour of the sticker. He knows the year and can read the month. He does not have to come up to you and say that your disc is faded. Is it relevant or not? Is it up-to-date or not? You say: "This is what they gave me."

We need to get into little things like that and move on, because it makes so much difference if a police officer does not have to stop you to check the stupid sticker. If he can see it automatically, he does not have to block traffic.

Sir, one other suggestion with respect to traffic, and I do not think this is likely to be too popular with people

with vehicles - I think, with the exception of people who specifically have to be in town in service situations, doctors, Senators, if you like, there should be a rule about people travelling singly in a car into town at rush hour. We ought to set up satellite stations outside of town, where such people can park their car and get a shuttle bus for a \$1, or something like this. That would save enormously on gasoline.

It would save enormously on monies that we have to buy gasoline and it would save enormously on pollution. It would also, perhaps, revive the spirit of the village, as Senator Walters would say, where people would bring along somebody, where there would be some effort of sharing your vehicles, rather than using it as a private mobile house.

Sir, talking about the environment, I wanted to bring up the question of where we were on waste conversion. The technology on waste conversion has gone extremely far. There are all sorts of alternative forms of dealing with energy.

We have had the benefit of Professor Headley=s knowledge of wind energy. I do not think we got anyway there. There are some Solar Water Heating people who have done some interesting things outside of the water heating system. They built solar dryers from containers, but we had not got into the business of using any of this. A lot of this is important.

In the case of fish waste, if we had solar dryers, we could crush the waste, dry it, and it becomes bone meal, which is an important segment of animal feed. In fact, we ought to be looking at that problem in much greater detail. I am sorry that the Minister of Agriculture is not here, because I am still going to talk about food security, but one of the important things in food security, is growing things that are local, specifically, and can be used in any number of areas.

Sir, I was thinking, there have been experiments done on cassava as a feed, and it has produced much better results with Black Belly Sheep, for instance, but if we had cassava, we went back to growing guinea corn. Incidentally, if we import it in vast quantities now as animal feed, I think we would be much better off. I think we have to look at these things as a means of solving problems.

Sir, last year I said that in the next 10 years, the crisis would be water and food, globally. It is already food. Water will come, because, as the population grows they are going to need food, and even more important than food is water. If you do not have water for four days, you will die. You can live without food for four days, but you cannot live without water.

Sir, the point I am making is, we are not using our water well. We have an old system, and I remember about 15 years ago saying to somebody at the Water Works, that the British have changed their system, which was the system we have, and they discovered that they were losing 40 per cent of their water. He said that we are not losing 40 per cent. The latest figure I heard is 60 per cent.

We really have to get down to doing something about that, because if you are going to argue that the water goes back into the aquifers, you have purified the thing, so you have wasted energy on it to send it back to the aquifers to purify it again. Sir, we have simply not looked at recycling water.

The Sewerage Plant on the South Coast just spills the effluent into the sea. This could be further processed. We could have a dual system. This could be used for farming, golf courses, or whatever you want to use it for.

Sir, talking about waste specifically, the technology at the moment is based either on the village level, as in China, where you put pigs faeces in a little box, and a minor machine converts it into methane. What is left is simply a fertilizer. In fact, it has gone a long way from that. You can take any type of faeces, human, pig, chicken, bagasse, food waste, any number of waste products that we throw into landfills and process it to create methane.

Methane is a relatively clean burning fuel. If you do not want to use it as methane, you can convert that into diesel or gasoline. The technology is here and available. What is even more, since there are European countries with factories that invariably pollute, they have set up a system of carbon credits for such companies to get involved in the production of energy like what is done in developing countries. This is something that we should look at, because we really need to get into this business.

12.20 p.m.

Sequence 88

Friday, March 28, 2008

Estimates - Senate A2, sequence 89, 12.20 p.m.

SENATOR R. O. MARVILLE: Sir, the best thing is that after all of that, you have a source of fertiliser that is infinite. You do not have to throw bagasse straight on to the field, because that is a terrible waste. The same bagasse can be converted, as in Cuba and Peru, into paper and animal fees, or if you are going to use it, use it this way so that you get methane out of it, and then you put it back into the business of fertilising. These are things that I think we need to look at, Sir.

Mr. President, I have been very pleased with some of the statements I am hearing from health, because we are looking at changing things, and we really need to change things enormously. Senator Goddard made some comments about the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, which I think should be taken into account. We obviously cannot do all of that in one go, but we can do it bit by bit.

There are other areas that need to be looked at as well. We need to look at preventive health, rather than just curing. One of the massive problems of this society is diabetes. I have been to the hospital and I have seen people come into the emergency with their feet cut off because of poor treatment of a diabetic condition.

We ought really to tell the makers of soft drinks and fruit juices that they put too much sugar into these things. They are killing the people. Taste will change. If there is less sugar, people will drink it, and we really have to do this, as a means of improving health.

We also have to institute programmes, particularly at the level of school - because we are getting obese children now - where only healthy foods are sold on the school premise and also there is a mandatory exercise programme, a Physical Education programme for all the students in the schools. Sir, we really have to get into this thing, if we want to go where we need to, and cut down on the expenses.

Sir, I approve of the money spent on Health and Education, but we could have more monies to use, if those monies were spent more carefully. In fact, if you cut out an element of the diseases you have to cure, you have some more monies for other things. In my own view, one of the most important things is research, something that we very seldom seem to do.

Finally, I wanted to talk about the question of water. Sir, not only do we need to get into the habit of using water sensibly, I think we all ought and, perhaps, the Government could put some incentives for people to save rain water, so that they do not wash their cars with the water that has been processed for drinking.

In fact, I have seen a house in Barbados, where there is a central tank and the rain water goes back into the bathroom systems. It goes out as well to water the gardens and stuff like that, so that in fact, very little pressure is put on the Water Authority to produce refined water to throw on the ground. Sir, this is one of the things we ought to do.

The other thing is that we have built traditionally a lot of wells in sugar cane fields. If instead, we put some clay on the surface and create ponds, we might stop flooding in some areas, and if you add fish, you would have the benefit of food and the elimination of mosquitoes,

because if the fish are there, the mosquitoes cannot breathe. The fish would eat the larvae.

Sir, you could also use that water, as I have seen done in a couple of progressive farms, for irrigation. Again, you would not have to use the processed water for that purpose.

I think the notion of giving people the right to use processed water for irrigation is self-defeating in a way. I know that you will, in some circumstances, be unable to preserve water in the way that I am talking about, but in most cases, you can and, I think, that should be encouraged. There has to be some means of getting people who do the right thing, rewarded.

I thank you, Mr. President.

SUSPENSION OF SITTING

SENATOR the Hon. Miss M. P. O. McCLEAN: Mr. President, I beg to move that this Sitting be suspended until 1.30 p.m. today.

The question that the Sitting be now suspended until 1.30 p.m. was put to the Senate and agreed to and Mr. PRESIDENT suspended the Sitting accordingly.

Senate A2, sequence 89, 12.25 p.m.

Friday, March 28, 2008

RESUMPTION

Mr. PRESIDENT: This Sitting is resumed.

SENATOR D. K. A. GRIFFITH: Mr. President, I am quite honoured to be able to stand before you today and address some of the issues that I believe are on the hearts and minds of the people of Barbados. We have just come out of a General Election Campaign where the vision for our country has very much been at the centre of the discussion.

As a young person, I intend to look at the vision with regards to youth, because it is the youth of this country who have to now become the political leaders of the future. It is the youth of this country who now have to implement the development plans we so heavily tout and it is the youth of this country that we must look towards developing.

Mr. President, it is important that we look at the statements made during this period when we go to the Estimates. I have heard many remarks made with regard to the lack of policy evident in the Budget, and the lack of the Budget speaking to what the Government is going to do, and I am at a loss when these comments are made, because

if you look at the Estimates that have been put before us, what we can see is that we have gone back to the policy of serving people and putting people back into Government and its running.

Mr. President, the Government says that it wants to get young people involved in its management. I stand here as a very clear example of that policy and it will not stop there. This Government intends to make young people feel relevant again.

Sir, for a number of years, we heard about the politics of inclusion, but with such a broad policy of inclusion, it was quite baffling to the average Barbadian why so many people in this country felt disenfranchised and why so many felt that they were not being heard. Therefore, we must get to the point where we include all of these marginalised groups, whether it is the youth, the disabled or the working poor, to make sure that this country is solid for the next 20 years.

To do this, Mr. President, we need to initiate ongoing discussions. I am not talking about having Town Hall meetings to run talk shops, because that is what Government is seen as by young people. What we need to do is to evolve a process where young people can make suggestions and have those suggestions filter through the bureaucracy. Mr. President, there are a number of areas where we are going to have to do this and there are a number of areas where the Ministers have started to do this.

Mr. President, we could look at the development of two significant new Ministries under this Administration, which are clearly outlined in these Estimates and have been clearly funded - the Ministry of Family, Youth Affairs, Sports and the Environment and the Ministry of Social Care, Constituency Empowerment and Urban Development. These two Ministries have a very strong role to play.

Mr. President, regardless of all the talk about Constituency Councils, the Ministry of Social Care, Constituency Empowerment and Urban Development, has to put the community back into the Barbadian psyche. I have heard Senators addressed the fact that we do not have these community efforts anymore, and this is a significant plank in the Democratic Labour Party's policy to take this country forward and it must not be ignored.

Senate A2 Sequence 90

1.40 p.m.

Friday, March 28, 2008

SENATOR D. K. A. GRIFFITH: We need to get the community spirit going in this country once again, because it will drive everything else.

Sir, during my presentation, I will speak to you about the programme for Sports and Youth Affairs, but the crux of the matter will always come back to the level of community involvement in developing these things. Sir, when we look at neighbouring islands like Jamaica and the Bahamas, we would see they have developed athletic prowess, but when we examine the programmes that have been put in place, we would see they all have strong community bases behind them.

Mr. President, you cannot start the West Indies Cricket Team at the level of international players, if we neglect Kiddies Cricket or if we neglect Secondary School Cricket. Therefore, if we neglect the structures and foundations that are going to build these things, we would never be able to complete the house, because we would be on shaky ground. Therefore, the development of the community is at the core of the development of Barbados, so that we can have 20/20 vision plans for time immemorial. Sir, if we do not develop communities, they would never be realised, because the people of Barbados would have failed to have the appropriate investments in seeing these visions come true.

Mr. President, quite important to this effort is that of education. I have heard a number of Honourable Senators speaking to the topic of education, and in large parts, I take many of the ideas on and support them, including the expansion of the curriculum at secondary schools. We must no longer pigeon-hole children. We need to understand that a large part of the problem we have with education is, that most of our children do not know where their place is. They feel left out of the school system. They do not know what they are going to do.

Sir, in Barbados we have always had a very heavy focus on academics and quite a reasonable one. It is responsible for much of our development, but we must now balance the academic maturity of this country with the development of further skill programmes for those who are not academically inclined, because we must get past the mentality that unless you are an academic, you have no place in society.

Mr. President, all around us we see the development of areas like the cultural industry. Sir, cultural industry is such a broad term, it speaks to musical talent, to dramatic talent, to artistic talent, all being marketed, not just to our own people, but on the world scale. Therefore, if we are going to look to address the issues of balance of payment deficits, we cannot go back to the same old models.

Mr. President, the era of just sugar cane or that of tourism driving the economy forward is no longer here. Barbados is a small developing economy and we need to exploit the niches that we are so adequately prepared to exploit.

Sir, if there is another example which is good to expound this, would be the example of Miss Robyn Rihanna Fenty. This shows us that we have been remiss in marketing our own talent, because it took someone from outside of our country to come here and say: ABut why are you wasting such talent?@ It took someone from outside of this country to come and develop her potentials, to the point where she could make a significant sum of money and set herself up for life. We need now to look at these Estimates and see the development being incorporated in them, for taking young people forward.

Sir, we have so many talented musicians. Why are we not promoting them more? Mr. President, we have festivals where we take troops of musicians up to the United States of America, Canada and Europe, but why are we not focusing more heavily on ensuring that our musicians have access to established Music Festivals? There are Jazz Festivals in most metropolitan cities around the world, yet we do not try to assist in the marketing of our young people to these festivals. We need to make sure that these young people benefit from the quite generous payments made to artistes performing. We need to make sure that they have access to larger markets by being able to tap into television on a world scale.

There are so many events that are pumped into Barbados, through television channels like BET and Tempo, which focus on areas where Barbadians are quite competent of competing and competing effectively, because we have the quality of product that is going to attract international attention. Sir, let us make no bones about that. We have the quality of product.

Mr. President, when we speak to education, we must also look at the broader concept of youth development and skills training. I am proud to see in these Estimates that allocations have been made to further the Barbados Youth Service, which has been neglected for far too long. I think it is one of the most brilliant policies of a previous Democratic Labour Party Administration. It helps to develop discipline and confidence.

Mr. President, one of the things I noticed most often about Barbadian children, is not their lack of ability, but their lack of confidence in their ability. Therefore, if we could get to build the confidence in the ability of these young people, then we would all step back and wait to be amazed, because they would have had the tools to get the job done. What we would need to do now, is to let them spread their wings and take control of making sure we have

a better economy and a better country, and that we develop the moral basis for which this country could then prosper under.

Mr. President, further on the Youth Affairs programme, I think it is important that we look at the role of the Youth Entrepreneurship Scheme. Sir, entrepreneurship will play a very large role in the development of this country going forward. We now have the Internet and broadening technologies which can be used for business purposes and targeting businesses in the most remote parts of the world. There is nothing now to stop a 16-year-old school boy in San Francisco from waking up and doing business with the 45-year-old German magnate. Therefore, if we do not put in place the tools for developing the entrepreneurial skills in young people...

Mr. President, I believe one of the problems with our school is what they teach young people. Sir, the focus has always been going through the system to get a job. We need to put the educational acumen there, so that young people could know they could think outside the box. Sir, I believe many entrepreneurs have been prominent and successful in this country, with some being not so successful, but I believe we could see more if we put things in place that would encourage this activity.

Mr. President, I also believe, especially the plan to extend the YES Junior=s Programme in secondary schools, is going to be critical to ensuring that the entrepreneurial spirit is engendered in young people across this country.

Mr. President, I am pleased to lend my support to Government=s attempt to broaden this programme.

Mr. President, under the programme of Education and Youth Affairs as a general topic, I would like to look at the University of the West Indies. We have heard many discussions about the university. Sir, as a student and also as a Member of staff, I have seen different aspects of how the system is monitored and managed, and a large part of the problem is always going to be that we do not demand enough of our university.

Mr. President, both Governments have long put policies in place, but under the enlightened leadership of the Democratic Labour Party, we started the programme.

1.30 p.m.

Friday, March 28, 2008

SENATOR D. K. A. GRIFFITH: What has happened is that we have put funding into the university, but we have not put the appropriate benchmarks in place to ensure that the country=s development needs are being met, so we see brilliant young people leaving the

University of the West Indies, but they are not able to find jobs in Barbados, because they are of the same mentality that they need to be given a job as opposed to creating business in this country, and also because there is this reluctance to allow students and allow educated people to effect change in businesses in our country.

Mr. President, we need to get more technologically savvy, because our size means we do not have economies of scale. We need to be using information technology to ensure that we can process information in what has now become a knowledge-based economy in the global context.

Sir, knowledge is key, so when we train psychologists, who then can find no jobs other than working at Harbour Road, working for a minimum wage, and that is quite contentious, because, what is our minimum wage? But finding people whom we have spent thousands of dollars educating, who can then only work in low-end jobs that stop them from meeting their productivity and their potential. Sir, many young ladies down Harbour Road break my heart just as a human being, seeing them struggle to figure out how they are going to feed themselves and their families and clothe their families on what sometimes is less than \$7 per hour.

Mr. President, I can remember an experience in the recent past where I was sitting on a bench in Bridgetown enjoying a quiet afternoon and one of these young ladies was lamenting to a friend that she needed to move from one company to another, because she heard they were paying \$2.50 per hour more and that would bring up her wages to \$10 per hour, so that she could afford to buy school clothes and books for her children come August, and Sir, that is not a state that I want to see any other Barbadians living in. I believe we have the potential as a nation to encourage systematic growth, and therefore, when we encourage this growth among our youth, and encourage them to reach out to an entrepreneurial development, we will be able to benefit at every level, so we can aim for higher standards of living, because I believe that Barbados has one of the best standards of living, not in the Region, but around the world.

Mr. President, we cannot sit on our laurels, do like the past Administration and say that because we have a wonderful standard of living that we do not have to do anything and that it will always be there. What we have to do is to think 10 and 20 years into the future and make sure we place the policy now.

Mr. President, I have heard about National Development Plans, but if the people of Barbados feel excluded from the national development plan and they do not understand it, how is it going to come into fruition? Because it is the same thing that has happened with CARICOM.

Sir, the people of the Caribbean do not understand CARICOM and none of them paid attention to it, so it is a brilliant policy that is not being used and what we have to do is to get back to putting people into the policies that we create, so that they are not oblivious and pointless to our people. Sir, we need to get back to having policies relate to people directly.

Mr. President, with regards to health, the specific concern I have, has always related to HIV/AIDS and its threats to our further development. Sir, significant steps have been taken in the short period that this Government has been in office to continue to address this subject. Sir, in Barbados we have two very serious threats to the interaction of people with HIV/AIDS in the community.

First, we have serious problems with the prevention of HIV/AIDS, because it has become far too common to see disinterest among young people in this country when HIV/AIDS is spoken about and too common for people not to be taking their full responsibility in protecting themselves.

We need to change the policies of health care aimed at this issue, because we need to make sure people understand the damage they do to their country by not being responsible in their sexual habits, and not being responsible for their overall health and development.

Mr. President, this goes wider than the issue of HIV/AIDS and development, because we seem to have caught an American ailment, where it is never our fault. There is never anything we can do to benefit, and therefore, we need to address that problem. We need to make sure that we have every Barbadian invested and wiping out the scourge of HIV/AIDS in this country, in making sure that every person living with HIV/AIDS is still capable of contributing to our economy.

Mr. President, the other major plank is stigma. We like to believe in this country that it cannot happen to us. We like to say it was their fault and that they have to live with how they made their beds, but the information continues to show that the major problem with people with HIV/AIDS leaving the workforce is not illness, but stigma. They cannot face to go to work every day so they stay at home and then they are on welfare, being maintained by the State, but they still have active and brilliant minds. They still have a great contribution to make to the development of the country, but they are sidelined, because we have our pious opinions on how they should be treated.

Mr. President, I have strayed away from sports to a certain extent, but the issue of outlets for stress and sustained mental well-being is something that has been addressed.

I am pleased to see that the Ministry of Education, in collaboration with the Ministry of Family, Youth Affairs, Sports and the Environment, are starting a programme to make sure that many of this nation's primary schools have facilities for children to play and to exercise, because we hear so often about children, who have obesity, we hear about them being very sedentary, we hear all sorts of complaints, but we have for far too long created an environment where we send children to school in a sterile concrete box and expect them to be creative. We need to engage them.

We need to make sure they are out there getting physical activity as part of the growth and development, both physically and mentally, so that we can ensure that the youth of this country are not going to be falling ill with chronic diseases, or will not be dying at the age of 13 or 14 with strokes, when we could have done something about it. Therefore, it is vital that our health policy going forward; that our development policy going forward, address the need of our people to remain active.

Mr. President, so far I have been speaking of young people as a special unit within the society.

2.00 p.m.

Sequence 92

Friday, March 28, 2008

SENATOR D. K. A. GRIFFITH: I think it needs to be recognised, that many of the issues addressing people under the age of 20,30 and 40, come back to the same scenarios that are affecting the society as a whole. Wherever you go on this island, you would be told by the residents that housing is an overriding concern.

Sir, it was amusing to me to see recently, in the media, complaints from realtors, themselves, that the pricing on houses was too high. In Barbados, and even the Caribbean, but more so in Barbados than other islands, we have a peculiar situation where children seem never to leave home. You will find 40 and 50-year-old people living with their parents at home.

Asides.

SENATOR D. K. A. GRIFFITH: It is particularly interesting, because there seems to be a growing stock out there, apartments popping up all over the place, and many of them often empty. The crux of the matter is, where is the business acumen that says, if I have an apartment, my mortgage of \$2 000 a month for the entire complex, whatever it is...

Asides.

SENATOR D. K. A. GRIFFITH: Thank you, \$4 000 a month for the complex with four apartments, but I want to rent each apartment on a monthly basis for \$2 000, when I could get them rented at \$1 500. Why do I not take the dip in price, to make sure that I have the occupancy, because when your apartment is unoccupied you are not making any money either way? This was an interesting perspective from the realtors themselves, the people who make money, by the very fact that the prices are higher, but they are not making any money, because nobody is occupying the buildings. Sir, we need to look and rationalise these things.

Sir, the last Administration went on a very concerted campaign, to encourage people to build room capacity for Cricket World Cup, and I do not hear anything about it anymore. They told these people to take out the mortgages, we would subsidise them, we would do all sorts of wonderful things for you, if you go ahead and build this room capacity, but now that the time has come for the marketing of the room capacity, the people have been left on their own. It is going to be the concern of a Democratic Labour Party Government, to ensure that the marketing and the acumen, that are needed to ensure that these rooms are filled efficiently, happen in this country.

Sir, I listened to debates in the Other Place over the last week, and a very promising policy was put forward, in collaboration with the Minister of Housing and the Minister of Health, to ensure that low interest loans, affordable loans, could be put to the people of Barbados, instead of using the vast majority of the funds of the National Housing Corporation to build large office buildings.

No matter how pretty the office building is, no matter how luxurious it is, the people of Barbados want somewhere to live. Therefore, this Government has set its policy. I hope you recognise that I said 'policy,' to make sure that the people of Barbados can get affordable loans. That is the problem with our interpretation of these Estimates and theirs. We see the people in them and they see the numbers. They are baffled by the numbers, and they would sit spinning and spinning, because all these numbers have confused them.

Sir, I say to you, look out for the people, look for the fact that we intend to spend our money on houses now, and not office buildings. Look for the fact that we intend to expand and rationalise the rental apartments. Look for the fact that we will deliver 500 house spots in the next few months, because the 100 days are not up yet. It is not a 100 days as yet, but by the time that 100 days is up, I know that you will be seeing the effects of the policy, because listening to the Leader of the Opposition in this House and in the Other Place, you would think that everything in the

Democratic Labour Party's Manifesto was promised in a 100 days.

Sir, the difference between us and them is, we do not believe we are God. Sir, God made the world in seven days, but we have five years to turn this country around, and we will do it.

Asides.

SENATOR D. K. A. GRIFFITH: Sir, I need to go back to the young people. I need to go back to the issue of securing decent employment for young people. It was a platform plank, and we intend to do it. Sir, when you hear me refer to these things, we did something very important. It has never been done. The Democratic Labour Party has a contract with young people in this country. They laid a Manifesto of youth-based issues to the young people of this country, and they would be held to the task to make sure that they come through. I know in my heart that they will come through and young people would have something to look forward to.

Sir, it continually comes back to me that what we get from the Opposition now, is doom and gloom. There is no hope ever for this country. We could have let things stay the same way, because nothing is going to change, but the people of Barbados do not believe that, and they said so on January 15 quite loudly.

We know that we are going to benefit from a change of attitude, because I heard statements made about the civil servants of this country, and I have seen with my two eyes: I beg anybody to challenge me on it, that the attitude by this current Government to civil servants, is a 180-degree turn from what it was before, because we heard in this Honourable House this week, that civil servants are not going to get any better. You cannot trust them. They are the same civil servants who for the last 14 years were pulling down this country. Therefore, you cannot expect these civil servants from then to now, to take the blame for everything that went wrong in this country, and still to offer creative ideas, and to talk to their leaders, because that is what Ministers are supposed to be. I do not know where the difference came in.

I do not know where the confusion came in, but Ministers are supposed to be leaders. Therefore, these leaders now need to go to those same civil servants, and come up with a plan that will save this country.

Sir, before this Administration changed, I heard the doom and gloom from the then Deputy Prime Minister that this was going to be a year where Barbados to face all sorts of economic crises. As always, Barbadians said if we are going to be in hard times, we need to be in the hands of the

Democratic Labour Party, because they know how to get us back on a strong footing.

Sir, when the Democratic Labour Party left office in 1994, prosperity reigned in this country for 14 years, and whatever fairy tale you want to call it, you can see that this country was on its way up. It has been taken in a very short period of time, through economic difficulties that still affect countries in the Caribbean today.

Sir, there were all sorts of blame to be placed, but now we are supposed to look forward and say, nothing bad ever happened for the last 14 years. The people of this country are wrong, because they had good jobs, they were eating heavily and they were getting obsessed from all the convenient food at their disposal. It is at their disposal and it is there to make them sick. That is why the Barbados Labour Party was too sweet and the country was diabetic. That is the only reason we have problems.

Asides.

SENATOR D. K. A. GRIFFITH: Sir, when I look to these things, I see that the vision has shifted to a people-centred policy.

Sir, I also want to address some of the areas outside of the youth, which other Senators would have spoken to. I am pleased to hear from the Minister of Agriculture about his emphasis on the return to the cotton crop.

2.10 p.m.

Sequence 93

Friday, March 28, 2008

Estimates - Senate A2, sequence 94, 2:10, p.m.

SENATOR D. K. A. GRIFFITH: Sir, cotton on the world market of the quality that Barbados produces when it is refined, fetches astronomical amounts of money. I can tell the Opposition Senators that currently it fetches far more than a barrel of oil. The same applies to the leather from our black belly sheep, Sir, because during the last Administration, a mysterious creation popped up called, AThe Barbados Black Belly Sheep of Texas.@

Asides.

SENATOR D. K. A. GRIFFITH: It is the most interesting looking animal. It looks exactly like a Barbados black belly sheep but it chooses to maintain U.S. citizenship. Sir, on the commodities market, the leather of the black belly sheep is ranked as a product only behind that of kangaroo leather. As far as I am aware, kangaroos are endangered species. Therefore, because of its progeny

and the fact that it is so good at replicating, you will have a group of black belly sheep kids of 4, 5, 6, 7, up to 9, and in a relatively short space of time. It is producing a valuable quality, because some of the smaller contracts for leather from black belly sheep that I have heard about, have been in the range of 10 000 skins.

Sir, Barbados cannot even produce 5 000 skins as far as I am aware. The smallest contracts on the world market are 10 000. The U.S. Air Force, on a yearly basis, orders about 40 000 skins, because all of their pilots are required by Law to have helmets lined with this leather. We have this commodity here that has been roaming around the island freely, apparently, and we have not been taking advantage of it. Sir, we need to see the niches that are right under our noses and capitalise on these products.

Sir, we can no longer say that tourism is our only hope to survive. It is too unstable. It is too fickle. Sir, for far too long we let our capacity drop. Therefore, we need to shore up the reserves of this country by finding new ways of bringing in foreign exchange.

Sir, I would now like to move to a matter relating to Immigration and it is to deal with work permits. I think that we need to address the manner in which we grant work permits for people who are not nationals of this country. I have seen several systems, particularly the one in the Bahamas, where in order for any company to be granted a work permit, they must identify and start to train a national of the country, to ensure that by the time the work permit expires in four or five years, the national is now competent to step into that job.

Asides.

SENATOR D. K. A. GRIFFITH: I believe that policies like these need to be put on the table in order to safeguard work for Barbadians. Sir, at the end of the day, while we have heard the wonders of CARICOM and while I think CARICOM is a wonderful thing, the job of this Government is to safeguard Barbadians. Therefore, I would hope that our esteemed Prime Minister, whenever he chooses to emit office willingly, will not have accolades read at CARICOM about how well he performed on their behalf, but how well he performed on our behalf.

Asides.

SENATOR D. K. K. A. GRIFFITH: Therefore, we need to look at how we are going to shape this Government to ensure that the policies we put forward benefit the people of Barbados.

Sir, finally, I intend to look at the Auditor General's Report, because it goes back to the leadership in this country. I will not rehash any of the things said before.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Please, you could not, Senator.

SENATOR D. K. A. K. GRIFFITH: Thank you. I am aware that every Senator in this Chamber, regardless of what has been said otherwise, is in possession of this document. I ask every one of us to look at the comments of the Auditor General when it comes to the granting of contracts and tenders.

Sir, it is almost unthinkable that having raised the rate at which contracts needed to be tendered from \$50 000 to \$100 000 that the Barbados Labour Party Administration could not find in itself to adhere to that Law, which they brought into effect.

Sir, continuously throughout this document, the Auditor General makes the statement that Ministries and Departments have granted contracts and tenders over \$200 000 without going to the process of tender, and it cannot be allowed to continue in this country. I know it will not happen from now on, Sir.

Asides.

SENATOR D. K. A. K. GRIFFITH: We have machinery in our hands to deal with this and I am calling on the Public Accounts Committee. I have been hearing mumblings about good governance. Sir, I am calling on the Public Accounts Committee to take this document and examine every breach of the Regulations that have existed thus far. I implore the Members of this Senate that sit on that Committee to call on the Chairman of the Public Accounts Committee to start doing the job that she is paid for by the people of this country. She is drawing the salary, let her do the work. Sir, we would like to see a report on why it is that these breaches have continued to exist and how we can make sure that they never happen again.

Mr. President, I thank you for your indulgence. In closing, I just would like to say that I believe that we have started a process here today that is going to change the shape of Barbados. I am pleased to see so many different types of representation around this table, and I am pleased to see the politics of inclusion actually meaning the inclusion of the people of Barbados. Therefore, I believe it is our work to continue to make sure that for the next five years of this Administration, we adhere to the people=s business and it is no longer a rehashing of what can be done in Europe, or no longer a rehashing of what can be done in CARICOM, but it is a course that says we can find the best options, so that Barbadians are not forced to take one course, but that once again they are in a position to choose their own destiny.

I thank you, Mr. President.

Mr. PRESIDENT: I thank the Honourable Senator.

I now give the Floor to Senator Newton.

SENATOR the Hon. Mrs. V. E. NEWTON: Thank you, Mr. President. I would wish to congratulate the new Government on its Election victory. I congratulate you, the Deputy President and Senators on the Other Side, on their elevation, or whatever they would like to call it.

Mr. President, I wish to support the Appropriation Bill which is before us and for which we have not really had any in-depth analysis. I suppose that when the Minister responsible for Economic Affairs speaks, and I believe he is speaking after me, that he will elucidate us, on some of the provisions of the Estimates, on which the Leader of Government Business spoke very well, but in a general way, because this was her intention.

Senate A2, sequence 94, 2.20 p.m.

Friday, March 28, 2008

SENATOR the Hon. Mrs. V. E. NEWTON: Mr. President, unfortunately, on Wednesday afternoon I missed a part of the debate because I had to leave early. For me this has been a particularly robust and very political session of the Senate, no doubt because the Government is still in its infancy, still in a euphoric state and has not implemented that many new policies on which its Members could report. Therefore, it has been easier for Honourable Senators to focus on what they consider the sins of the past Government. There is nothing wrong with that, and to promise to do better, again nothing wrong with that.

The Opposition, Mr. President, as far as I can see, is obviously determined to show that two is just a number and has no bearing on the amount of criticism they could heap on the new Government, especially since the two Opposition Members in the Senate are undoubtedly two of the most skilled Debaters and speakers of the former Government.

The Senior Member of the two-person team has had some 11 years or more experience as a Minister. I personally thought that some of the advice which she gave was excellent, but I heard that on Wednesday after I left she delivered a "below the belt" parting shot which evoked strong responses from Government Members. I still have not heard exactly what it was, but I certainly heard some of the repercussions.

We the Independent Senators may have our political preferences. After all, we are not living on Mars and we are not living in a vacuum, but at the end of the day we should not let our political preferences cloud our judgement, or prevent us from being critical of policies which deserve criticism and, at the same time, give praise where it is due.

Serving in the Senate of Barbados as an Independent Member, is about serving Barbados, not about narrow political interests. I certainly will be as frank and as vigilant as I have always been in the Senate Chamber. I see no need for change.

Mr. President, there is one point I would like to make at this point. This is my ninth year in this Senate, and the Senate has always been a place of decorum. It has not been like the Other Place where entertainment took precedent over education.

Mr. President, I would hope that it remains so because if you speak to persons in Barbados who listen to the debates, one thing they have always said is that they learn things from Honourable Senators. Therefore, I would urge that we should continue in that vein to make sure that we are not distorting the truth.

It is a political situation, so of course there are different sides and there would be interplay and reminders of what persons should do or what Administrations should do and did not do, but we must remember that there is a certain measure of decorum that is expected from us as Honourable Senators. I am sure that we, certainly on This Side, would want to continue in that tradition.

Mr. President, before I start with my main presentation, which would be on the University of the West Indies, the National Insurance Scheme and on the need for a Contractor General in Barbados, I just want to divert to say one thing.

Mr. President, it gives me extreme pleasure to serve in this Chamber at the same time as a colleague who I knew as a little boy, the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development. He was a mischievous little boy, but he was always smiling and he always had good things to say.

At the same time, from our little neck of the woods, Mile and a Quarter, Rose Hill, we have in the Other Place, the Minister of Transport, Works and International Transport. That little neck of the woods produced a former Prime Minister, the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development, your humble servant and now Minister Boyce, and I am extremely pleased and proud of that.

Before I move on to my submission, however, I would like to say that in my view the first-time submissions here were merely quite good. There was the dig at the side and so on, but in terms of balance, simple and eloquent deliveries and substance, I would give Senator Ifill full marks and urge this remarkable young woman to continue on the path that she is on.

Mr. President, I turn now to the University of the West Indies. This is an institution at which I have worked

for the past 34 years. I have seen it grown from a sleeping boring little place in the 1970s to a bustling active campus with a wide variety of programmes and with students who seem younger and younger every year, many of whom are as sharp as the proverbial nail, and others who are just trudging along.

Mr. President, in this respect, the University of the West Indies is no different from many others. Many students go to the university because they are not sure what they want to do with their lives. They seem to have no other choice at the time and they are hoping to find out once they get there what they want to do.

When I went to the university many years ago, I had the choice to wait one year in Barbados after getting a Barbados Scholarship to go to England, or somewhere else, or to go to the University of the West Indies, and I went to the University of the West Indies. I had no idea what I was going to do. When I got there I followed some of my colleagues into economics, discovered that I did not like it and then I went back to my first love which was history. To some extent, serendipity has always been a part of my life.

I moved on to several things since then, but I have never forgotten, wherever my academic career has taken me, that it is to the people of Barbados that I owe the beginning. I have never forgotten where I came from nor have I ever forgotten how I got there.

It is true, as some previous Senators have said, that some students from the University of the West Indies are not giving back. Again, that is not peculiar to students from the university, but I do know that several of us are willing to serve in whatever capacity, if asked. Many of us do so, some publicly, others in quite private capacities, by serving on committees and so on, or by just merely being available for consultation when needs be.

Mr. President, some critical comments have been made of the quality of the students= output of the University of the West Indies, wheather all of them find jobs or whether they are being trained for export, or whether the people of Barbados are getting value for money more or less.

Mr. President, many of the problems with which some graduates leave Cave Hill are problems which they brought with them, that is, faulty grammar, inability to spell properly and an inability to express themselves well. Unfortunately, in spite of the many programmes which the University of the West Indies has put in place... Do not think that the University of the West Indies is sitting back and doing nothing about it. The university is aware of these problems as anyone else, and a good part of its revenue has been focussing on remedial programmes and other

programmes with the hope that the students will leave in a better state than when they came.

Unfortunately, it does not always work, because today university education is competing with countervailing influences such as text messaging and so on for which you use common letters, not capitals, and no punctuation.

Senate A2 Sequence 95

2.30 p.m.

Friday, March 28, 2008

SENATOR the Hon. Mrs. V. E. NEWTON: Unfortunately, some students may know better, but by constant use of doing the wrong things, even in official correspondence, you would find text language and so on. It is unfortunate, but that is the case.

Mr. President, I have to make a point, which I had made months ago in this Honourable Chamber. Sir, every time it comes to the University of the West Indies and Honourable Senators see the amount of money the university takes, some signals are raised, because people think it is too much money. They then start talking about diminishing returns and about the university not meeting its objectives and such things.

Mr. President, a university education cannot be measured in terms of dollars and cents, no matter where the university is located. We all must remember that successive Governments of Barbados have committed themselves to free tertiary education. They are involved in the discussions which take place, to determine the university's programmes and needs and therefore they are part of the process. It is not that the university determines that it is going to do a, b, c, and d this year, and that the Government is not involved.

Sir, representatives of whichever Government is in place have to sit on the University's Council, where they decide on the funding and programmes. Sir, that would be the time, if there is a lot of dissatisfaction on Government's part in relation to the programmes that the university is offering, for them to say something. Therefore, the Government is well placed to say things, if Government is not pleased with the programmes of the university.

Mr. President, especially during the last five years, the university has been having constant dialogue with Government and the private sector, in an effort to come up with the kind of programmes, which would produce graduates to fulfil national needs, but as I said, it is important to look at investment in education in a

comprehensive way, as it is not just a capital outlay in a product called 'Certification.'

It is about the advanced development of the citizen, poverty alleviation and community upliftment, reheating the colonial legacy, skills advancement for the productive sectors, crime reduction, social stability, cultural integrity and psychological well-being. Sir, these are all part and parcel of a university in the community and university education.

The achievements of Barbados since Independence are based solidly on the expansion of opportunities in higher education. It is impossible to imagine the growth of a Barbados middle-class and a reduction in poverty, without thinking of the impact of the Cave Hill Campus in particular, and the University of the West Indies in general. Most of us in here, who have had university education, are products of that system. It has helped to make us who we are, once and for all.

The Cave Hill Campus has had a deeper and more profound impact on Barbados than the other Campuses have had on their respective societies. Cave Hill's reach into the community is deeper and more significant. Within the strategic planning cycle of 2000 to 2007, the enrolment at the Cave Hill Campus grew from the 3 000 to 8 000 range. The Campus proposes to grow by 12 000 by the end of the current strategic planning cycle. Sir, if this is not about people which the previous speaker, Senator Griffith says the Democratic Labour Party is all about, then I do not know what is.

The plan at Cave Hill is to focus on graduate student enrolment as a new driver of enrolment, enabling the Campus to transition to a research-oriented institution, after having done very well in the past 45 years as basically an undergraduate institution. This is a time where I hope the Government would have a greater say on how research and graduate studies should go. This will require a new approach within Government, in terms of a national research policy and a new funding plan, based on the need for research in the core areas of the National Strategic Plan.

Sir, I believe a full proposal by the university was under consideration by the last Administration. In this sense, we cannot speak about diminishing returns in higher education investment, when the country has not yet reached the critical mass necessary to achieve the developed nation status, which is the core objective of the National Strategic Plan. Sir, this is why the evidence shows the following:

The country's potential for development is a function of a number of citizens, who have been exposed to higher education.

Barbados has the highest exposure in the English-speaking Region, hence our highest ranking in the United Nations Human and Resource Development Index, but we have a long way to go. At the moment, we have about 35 per cent of our citizens, in the 18 to 30 age cohort, who are graduates of a campus or college. This is the highest in the English sub-Region and we need to move it to at least 50 per cent, which is why the university firmly believes that we should have at least one graduate per household.

Mr. President, I have never been enamoured with numbers, and there are lots of questions that one could ask about this particular policy. Sir, one thing the university has sought to do, and has to ensure is that a policy that speaks to, at least, one graduate per household, does not result in diminishing of standards. I believe that is why it has expanded its quality control sectors and is doing whatever it can to ensure that standards do not drop.

Mr. President, to speak about a quality issue should not be taken outside of its context. If you could move from 3 000 to 8 000 students, then admission becomes more democratic and more representative of the national population. This would mean a diversity of student abilities, but the fact is that no one enters unless they have met the matriculation requirements. Therefore, it is not a question of people deciding they do not want to go to the Barbados Community College and walking into the university. They have to meet certain requirements. If it is they do not meet those requirements, there are certain prerequisite courses they have to take and pass. Some persons are allowed to trail to the second year, but they have to pass those courses eventually before they are allowed to graduate.

Mr. President, the focus of the university is on the quality of student output, hence our investment in the quality assurance culture and teaching instructions, but, as we all know, those who would wish to focus on quality are competing with a number of countervailing influences, one of which is a rapid growth of the text culture, which replaces good grammar with symbols and where persons spell as they speak.

A university will never be all things to all people, and in my view, the campus is doing very well with the records, documents, stores and other properties, with the resources available to it. Sir, that is not to say some mistakes are not made, or will not be made, for no system is perfect, but the administration of the university is mindful of the great expectations, especially from the Government and people of Barbados and makes every effort to live up to those expectations. It shares its facilities by making them available for public use, whenever possible, and is constantly revising its programmes to make them more meaningful and relevant.

Mr. President, one problem the university has always had, and this is probably a characteristic of most universities, is that it does not have a strong public relations arm, which constantly keeps before the public the products it aims at and its successes, et cetera. This is a problem of which the university is well aware. They have tried to minimise it, to some extent, by having a weekly column in one of the newspapers, but I do not think it is enough.

Sir, there are lectures there almost every day. There are things happening, but unfortunately, often people do not hear of them and certainly not in good enough time to attend. Sir, I would think the university needs to do a little more to make sure the community in which it operates knows how the public's dollars are being spent.

Mr. President, like so many others before, I now move to the report of the Auditor General. This document has been referred to in this session by most speakers, but this document is no different from Auditor General Reports of the last 20 years, and I have seen a lot of them.

Sir, the Auditor General is required to report on financial irregularities in Government Departments, and I have recently looked at a lot of them, as I was telling my staff to let us put them together as they were all scattered.

Sir, I know of no year, under any Administration, when the Auditor General did not find anything to complain about.

2.40 p.m.

Friday, March 28, 2008

SENATOR the Hon. Mrs. V. E. NEWTON: Every year he makes his observations and the Departments of which he is critical, always promise to do more, but then next year you might see those same Departments. I remember for three years straight there were complaints about the Farm Labour Scheme and I remember Sir John has asked why nothing is being done.

I believe people make the response to get the Auditor General off their backs and business continues as usual. Sir, this is not good enough, but having said that, I have done works in a number of CARICOM countries with Parliament and they were having this same Debate and the situation was worse, but that is not to say that it is one that should be tolerated or one which we should take comfort. Sir, it is for that reason that I am recommending that if the Government has the funds, that serious possibility should be given to the introduction of a Contractor General, as is the case in Jamaica.

Mr. President, for many years the office of the Contractor-General in Jamaica was small and we heard very little of it, but most of you would have heard in recent times, this is fairly chilling, of one Minister spending a night in jail, and a few others being hauled before the Law courts in relation to a light bulb scandal.

The fact that this has happened in Jamaica, leads me to the conclusion that it is good to have the office, because the Contractor General functions in relation to Government contracts in the way that the Auditor General functions in relation to the overall oversight of Government Departments. The difference is that he can recommend prosecution and in the legislation, the Government has had to follow the course that he recommends and this is why it had reached that stage in Jamaica.

Mr. President, it depends heavily too on the person who is the Contractor General and this goes for most posts. In this case, there is a quite fearless, Cave Hill graduate of the Faculty of Law, not so young anymore, called Gregg Christie, and he is a serious fearless person, who is determined to take the matter wherever the evidence and information led him and it led him to the Law Courts for a few Government Ministers.

Mr. President, especially in a small community like that, you need to be extremely careful about who is appointed to be Contractor General, because too frequently in a small community such as Barbados, everybody knows everybody and even when you do not know the person, you are afraid of getting a bad name and, therefore, you might turn a blind eye to things that you ought to be looking carefully at, even if it is your responsibility.

Mr. President, I heard Senator Walters speak earlier about problems in the Civil Service and so on, in relation to people knowing each other and things like that and, it is a serious Parliament problem. Sir, nobody wants to be in anybody's bad books, or very few people want to do it. You need some courageous people, especially in discipline and tardy appearance at work and not doing the work for which you are being paid.

Sir, Managers have to be extremely serious and I was very happy to hear him say he was going to be starting a series of training courses focussing on letting supervisors know what their roles are. They have to know what their roles are. They are expected to perform them. They may not necessarily get support in doing what they have to do but you are not doing it for praise.

Sir, as a former Prime Minister said: 'It is not about friends. It is about doing the job for which you are paid, for the upliftment of your country.' You need some people who are going to take a firm stance in that regard.

Mr. President, back to the Contractor General, that was just a diversion. In the Jamaica model the Office of Contractor-General was established in 1986 as an Independent Commission of Parliament responsible for monitoring and investigating the public sector procurement process, including the award of Government contracts, licences and permits to ensure that the process is fair, transparent and equitable.

The Contractor General is given access to all books, records, tours, documents and other property belonging to the Government. He is appointed by the Governor-General, after consultation with the Prime Minister and the Leader of the Opposition, and in exercising his statutory powers, he is not subject to the direction or control of any other person or authority. His reports are laid in the House and debated and he may recommend that officials of Government and even Ministers be prosecuted, if he finds acts of wrongdoing.

Mr. President, there are two Commissions which function in his office. Firstly, the Commission of the Contractor General, which ensures that the Government's procurement process delivers value to the taxpayer and is free from corruption and irregularity. Then there is a National Contracts Commission, which is responsible for the registration of contractors and contract endorsement for Government procurement.

Mr. President, years ago, when Dr. Richie Haynes was involved in politics in Barbados, he had recommended the appointment of a Contractor General, but I do not know if it was ever investigated. As I have said earlier, the office of a Contractor General is similar to that of the Auditor General, except that it focusses on contracts, while the Auditor General has a wider reach and no power to prosecute. The Contractor General is usually an attorney-at-law, but the Auditor General is an Accountant.

Mr. President, the Contractor General may not necessarily stop corruption nor carelessness in the award of contracts and the payment of contractors if the office is not adequately staffed or the Contractor General is a person of integrity or fearlessness, or if the legislation which establishes the office does not provide for prosecution of wrongdoers.

Sir, for instance, the Auditor General, year after year, is chronicling all these problems, but he has no power to do anything further, and if the Government has not got the political will, or the Public Accounts Committee also does not have the political will to investigate some of the irregularities noted by the Auditor General, that is where the matter stops, year after year.

Mr. President, what I would say is that the institution of the Office of the Contractor General is worth a try in

Barbados. We need not have a system as elaborate as in Jamaica, but if the establishment of the office here would stop the leakages caused by the improper award of contracts, or the failure to ensure that adequate accounting procedures are followed so that duplicate payments are not made, then I would say it should be considered.

Mr. President, I now turn to the last matter about which I would like to speak, and it is a few words about the National Insurance Scheme. I have chosen to focus on the Scheme for several reasons. I have a fondness for the Scheme.

I have worked some years ago on a Committee that was responsible for revising the legislation, and for many years I edited the reports of the Tribunals, but some years ago, the publication of those reports stopped, which was a pity, because the National Insurance Office in Barbados was the only one in the Caribbean that was publishing and properly editing the decisions of its Tribunals. I know that some of the National Insurance Offices in the Region regard the Barbados scheme with great respect and were anxious to get materials from here.

Mr. President, I have chosen to look at the National Insurance Scheme, because I saw in the newspapers, and I heard very briefly, when I was listening to the debates from the Other Place, that the new Minister stated that Government was using the National Insurance funds for the provision of affordable housing for Barbadians. I did not hear how it would be done.

2.50 p.m.

Sequence 97

Friday, March 28, 2008

SENATOR the HON. Mrs. V. E. NEWTON: I also heard a former Prime Minister warning that one should tread very carefully, when thinking of using the National Insurance Scheme funds for this type of investment.

Mr. President, the National Insurance Scheme in Barbados was modelled on that of the United Kingdom, the Beverage Plan, which had its philosophical basis in the principles of the Welfare State. Under this mode, the State is responsible for carrying out programmes for the elimination of poverty, disease, and other situations based on social needs. Implicit is the principle of solidarity, whereby one generation pays for the pension of another. The Jamaican Scheme is the oldest in the Region. That was established in 1966, and Barbados in 1967.

Sir, the Barbados Scheme provides cash benefits for short-term contingencies, such as sickness, maternity, unemployment, funeral expenses, and it pays contributory

pensions including Invalidity Pension, Survivors and Disablement Pensions, to persons who meet the requirements.

There is also a non-contributory scheme in place, which provides for persons 65 years or over, and persons who are blind and death at 18 years and over, who have lived in Barbados for a stated period of time to receive benefits. Sir, old age contributions are paid at 65 years, the earliest, and there is no provision of indexing of benefits to the cost of living.

Sir, our eligibility conditions are generous, and the Scheme plays a significant role in the lives of individuals and the country. The Schemes are long-term commitments of our society to Members who may enter the labour force in their late teens, and these commitments have to be honoured some 50 years later. To maintain long-term viability of such long-range commitments, it is critical that the Scheme remains in financial equilibrium. That is, the financial system and expenditure are set up in such a way, that future generations will receive adequate benefits, and are not over-burdened with financing costs.

Sir, the Actuaries have made a number of recommendations, to ensure that the Scheme is not depleted in the near future. These include increases in insurable wage ceilings, improvements in compliance and reduction of administrative expenses.

Sir, at present the projections are, that by 2025, there will be a need to have four persons working in Barbados to support one pensioner, and by 2050, there will be a need to have two persons to do so. Sir, we will all be gone. The sources of the National Insurance Scheme are contributions of employers, employees and investment income. I believe that it is investment income with which the Minister is concerned.

Sir, the investment income so far, consists of Government securities, overseas investments and investments of an economic and social utility. I believe the proposal to use the fund for housing would come under the Head of Investments of Economic and Social Utility.

Sir, let us look first at Government=s security as a means of investment. The Government never pays interest to the Social Security Scheme rather, it rolls over the principal and interest instead of paying interest on cash. As a result, the choice to invest in Government=s security should be based on sound investment principles and not only in need of Government for an easy access to capital funds. It is not theirs.

The second type of investment is Overseas Investment. That is used mainly to reduce currency risk,

and in recent years the National Insurance Scheme has been turning to it more and more.

The third type of investment includes Private sector Initiatives, State enterprises, student loans, old aged facilities, culture, health, infrastructure, tourism recreation, sports and low-cost housing.

Sir, in the mid-1980s, when there was an economic recession in Trinidad and Tobago, the Social Security Scheme there started to lend money for mortgages, but when jobs were lost as a result of the recession, and persons could not pay their mortgages, many of them delivered their keys to the National Insurance and walked away from the properties. The National Insurance Scheme of Trinidad and Tobago lost millions of dollars. It is at that time they set up NIKBET, of recent airport scandal fame. It is still around to manage the debt. Sir, we do not want to see ourselves in that situation.

Sir, I would remind you that at present, what is bringing the US economy to the ground is the housing market. The people, who would be seeking money from the National Insurance Scheme, would be persons seeking sub prime mortgages. This is the problem in the United States. It is affecting the US mortgage economy and threatening the world economy and undoubtedly, we would soon be threatened as well.

Sir, there is presently a National Insurance Investment Committee, which determines the types of investment at any point in time that are good for the Scheme. This Committee was established in 1986. It was provided for under the National Insurance Social Security Act, 1967, but it did not become functional until 1986. Any decision to use National Insurance funds, in my view, should be left to the Investment Committee.

Sir, many Barbadians, when sick, have nothing else to depend on. As I said earlier, according to that actuarial projection, by 2025, there will have to be four working people in Barbados to support one pensioner, and by 2050 there will be two people. This is quite a high ratio, and it is one with which we ought to be concerned.

Sir, the National Insurance Scheme now has \$2.5 billion in reserves and I think that people looking for funds to use to fulfil real or imagined, short or long-term needs, it seems to be a good place to go, but this money is a fund for the people in the work force, and people now in the work force for the next 35 years. It is a large pool of money, but there are long-term claims on it.

Sir, I would say that very careful thought should be given by any Government before they tap into National Insurance reserves for something like low cost or affordable housing, even it is mean on lending.

Sir, one may argue that as long as the National Insurance Scheme is not a private scheme, that the Government may, which is part of their policy making process...

SENATOR The Hon. Miss M. P. O. McCLEAN: Sir, on a point of order. I hope that Senator Newton does not miss-construe what the Minister said. It has been very clearly put by the Minister. There has not been any discussion of lending money willy nilly to anybody or anything. The Minister said that the Ministry believed that they could lend it to commercial banks to lend to people. Therefore, there would be built-in safeguards in that process. Do not let it be mis-construed, that they intend to do anything along the lines of changing investment policies. They have said that they are going to lend it at similar rates for what they now do to other people.

SENATOR the Hon. Mrs. V. E. NEWTON: Thank you. Sir, the intervention has not changed anything that I would have said or will say. The point is, great care should be taken before going to use National Insurance funds, like low income housing. The thing is, there is going to be ceilings on the amounts that these houses are going to cost. It is likely that the investment return is going to be low; whoever the monies are on lent through, because the Government has set its policy to provide low income housing. You have to be careful.

Sir, in my view, it is a high risk thing. As I said, one cannot prevent the Government from looking to National Insurance to assist it in realising one of its Election promises.

3.00 p.m.

Sequence 98

Friday, March 28, 2008

Estimates - Senate A2, sequence 99, 3.00 p.m.

SENATOR the Hon. Mrs. V. E. NEWTON: Sir, no move should be made unless they go through the well-established NIS Committee and every care should be taken that very stringent safeguards are in place to protect the money that is there for the people of Barbados, when they are having hard times, especially in sickness.

SENATOR the Hon. Miss M. P. O. McCLEAN: Mr. President, on a point of order. I was proposing to respond to the Honourable Senators' comments in my wrap-up, and I probably will do so, but I just want to put in the record and very clearly so, that the Minister of Health was speaking of exploring financially-sound investment opportunities for the National Insurance Scheme, which

would have been legally constituted, clearly as the Senator suggested, undertaken by the Investment Committee.

If you look at current strategies, the National Insurance Scheme has already sought to participate in housing schemes. I can tell you that as a former President and Director of the City of Bridgetown Cooperative Credit Union, and as a Director of a Commercial Bank, I know of initiatives where the National Insurance, because of the Laws which govern its investment policies, has had to look internally.

I would hate to imagine that the Minister would have wanted to suggest something which would jeopardise the future. I think that perhaps there was some misunderstanding of the Minister's description of his proposal to utilise those funds.

SENATOR the Hon. Mrs. V. E. NEWTON: Thanks for that intervention. Sir, when I first started, I said that I did not hear all that the Minister said, but from what I read, I am not sure that I misunderstood him. As I said, he did not go into details and so on, but I am saying that the effect of it, is that one has to be very careful.

I know that NIS has been looking for investment opportunities and they have been lending money to housing. I am not sure that they have been lending for this particular purpose, low income housing. I think that is the crux of the matter, but I thank you for your explanation, Madam Leader of Government Business.

Mr. President, having made those few comments, I have nothing more to say except that I look forward to interesting and spirited debate in these Chambers, but I would hope that we all remember that the Senate has a reputation for being a place of decorum. I wish all of the Members on the Government Side and my colleagues on This Side as well the best, and we will see how things unfold. I will add, if I have not said before, that I support the Appropriation Bill.

Thank you, Mr. President.

Mr. PRESIDENT: I thank the Honourable Senator. I now give the Floor to Senator Boyce.

SENATOR the Hon. D. W. BOYCE: Thank you, Mr. President.

Honourable Senators, I am deeply humbled by this opportunity to make my contribution to the people of Barbados in This Place. I believe that God has brought us all here at this time for his purpose, in furthering the well-being of the fine people of our fair country. I pray confidently that God will give us all the grace, sufficient

for us to do his will here and in our work in the rest of the country.

Mr. President, I want first to just set a little of the framework with which we used in the presentation of the Estimates for this upcoming year.

First of all, we took into account the history of Barbados, in terms of the fiscal deficits that it has run, what the international community has come to expect of us, the rating on our debts, the fact that the economy of the United States of America and some of the economies in Europe were beginning to show some slow down. Therefore, we felt that it would not have been wise to push for a very large deficit in this first year of a new Administration, unless there were circumstances which arose of a special nature with which we had to deal, in order to preserve the integrity of our workforce numbers and to preserve our foreign exchange earnings.

Mr. President, we followed what has been the practice in this country for many years and we went the route of keeping our fiscal deficit in what we consider a manageable figure of around 2 per cent. Mr. President, we thought that was sufficient to enable this Administration to begin to address some of the problems, which any country would have and which we have to deal with, as a society.

Mr. President, it does not contemplate any grand new projects at this time. Those will have to be taken later on, as the existing projects run their lives, and as those which have started, come to an end, are amended or are made to suit other circumstances.

Why are we concerned with the matter of the fiscal deficit? Sir, the people who buy our bonds in the international market, listen and are guided to the rating agencies. The rating agencies have found, in their experience, that there is a certain range in which you are to keep your country's deficit and a certain range within which you keep this country's debt to GDP Ratio.

We have had signals now for a couple of years that our debt to GDP Ratio was beginning to get a little worrisome. We thought that we ought to take a position of holding the deficit to a figure such that the growth in the economy would exceed the increase in the public debt that would occur, because of the deficit. Therefore, we could begin to address the matter of bringing the debt to GDP Ratio down.

Mr. President, if we do not do that, our ratings are going to get worse. It would become more difficult for us to borrow when we need to borrow to do capital works. Our interest will go up and we will pay more for the same thing. It is what any prudent person would do in their personal lives. It is what this country has done for many

years since Independence, and it is what I believe will continue to be done in this country.

Asides.

SENATOR the Hon. D. W. BOYCE: Mr. President, despite the fact that we want to hold our deficit down, we know that there are certain things we have to do and, in my estimation, human life counts above all else.

Asides.

SENATOR the Hon. D. W. BOYCE: Mr. President, in our discussions at the Ministry of Finance and with the various Ministries, we all agreed, in every Ministry at every discussion, that where there was going to be a rationing of funds you had to make a choice. That choice will have to go towards making sure that the health system was working, so that our people would have a chance for reasonable health care.

Asides.

Senate A2, sequence 99, 3.10 p.m.

Friday, March 28, 2008

SENATOR the Hon. D. W. BOYCE: It is not to say that we were of the view that one could go and build a new hospital tomorrow or that one could make major repair work at the current hospital facility, but given the size of the wages bill at the hospital, you had to give them at least enough money that they could buy medication and supplies, repair the equipment and help to improve the health care system. In discussion with the public servants, we were all of the view that would have to be the priority.

Mr. President, while I am at it, let me stop here and recognise before I forget, the sterling work done by the very many officers in the Ministry of Finance and their counterparts in the other Ministries who took the time out, despite the fact that we would have obvious delays because of the Elections, and work the extra hours and produce the Estimates for us on time and reasonably accurate. There are some of them whom I have known for a long time whom I have worked with for over 30 years. They are at work before 7.30 a.m. and they are still at work at 7.00 p.m., so we could have our uninterrupted meetings at half past six or seven and get our work done.

Mr. President, having decided that we were going to try to keep the health system going while the Minister of Health and his officials went through the plans for the hospital and for the Barbados Water Authority and so on, we felt that the next thing we had to focus on was the matter of waste management and to make sure that the Sanitation Service Authority is placed in funds to do the

work which they have to do. That was part of the preventive health programme. That was our second priority. Mr. President, our third priority has to do with discretion expenditure, because you have to meet the statutory expenditure on salaries and wages and national insurance. You also have to meet the debt service repayments, to pay Treasury Bills, Debentures and the interest.

Mr. President, the interest on our debt is quite high. The debt service is a high figure. Once we recognise that those are the critical things we have to get done, we then turned to the next item, which was the matter of the upkeep of our schools, because we have a large number of people in our schools, most of them very young people, who are at risk. I feel it sends the wrong signal to our young people if we keep them in conditions of dilapidation.

Mr. President, we have to try to fix our schools when we can. Wherever they are bad, we must fix them, because we must not expose our young people and our teachers to some of the conditions that exist in some of our schools.

Mr. President, I happen to have been on the PTA of Harrison's College, the Old Harrisonian Society and on the Board of Harrison College and I know the problems that school has had with its physical plant. I also know the problems that the Lodge School has had with its physical plant. We cannot do it all at once, but we have to start somewhere and begin to improve the conditions of the schools.

Mr. President, there was this matter of the accommodation of our public servants. Some of them have made cases out for some repairs of the facilities where they work. They have not, for the most part, come with lavish requests. They have asked us to give them something that they can, at least, get rid of the real dangerous situation in which they work. Mr. President, I have had to agree with them. You must give them at least reasonable conditions.

Senator McClean is in charge of a Committee of Cabinet to look at the big problem, what to do on a large scale. In the meantime, while the grass is growing, I should have to find money to feed the horse. Therefore, we have decided that we need to give to the Ministries who asked for it, some accommodation, so that they could fix the critical parts of the infrastructure which house them. We felt that we needed to treat to those people's issues first and foremost, and then having done those critical social issues, to turn our attention to some of the economic issues that we need to facilitate.

Mr. President, the first of those was the matter of the Barbados Tourism Industry. With a slowdown in the United States of America's economy looming - it is now here, some people believe that it is half-way through its

course already. I do not know about that. I would wait and see. We felt that we had to take the position to make sure that the Barbados Tourism Authority has funds to do the efforts in marketing this country. We have to ask them to be as efficient as possible, to look at how they do it and to be as effective as they can be. We have decided to provide for them the funds that they can market this country properly. We do not wish them at this time to be in a position where they cannot do the work with which they are charged, and to help us bring foreign exchange into the country.

Mr. President, we had to look at the international business sector. It employs quite a few people. It brings in a great chunk of our corporation tax and we therefore had to provide funds for the promotion of international business. In doing so, we have also asked them to focus their energy - you cannot do everything one time and do it well until you have got to a certain level of maturity, and pick the areas where there was the chance for most success. We gave them money for that purpose.

We then had to look at the matter of the Coastal Zone Management Unit, because they are doing some sterling work trying to preserve our beaches. It is work that was started under the previous Administration and it is work that must continue for a long time, so that the major bases for our tourism are, at least, put in place and that what we love about our country remains safe.

Our beaches are under threat, have been under threat for a while and we felt that we needed to make sure that the Coastal Zone Management Unit was able to do its work in that area. That has been happening for years and it would happen for many years more, and it ought to happen, because this country, God be praised, has raised up bright, intelligent people who have been on all sides of the political divide. May that ever happen in this country.

We then looked at efficiency measures, because if you know that a particular institution is not being run efficiently, it makes no sense to give them whatsoever they ask for, because it will be spent in the same inefficient way. Therefore, we have said to some of the institutions which we do not feel are being run, as well as they should be run and to some of the institutions which we feel ought to be merged to give greater focus and greater efficiency, that we would not give them all the money they have asked for, but that we would give them enough money to do a good job, and they would have to focus and spend that money well.

Senate A2 Sequence 100

3.20 p.m.

Friday, March 28, 2008

SENATOR the Hon. D. W. BOYCE: Mr. President, therefore, we have managed to meet the critical needs that we have to meet within the context of holding our deficits to the 2 per cent figure. We are able then to make sure that our borrowing during the next fiscal year would be contained to a reasonable figure.

Sir, that was the framework for the expenditure. Later on I will come back and look at some of the issues to do with the details of that expenditure.

Mr. President, before I move off the summary of the expenditure, we also looked at the matter of ownership arrangements for tenants of the National Housing Corporation Estates, where those owners have been there for a long time and where promises have been made that those tenants would become owners of those facilities. Therefore, we have provided in the Estimates sufficient money to do the work on those first set of units that will be sold off to tenants of the National Housing Corporation.

We have also made provision for the land surveying services to forward those plots of land that will have to be sold. I believe that all Barbadians should own their own houses, because it does not make someone feel like a real person until that person owns his or her own shelter. Sir, I felt that way. I come from the country and in the country persons like to own their own homes, whether those homes are big or small. Therefore, I believe that all over Barbados, Barbadians should own their own homes.

Mr. President, there has been some concern expressed, from time to time, about whether or not the Revenue and Estimates are over optimistic. I have looked at the recommendations made by the technicians in the Ministry of Finance, many of whom I have worked with back in the mid-1970s, and many for whom I have a lot of respect for their integrity and professionalism. I believe what the Estimates have provided us with are the most reasonable set of Estimates that we can have at this time.

Mr. President, we have always had Estimates and we know that the realisation would not necessarily be equal to the Estimates. Some would be higher. In some areas we would realise more, while in others we would realise less, but at the point in time when we prepared those Estimates and at this point still, I believe those Estimates are reasonable.

Mr. President, when one looks at the revenue projections, one would see that there has been a fairly substantial growth. Of that amount, \$62 million is what we expected from the Offshore Bid Rounds. When that \$62 million is extracted, to bring it back to what would have happened during this current fiscal year, where we only had \$6 million from the sale of seismic data, our growth in revenue is just a little bit more than the growth in the

nominal economy, which is a reasonable base on which to start. We have since sent signals to our revenue agencies that they must seek to improve their collection efforts and that those efforts be intensified and enforced, to make sure that we raise the revenue that has to be raised.

Mr. President, when you go to the specifics, on the corporation tax, for example, most of our corporation tax comes from the International Business Sector, in recent times. Therefore, for the tax that comes from the local community, I think those tax rates stabilised in 2006. Therefore, what would have happened in previous years was that corporation tax, all things being the same, would have moved down from local sources, because we were reducing the rate of corporation tax, but that has now stabilised and we should see it going up again.

Mr. President, similarly, there has been stabilisation in relation to income tax concessions, for personal income tax. I have been assured by my officers in the Ministry that they have taken into account an increase in tax credits and an increase in allowance for persons. Therefore, I have every confidence that they have done a good job, and I am pleased to commend them for their effort.

Mr. President, on the matter of tax on international trade, you would see those have gone up only by 6 per cent, barely in line with nominal Gross Domestic Product growth and once again, we think that is reasonable.

Mr. President, we have tried very hard to make sure that the Estimates are in line with good reason. It is my nature and training as an accountant to check for reasonableness and projections, to check them against history and against the most recent results. Sir, I have done that and therefore I believe we have a reasonable set of projections of our revenue here.

Mr. President, in summary, when we have done all those things, we ended up with a deficit on the basis of the international financial institutions of just under 2 per cent. On the basis of the Accountant General, we are at a deficit of \$653 million, which is a little bit down from last year, but essentially, we have tried to consolidate the position at this time before we try to become too ambitious in doing too many things going forward.

Mr. President, there are ways, and I will describe those ways another time and possibly in other places, to use the programmes that have been promised by this Administration.

Sir, all of those programmes need not come through the central Government or in the Estimates, but they are not going to be done by way of BOLTS. They are going to be done by way of facilitating the people who have the resources, those who wish to buy properties. We are going

to let them make the judgement as to whom they would wish, what they would wish to provide.

Sir, once those things meet our standards, then I think we could find willing builders, willing financiers and willing buyers, at rates which enable poor people to buy their properties. Sir, in circumstances where Government would then have to guarantee, facilitate or provide a subsidy for homeowners, Government would do so.

Sir, I would wish to say that every iota of a programme does not have to go through. What goes through the Estimates would be that financial commitment which Government has to meet.

Mr. President, I am not talking about BOLTS, where persons would build and then lease to Government, I am talking about arrangements which allow the building providers and willing customers to come to an arrangement that would satisfy both parties.

Mr. President, I want to give a little more information on our revenue projections, detailed against last year. The taxes on goods and services were increased by 6.6 per cent over last year. Taxes on incomes and profits were increased by 9.1 per cent, non-tax revenue increased by 60 per cent, largely because of the sale of the seismic data, and taxes on property will increase because new valuations on properties are due this year. There has been a slight change in property bands, and due to the new valuation on property tax, we expect that the yield from the property tax would also go up. Tax on international trade will also go up by about 6 per cent. Those are in line with the revised Estimates of this year and they are in line with the growth of the economy.

3.30 p.m.

Friday, March 28, 2008

SENATOR the Hon. D. W. BOYCE: Mr. President, we have not, in these Estimates, made provision for any wage increases. It is not usual to put into the Estimates any allowances for wage increases, because you need to let the negotiation process proceed before you include any estimate in your revenue and, therefore, it is not inside these Estimates. In the same way, Mr. President, it is not usual to include in your Estimates of Revenue any changes in revenue items, because those things normally have to go to Parliament for approval and, therefore, you do not include them either. Therefore, I do not wish to have the signal sent that we have not taken account of the fact that there would be wage increases. We have done so. We know how we will deal with those wage increases when they come, but those matters are normally left until after the wage increases have been agreed and then they are dealt with at that stage.

Mr. President, there are a few things we have dealt with the Estimates' projection. One is the matter of the general public, Defence and Security. We have had quite a substantial increase in Defence and Security. You will be aware that the Coast Guard has had significant improvement in recent times and that has called for additional staffing, boats and so on. We have provided for those things and, therefore, the amount of money provided for Defence and Security has been increased.

Mr. President, we have also this year treated with the police in the same way that we treat with the Defence Force. They are both security agencies and, therefore, they have both to be treated as security agencies and their Estimates have been treated the same way by the Ministry responsible for Defence. This has resulted in the Defence Force and the Police being given the requirements they have asked for to be able to do their jobs at this time.

Mr. President, our Health Estimates have gone up over last year. Once again, this is because we have tried to focus on doing the things that we need to get done immediately while we work on the other plans.

Mr. President, we have had an increase in education, not as large an increase as we would normally have liked at this time, but because we wish to have some more examination of a number of proposals to do with the educational sector. We believe there is still a lot of expansion that can be structured into the Samuel Jackman Prescod Polytechnic, the Barbados Community College, Erdiston Training College and when we have done those things, when we see how far they can go, if we need to do more, we can do more.

Mr. President, I have great difficulty in just allocating funds for projects which I do not feel are sufficiently detailed and sufficiently worked out, so that we know the full implications of those things on at least a medium-term basis. Therefore, we have held some of the spending on education until we have clarified some of those issues. Sir, we have an increase in the economic services and we have an increase in the other services.

Mr. President, our interest expense has gone up by close to 11 per cent this year and that is one of the reasons why we have tried to constrain our borrowings as we go forward.

Mr. President, in terms of allocating the funds in the Estimates, the Ministry of Health got what they asked for the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, the Sanitation Services Authority got what they asked for. The Geriatric Hospital got what they asked for. The Psychiatric Hospital got what they asked for. The Disabilities Unit got what they asked for. What the National Assistance Board asked for, we discussed and agreed, and they got that amount of funding.

The funding for the purpose of land for the West Coast Sewerage Project that was due to be purchased, was provided for.

We have agreed that we need to get a full plan for the hospital and for the Barbados Water Authority. We know those are going to be large chunks of expenditure. We want to see what it will mean from year to year over the next 10 years or 15 years, so that we can properly plan the funding of it and we can plan the debt service of those things. We have asked them to do all their analyses and we will then do some special programme to make sure that we can fund it properly and, Sir, that work is in train.

Mr. President, what the Ministry of Education asked for the Primary schools, they got. Sir, what they asked for the Nursery Schools and secondary schools they got, because I believe those are important areas that we have to help the schools with. Sir, that has been our approach on this matter.

Mr. President, let me talk a little bit about some initiatives which do not involve, at this stage, a great deal of money, but they have to do with institutional strengthening.

Firstly, the programme for the modernisation of the Customs Department and the VAT Office. That programme has now been signed off and is proceeding apace. We believe that we need to update the Customs Regulations. We believe we need to update the Customs and VAT offices, so that they could become more efficient and effective in collecting the revenue of the country.

Mr. President, we have agreed and have asked the Accountant General to press ahead with the development of a modern and comprehensive database, which would serve the Accountant General's Office as well as serve the Inland Revenue Department and Customs Department, so that we could have better data available in the revenue offices. Sir, that work is going on and we have provided funds for it in the Estimates.

Mr. President, we have agreed that the work started on the Central Revenue Agency a few years ago, that work ought to continue since we need to get greater synergy between the revenue agencies, if we are going to get the level of collection that we wish to get in the country.

Mr. President, we have agreed on the modernisation of the procurement systems in the Government so that we can seek to ensure better procurement and more efficient procurement. I do not believe that we are procuring our services in goods in Government as efficiently as we can procure them because we are not making use of the size of our procurement bill nor are we in the mode of negotiating with people, when they send us tenders, though they may

be the lowest tender, but may not be a sufficiently good tender, so we are trying to deal with those matters, to see if we can squeeze some cost out of our procurement system.

3.40 p.m.

Sequence 102

Friday, March 28, 2008

SENATOR the Hon. D. W. BOYCE: Sir, the work continues on the Financial Services Commission, which would be a Commission for the regulation of the non-bank financial services in the country. We need to make more decisions about that, to make sure that everybody has been properly consulted. All institutions which are part of the financial services have been properly consulted on this matter, the regulation, so that we do not end up with a Commission which hurts some services in the financial services and helps others, that it is even in that respect.

Sir, we have asked for instructions to be issued to standardise the procurement of technology in the public sector. The IT systems in the public sector need to talk to each other, and talk easy to each other, so that you can get efficiency out of the system. Each time we want information, we do not want to start from fresh. That work has been commissioned.

Sir, we have given instructions to examine all of the borrowing terms and arrangements for financing within the public sector, both central Government, statutory and other corporations, to make sure that clear signals are sent about what are the rates at which Government institutions should be borrowing, what terms and conditions they should have, and make sure that we get the benefit, and in fact that Government, being such a large depositor of funds in the system, as well as a large borrower of funds.

Normally, most institutions would use the strength of that position, to make sure they get the very best rates that they can get, both directly and for their subsidiaries and associated companies. We are trying to do the same thing in Government, at this time.

Sir, we have instructions for the merger of some companies in the Government sector, because we believe that they will benefit from those mergers. As you know, it has been announced that we have asked for, the merger of the Barbados Tourism Investment Inc. and Needham's Holdings Limited, to make sure that the people who are dealing with putting together tourism investment transactions, involving Government land, those transactions are done at the same institution so that they can hire the appropriate level of skills, to make sure that you get the best service possible for those transactions, because they are not small transactions involved.

Sir, we had to give instruction, on the advice of our technicians, for some efficiency audits of a number of Government Corporations and Departments, almost all of them. I believe that we have to constantly look at the way your Departments are operating to weed out the little inefficiencies that creep in over time. If we do not do it, they creep in and stay there, and thus the way of doing things becomes the wrong way of doing things. We do not respond to the current situations, and we build up cost. Then we go on to do something else. We just lay new costs on top of old costs rather than making sure that the old costs there can do more than they are now doing.

I have asked for that management audit to begin. We have to make sure, step by step, that we do things with efficiency. This is not any attempt to weed out staff from institutions. That is not part of what we are looking at. We are looking largely at the processes which people are using in getting their work done, so that those processes are efficient processes.

Mr. President, I have been advised by some of the officers in the Ministry, that there are a number of situations in which the controls in our IT system, in Departments which deal with large sums of money, are not what they would like them to be. I believe that it is public knowledge, that there have been one or two instances of funds going, because the controls are not what they ought to be. Therefore, I have asked that we get some help in making sure that those controls in those Departments, that deal with large sums of money on the IT systems, that those controls are developed promptly and put in place to stop any leakage of funds.

Sir, there are one or two instances where we will probably have to do some forensic audits in some of those Departments, to make sure that if there are instances of funds gone missing, those instances are detected and the persons responsible for them are brought to pay back those funds. This is nothing to do with whether one supports the Barbados Labour Party or the Democratic Labour Party. It is something, if we find instances where the controls are not proper, where the funds may have gone missing, I have a choice as a Member of my profession, but to seek to stamp out that practice. Therefore, we have to get the audits done to deal with it.

Sir, when you look at the size of Government compared to most corporations, Government is so much bigger than many of our corporations put together. Therefore, we have to make sure that those controls are in place, and are running efficiently. Sir, if you lose 1 per cent of Government revenues, it is a lot of money that you lose.

Sir, we have also signed off on the modernisation of the Statistical Services Department. The effort to modernise the Statistical Services Department, has been in

the works for a very long time. I have had, during my career, to depend on the Statistical Services Department for information around the Region. We used to have one of the best Statistical Services Departments in the Region. I am told by my statisticians that they really do not think that they have been putting that kind of thing in place and they really want to get back there. I have hurried to get that project signed off, of the work that has been done before. It has taken so long to get to this stage, and I therefore want to really get that started that has been signed off, Sir.

Sir, we have asked for some work to be done on the systems in the Project Investment Units, to make sure that the planning process in Government, in the Ministry of Economic Affairs, ties in very closely with the financial projects which are done in the Ministry of Finance. We need to be able to look at our Estimates per capita over a 10-year period for the whole thing, to see where our funds are going to come from, what kind of funding we need, whether it is something we want to do that should be done by a Government, or whether it should be done by an NGO, or it should be done by the private sector, so as to make sure that Government does not over-stretch itself. Sir, we really need to see it on a longer term picture. That is what I have asked them to do, so that we can tie the Ministry of Economic Affairs, so they work together.

Sir, we have had for a long time in Barbados, a situation where Government spends money on projects, which are to be funded by the various funding agencies, then we do not claim in time. It is a long time between when we spend the money and when we make the reimbursement claims. It is millions of dollars that are due for reimbursement, for which we have not yet made the claim.

3.50 p.m.

Sequence 103

Friday, March 28, 2008

Estimates - Senate A2, sequence 104, 3.50 p.m.

SENATOR the Hon. D. W. BOYCE: I have asked the senior officers to try and get that project going. It is a project that has been going on for many years. At this time it has been stopped. The effect of it is that we are borrowing money in Government to do a project and we are still paying commitment fees to the international organisations on the funds that we should have borrowed, but we have not borrowed. Therefore, we are trying to get that cleaned up and pushed on, Mr. President.

Mr. President, very shortly, we will meet with the various Ministries to agree on some performance targets with them, such as, what each Ministry will deliver in the

course of the year. Sir, that process started, but I think it has not been focussed on sufficiently, because we need to be able to measure what people say they are going to deliver with the funds that they have, so that year after year, we do not have the same things being promised and not being delivered. This will be a way to keep people focussed on what they need to do, Sir.

Mr. President, sooner rather than later, we will have to go to the stage of having some consolidated financial statements, because we need to know in one balance sheet, what is the total liability of the public sector and the total assets of the public sector.

Sir, guarantee debt and contingent debt in any Government sector could often become real debt. Therefore, we want to make sure that we can see in one place, where all of your debt is, where all your assets are, where there is borrowing and lending between companies in the same Government. We can net those out and see exactly where we stand with our Government finances. Sir, that will have to come sooner rather than later. I daresay that as soon as we get over having the accrual system fixed and getting that up and running properly, we will move to do the consolidated statements, so that we can see what is happening in the whole Government sector.

Mr. President, I will turn now briefly to a couple of other matters, which we have to deal with. Sir, the matter of the price of energy will be dealt with. We are doing our numbers. We are doing our analyses. We are looking at the way we can make sure that we give support to our businesses to keep them competitive. We are looking at ways to make sure that the vulnerable persons in our society are shielded to the extent possible, from the energy prices. We are making sure that when we come up with a proposal that the Barbados National Oil Company (BNOC) will be able to recover the deficit, which it has run up.

Mr. President, the matter of oil prices rising did not start on January 16, 2008. Indeed, by that time the deficit of the BNOC from the subsidy provided was more than \$45 million. It was close to \$50 million. We have put arrangements in place so that the BNOC can resume their business of drilling, in the mean time, until we have dealt with the matter of petroleum prices and energy prices. Mr. President, what has taken many months and not been resolved, will be resolved in a few months.

Asides.

SENATOR the Hon. D. W. BOYCE: Mr. President, the BNOC got their losses run up to a high figure and we will enable the BNOC to deal with those losses in a satisfactory way.

Mr. President, we also have an issue that relates to the clean-up at Gravesend, which we need to deal with. Esso had entered into an arrangement with the Government to pay a certain sum of money. At the time, based on the initial estimates of cleanups seemed that that might have been sufficient. I do not know, but a contract was let to clean up the Gravesend area, for roughly the same amount of money.

Mr. President, it now appears that this clean-up will require a lot more effort. It seems that the contamination is deeper and wider, and it will cost us considerably more in the vicinity, I am advised, of US\$30 or \$31 million to clean up. We are obviously taking a second opinion on that matter because you cannot just rush ahead into a contract for that amount, except we are very sure.

Mr. President, that matter is being looked at, and we are trying to look at the ways in which we could get the funding to clean it up, but we want to make sure that the funding that we are looking for is the correct funding.

Sir, at this stage, just one opinion on a matter of that size would not be good enough. Therefore, we need to take a second or possibly a third opinion on that costing for that clean up. Mr. President, that will come, and that is part of where we are with the energy situation.

Mr. President, I have also had discussions with many people, including our power company people, about the matter of the waste-to-energy. They are moving ahead to get a consultant in, to help them to come up with a proposal for us to deal with the waste-to-energy, so that we can have a plant commissioned, as soon as possible, to enable us to generate electricity from the waste that is generated in the country, including the new waste as well as the existing waste at Mangrove.

Mr. President, I came from Chalky Mount where I look down at Greenland. I would much rather wish that Greenland carry Tilapia as, I think, one of the Senators mentioned, rather than it carry waste. I daresay that we will have to make every effort, as soon as we can, to make sure that we can mine the landfill at Mangrove, so that we can avoid having to take waste to Greenland for any length of time and if we have to take it there then, Mr. President and Senators, we will have to find a way to get rid of it from there. I love St. Andrew dearly and I would wish that we could find somewhere else to deal with it, and we are going to seek every effort to deal with the waste-to-energy situation.

Asides.

SENATOR the Hon. D. W. BOYCE: Mr. President, I am not talking with persons who do not have power plants, who do not know about generating energy. I am

talking with the people who actually do it commercially, and those who produce our electricity here. The people are already in touch with each other, and I expect to get some results from them.

Mr. President, there is a group working to make sure that the situation we have with gas supply will be sorted out. Sir, that effort began under the previous Administration and rightly so, but I have asked them to speed it up, because we need to know where our gas supply will come from in a few years. Sir, there is a joint task force working now with the Ministry and the Barbados Light and Power Company to make sure we have recommendations very shortly on how we go forward with that project.

Senate A2, sequence 104, 4.00 p.m.

Friday, March 28, 2008

SENATOR the Hon. D. W. BOYCE: Mr. President, while we are working on the Offshore Petroleum regulations and that process, we are fully conscious that it takes a very long time between the awarding of a block to someone and the time you get the oil out of the ground. I have been advised that it is anywhere between seven and ten years. In the process there are some services to be provided to the oil companies who win from local people, because they have to get supplies and so on.

We have commissioned the work to identify exactly what it is that the local businesses could supply, so that when we speak with them we could give them specifics of where they could actually seek to invest to make sure that they can benefit from the development of the oil industry.

Mr. President, I am not in the practice of just dealing with a concept. I think it has to be brought to a stage where it could be implemented where people could actually invest in the matter. That work is ongoing.

Mr. President, we have approved the posting of the regulations for comment by the industry and others so that when we finalise those regulations later, perhaps by the middle of next month, they would have benefitted from comments from the wider industry and community, because we would not wish to go out with regulations which are not in accordance with best standards.

Mr. President, we have set the dates when the bids would come back in and when the successful bids would be announced. We expect that by the end of August, we would be in a position to announce the successful bids. That, Mr. President, is a little bit later than what had been the position.

Mr. President, it would be totally unreasonable to expect, on a matter such as this, for an Administration to go right ahead and publish and approve things without having read and understood them and without coming to your own judgement. I am not in the habit of behaving like that in my profession, and I would not start now.

Mr. President, we have looked at the work on the heritage funds. We think that could hold for a little bit longer while we work with some of the other important areas.

Mr. President, on the matter of the Barbados National Oil Company Limited and any privatisation and making sure that Barbadians are given a chance to invest in the Barbados National Oil Company Limited.

Mr. President, I believe it was in 1996, that I recommended that the Barbados National Oil Company Limited not be sold, because I did not think that we had the bids that were sufficiently representative of the value of that company back then.

Mr. President, the Barbados National Oil Company Limited will represent an opportunity for all Barbadians in the fullness of time to participate in the offshore oil industry. While the data looks very good at this stage, I am told, for the offshore oil industry for Barbados and while it has wonderful prospects, you would want to make sure that when you ask the man on the street to invest in the Barbados National Oil Company Limited, or in any company which would carry the local interest, that you do so at a time when you know that there is a pretty good chance for success in that area.

Mr. President, what we would do is to ensure that the options are there for Barbadians to buy into the company. We have to also make sure that when they actually lay their money out, that they lay it out at a time when the company is likely to be successful.

I think one has to be very careful when one goes and makes these public placements, because if you are not a sophisticated investor in these matters, you may be misled about how soon you would get a return from these investments and you may not have the financial strength to last out the time it requires, or to last out if it does not succeed.

Mr. President, we are going to press ahead with making sure that the Barbadian public gets their share in the oil industry. We would do so in a way which enables them to get a successful investment rather than a risky speculative type investment.

SENATOR Miss H. E. THOMPSON: On a point of order. Mr. President, I have promised to restrain myself and

I really have for the duration of the debate. I do, however, want to ensure that there is accuracy here. I agree with the information given by Senator Boyce in relation to ensuring that there is no risk in the investment. I would just want to remind or inform the Chamber that the way in which the policy and the legislation, which is already enacted by the House, has been crafted in that the shares passed to the public are shares in wells carried by the Government.

The Government investment does not bite on a risk. Sir, it bites only at the time the foreign entities declare that they have found a commercial amount of oil, so there is no risk to the shares that pass to the public. They are buying into a successful well only. That is the way that the legislation and the policy have been crafted.

Sir, I am pleased that the Honourable Minister is thinking about safeguards, but there was a safeguard mechanism built in for the public, so they are not taking risky investments.

SENATOR the Hon. D. W. BOYCE: Mr. President, while there is that part of the opportunity for Barbadians to buy into the offshore industry, there are other areas where they could buy in where, may be the prospects could be even richer for them. Therefore, for those opportunities, we would make sure that there is safety before they are invited to buy into those opportunities.

Mr. President, I want to say a quick word on the matter of food and agriculture. The BAMC, I am told, puts a couple hundred acres of land into food production. After discussions with Senator Benn, we have decided to ask the BAMC to provide us with larger acreages of land for food production and for such crops as the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development considers necessary, to be able to help us to ensure more food security in the country. I have asked him to put 1 000 acres of land under food production, because I think we need to make sure that we have that safety in our food supply.

Mr. President, we have a situation where in The Belle there is some threat to our water supply. These Estimates also provide for a feasibility study for a sewerage system for The Belle, so that we could move ahead and protect our water supply. These Estimates also provide for a septic handling facility on the South Coast. Sir, we have tried our best to make sure that the health issues are handled in this set of Estimates.

Mr. President, I noted the concern by the Honourable Senator Newton on the National Insurance Scheme funding for affordable housing. I believe that the National Insurance Scheme, as it has done in the past, would be very conscientious in its job as trustees of the funds of the country. I believe that with the appropriate structuring of the transactions, that some affordable housing may well

represent a good investment. I agree that they would have to be very carefully structured to make sure that the risk does not lie with the National Insurance Board and that there is no threat to the fund of the National Insurance Board.

Senate A2 Sequence 105

4.10 p.m.

Friday, March 28, 2008

SENATOR the Hon. D. W. BOYCE: I believe the people who presently make up the Investment Committee of the National Insurance, would take the appropriate legal and financial advice on how these things should be structured, to make sure that the National Insurance Fund is subjective and that Barbadians are able to purchase their homes.

Mr. President, there has also been some concern about traffic congestion and we have had discussions with the Honourable J. D. Boyce, who is the Minister responsible for Transport, Works and International Transport. The Honourable Minister has begun to look at the park-and-ride situation. He has looked at a number of sites, some of which have already been prepared - in Oistins and at Spring Garden Highway - as a way of beginning to see whether we could get the park-and-ride operation going, as soon as possible.

Mr. President, I have heard the concerns expressed by Honourable Senators about the ABC Highway and the matters of the fly-over. I also noted their agreements with the broadening of the highway and their concerns about the flyovers. Sir, I want to say that Cabinet has not agreed to include any funds for Phase II of the ABC Highway, which has to do with flyovers, while Phase I relates to the broadening of the highway. Sir, the Phase I project is under review.

SENATOR K. D. SYMMONDS: On a point of order. Mr. President, it is with the greatest reluctance that having tried to draw to your attention that which I am now about to say before having to rise, that I have to say after having to rise.

Mr. PRESIDENT: The only way you can draw it to my attention is the way you are about to draw it to my attention now.

SENATOR K. D. SYMMONDS: Mr. President, I understand where you are coming from and you and I will sort this out in this Honourable Chamber in due course.

Sir, this speech began at 3.10 p.m. We are now at 4:15 p.m., and I think the Chair has a duty to be as fair to all

Honourable Senators, in an impartial way, without any bias whatsoever. As a matter of privilege, I am asking you, therefore, to exercise your discretion appropriately.

Mr. PRESIDENT: In the exercise of that discretion, the Chair has come to the conclusion that the Honourable Senator is in the process of completing his presentation and that Other Honourable Senators find interest in the completion of that presentation. Therefore, the Chair is using the discretion which is vested in the Chair, to ensure there is completion of the debate in a sensible manner. I trust that is accepted to the Honourable Senator.

SENATOR K. D. SYMMONDS: Mr. President, as a matter of fact, it is not, because the Chair has not yet given a time within which the speech must wind up. Sir, that is the point on which I rose. It is a matter of privilege that every Honourable Senator has been brought to his or her conclusion within a specified and stipulated time, according to the Standing Orders of this Honourable Chamber.

Mr. President, with the greatest of respect, the Standing Orders cannot arbitrarily be applied, and your ruling, therefore, is vacant to the extent that it has not committed Senator Boyce to conclude within a specific time-frame, as required by the Standing Orders, which have not been suspended on this matter, to the best of my knowledge.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Will the Honourable Senator please quote the Standing Order which is being violated at the moment?

SENATOR K. D. SYMMONDS: Mr. President, it would be remiss of me to further impute the expected integrity of the Chair by having to quote and lecture the Chair on the Standing Orders.

Mr. PRESIDENT: I wish that the Honourable Senator would desist from attempting to lecture the Chair and the day will come when the Honourable Senator will be in a position to do so. In the meantime, the Chair will continue to exercise the discretion which is vested in that Chair. Senator Boyce, you may continue.

SENATOR the Hon. D. W. BOYCE: Fellow Senators, we have tried within the constraints of prudence to make sure that we meet the critical requirements of the country at this time. We have, for those projects which we know will have to come, begun to formulate ways of delivery which will not put this country's economy or finances in peril. Sir, these are ways that are totally and fully acceptable, ways which are prudent, ways which any right-thinking financial expert or lawyer would, in the fullness of time agree with, when those things come to be done.

Mr. President, I wish to thank you and this Honourable Senate for the opportunity to speak on these Estimates, and I support the Appropriations Bill.

SUSPENSION OF SITTING

SENATOR the Hon. Miss M. P. O. McCLEAN: Mr. President, I beg to move that this Sitting be now suspended for a period of 20 minutes, to be resumed at 4.40 p.m.

The question that the Sitting be suspended until 4.40 p.m. was put to the Senate and agreed to and Mr. PRESIDENT suspended the Sitting accordingly.

4.17 p.m.

Friday, March 28, 2008

RESUMPTION

Mr. PRESIDENT: This Senate is resumed. Senator Alleyne.

SENATOR D. McD. ALLEYNE: Thank you very much, Mr. President. It is with a sense of humility that I stand before my fellow Senators to make what will be my maiden presentation in this august Chamber. Sir, I will tell you though that it will not follow the traditions of a maiden presentation for clearly, Sir, the die has been cast. The die was not cast here in this Chamber. It commenced at the Throne Speech where I had the unfortunate position of sitting next to the Opposition Senators. I had to strain to hear the Throne Speech, the loud sucking of teeth, the strapping....

SENATOR K. D. SYMMONDS: Mr. President, on a point of order. Sir, this is highly unparliamentary to cast that type of aspersions on Honourable Senators to suggest that in the presence of Her Majesty the Queen that her Honourable Senators, sworn as they are to pay allegiance, would be sucking their teeth and misbehaving themselves. Sir, it is unbecoming even of the most novice of Senators. I am asking that it be withdrawn. It should be struck from the records and deemed to be absolutely inappropriate.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Without prejudice to the merits of the intervention, Honourable Member I wish you to respond.

SENATOR D. McD. ALLEYNE: I am always guided by manners and respect and I will always respect this Chair. If the Honourable Senator believes I am misleading this Chamber, I withdraw the statement, because I am always guided by manners, because to be a Statesman is a politician who places himself at the service

of a nation. However, a politician is a statesman who places the nation at his service.

Mr. President, I want to say that in 1986, Senator Wes Hall said to me when I was managing his campaign that if we win the Government, and I was offered a place in the Senate, would I take it. I told him that the Senate is for old people and, Sir, I have not reached that stage and I am proud of my 54 years, because, Sir, it is with age that wisdom often comes.

Mr. President, I want to thank the Most High for the challenges that he has placed before me, the strength to deal with them and the blessings he has bestowed on me. I want to say thanks to my parents, to my wife, my Cabinet at the National Union of Public Workers that has endeared me.

Sir, we have a small Cabinet and we engage in cricket Debates and so on which has given me practice on Fridays. I want to thank them and I want to thank, for my political interest, the late Lawson Weekes, who taught me humility; Wes Hall, who taught me courage; Cameron Tudor who taught me enough sense to research and, of course, the Honourable President, who taught me how to forgive.

Mr. President, when it is all said and done, politics is about who get what, when and how. One of the myths that has gone around this country is that the last Administration did an excellent job, and that the people of Barbados, particularly the young ones, made a mistake and voted for the Democratic Labour Party. Sir, there is that view, particularly when you hear the Opposition Senators now speak. They speak as though if they have not understood and I beg your permission to use a Latin phrase and I will give the translation as well. *ANovus ordo seclorum*. They do not know that a new order has come.

Mr. President, yesterday I sat in my seat and I heard the Honourable Senator Symmonds stand and give the inference that he was uncomfortable. By the way, he came here and I felt it was uncharitable. Sir, my mother has always taught me that if I am uncomfortable in any company...

Asides.

SENATOR D. McD. ALLEYNE: Sir, we have not asked Senator Symmonds to come here. His Leader of the Opposition has sent him here and if he is upset with her, I feel....

4.50 p.m.

Sequence 107

Friday, March 28, 2008

SENATOR K. D. SYMMONDS: On a point of order. The Honourable Senator again is misleading the Senate, and I think unnecessarily so. My exact words, if I can share them with you again, Sir, were, "I, understandably so, was not pleased about the circumstances which caused my Party to be in the Opposition and therefore to be in the Senate." Sir, I do not think that can in any way be construed as uncharitable. Was I contesting an Election exercise to lose, or was my Party contesting one to lose? Mr. President, these things are unnecessary.

Sir, the Honourable Senator does not have to go into that kind of thing. If he has a submission to make on the Estimates, he should do so. There is really no punishment if he has nothing to say for remaining in his seat.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Honourable Senator, point made.

Asides.

SENATOR D. McD. ALLEYNE: Sir, he will be getting up very often, Sir.

Sir, substantiate that argument, because in the 20 minutes into his presentation, he made reference to the Minister, Over There, that is holding on to his seat, temporarily.

Sir, the people of Barbados make decisions about who would serve them, when, and we as politicians ought to learn to be Statesmen and women. We have to understand that Statesmen put the nation first. To make statements about the temporarily holding of a seat, he does not own his seat. I walk about with mine, Sir. It is in that context that I want to cast my presentation.

Sir, there was a feeling by the Other Government that they could never lose. Sir, as I said to my wife, and she is here in the Chamber.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Senator, no.

SENATOR D. McD. ALLEYNE: I apologise, Sir. I am new to this thing, Sir. I would be guided by you and am grateful for any intervention you make to put me right.

Asides.

SENATOR D. McD. ALLEYNE: Sir, I told my wife that it seems to me that the Members of the now Opposition are suffering from withdrawal symptoms. I repeat that, 'Novus Ordo Seclorum,' a new order has come. Sir, it is difficult for those Honourable Members to understand it. It was developing in Barbados, a concept of the maximum leader, where nothing else in Barbados

mattered, and you had to bow down and like Julius Caesar, fall at his knees begging for alms. I have always felt that the people of Barbados will always make the decision that in their interest, served Barbados best.

Therefore, I want to say, to follow my theme, that politics is about who gets what and when. The Senators repeatedly argued, yesterday, that there was no connection to the Estimates, and they want to tell us which order we should use to present our Estimates. They wanted us to put this person first and this person second. They wanted us to come with the statistics first. Senator Symmonds said that they changed the architecture of Estimates and presentation of Budgets. Sir, they did. They had a Budget on January, October...

SENATOR K.D. SYMMONDS: On a point of order.

SENATOR D. McD. ALLEYNE: You will get up often.

SENATOR K.D. SYMMONDS: I do not mind doing that. Sir, I am going to claim all the privileges of any Senator in the history of this Place and presently. Sir, I am saying that it is improper and uncalled for, for any Honourable Senator to misrepresent, and I think deliberately so, that which I said, especially before my face.

Sir, I said that we changed the financial architecture of the country, and I spoke specifically to a programme of tax reform. I never said anything about any Estimates and Budget presentations. It is wrong and it is improper, and the Honourable Senator should make contact with the substance of that which brings us here, that is the Estimates debate. This is a long winding road to nowhere, Sir.

SENATOR D. McD. ALLEYNE: Sir, it is almost humorous. Sir, I am going to come to financial prudence soon.

Sir, the point I am making is, this Government with a team and leader, who appreciates strengths and weaknesses, said to all the Senators on This Side: "When do you want to speak? When do you want to make your presentation? When do you feel comfortable?" And we all said when we felt. We planned our presentation, but because it does not suit certain Honourable Members on That Side, we are not getting a connection to the Estimates. Senator Boyce made a presentation, very simplistic, clear, precise, that I saw all the Senators glued to his every word, very simple. There was no 'econometric' or 'economism.' It was clear.

Sir, I had a friend who used to say that he does not like 'econometric' determinism. Sir, I do not know if that is correct, but he used to say that when we were at Cave Hill.

Sir, the Senator gave us basic lessons in what he was about as the Leader of the economy of this Government, and all of us are richer for his presentation. I am Sir, because I take the word of Senator Newton, I am here to learn, Sir. Each Member in here can teach me. I have learned humility.

Sir, my nephew told me one day, AUncle Derek, you have to learn to listen to me, instead of telling me all the time what to do.@ That is a lesson with him I have never forgotten.

Mr. PRESIDENT: How old was he?

SENATOR D. McD. ALLEYNE: He is 10 years now, Sir. He taught me that as a lesson, that I was telling him what to do every week and was not listening to him. Each of us has to be humble enough to believe that each one of us has a contribution to make. We can all learn from that. Senator Crichlow thanked you. Senator Goddard, yesterday I enjoyed your presentation, in particular, Senator Hutson. I knew nothing about the ratoon types of cane.

Asides.

SENATOR D. McD. ALLEYNE: I could have asked Senator Benn.

Sir, the Senator explained to me the challenges of the Sugar Industry in clear terms, and I am proud to have been here in his presence, Sir.

Sir, this country went through a stage where fear, and I say that as I make connection to these Estimates. I want to characterise the last Administration, as the destruction of independent proud creative citizens to becoming dependent mendicant citizens, where persons feel that they had to be part of an inclusion, by giving up independence and walking across the Floor and joining the Other Party. You do not have to make a contribution by joining this Party. You do not have to join this Party to make a contribution. Anybody is free to make a contribution. You do not have to carry a card. Sir, you have Senators who jump over, then jump back over, and then jump back over.

Mr. PRESIDENT: I hope no such Senators are in here?

SENATOR D. McD. ALLEYNE: No, Sir, not in here, Sir. Not in this Chamber, Sir. They may be some in here who went over, but they did not come back over, Sir.

Asides.

SENATOR D. McD. ALLEYNE: Sir, let us make some connection to these Estimates. I want to start with the Queen Elizabeth Hospital. Sir, I was Personal Assistant to the Leader of the Opposition, when, one Thursday afternoon, the Leader of the Opposition and I were sitting in his office, downstairs, when we turned the television on, and saw the Prime Minister cut off the head of the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, cut it off, one lash, whacks, head off, the hospital. Sir, have you ever taken a head off a chicken?

5.00 p.m.

Sequence 108

Friday, March 28, 2008

Estimates - Senate A2, sequence 109, 5.00 p.m.

SENATOR D. McD. ALLEYNE: Sir, you cannot stick it back on, and from that day, the hospital has been struggling to catch itself. Sir, it did not only destroy the management of the hospital, it destroyed the confidence of every other worker at that institution. We have tried everything to get the hospital going. It is not only a systemic problem, but it is a problem of loss of confidence.

Sir, you cannot wake up one morning and have four Directors go through the eddoes. Then, eight years later, you are struggling to impose a Board. Sir, when you impose that Board at the hospital, you gave the workers two options, either come with the Board or leave.

Sir, there were suggestions to give the persons a chance to go into what we call a secondment, because there is a fear for working with a Board. Sir, if you give the persons a secondment with an option after two years to go, if they want to go, or to stay if they want, the environment at the Board could be so conducive that they would have wanted to stay.

Sir, but no. That was not an option, because those people did not like that option and you could not talk to them, because they were not listening. Sir, now they want to tell this Government what they must do, when they were not listening to anybody.

Sir, the hospital today has a shortage of nurses. The nurses have gone to Bermuda, not because of the money, but because we did not want them here. Sir, when you get to age 50 as a nurse, you do not want to work night shifts, but if you are locked into the hospital, you have to work night shifts. Sir, when most of the nurses get into that advanced stage, they go into community nursing, so they can get home and help with their grandchildren. Therefore, the option is to stay in the wider system, so that they could enjoy some comfort when they get to 55 years old.

Sir, the Government was not listening. They had their maximum leader who knew everything about everything, and we were driven by economics and not by people. Sir, if we were driven by people, the nurses= interests would have been heard and the patients= interests would have been heard.

Sir, we have a nurse, 27 years old in the Eye Theatre, who was down at the Geriatric Hospital fixing sore feet, because she is at the age where she has to put in four more years, before she moves to the community nurses.

Asides.

SENATOR D. McD. ALLEYNE: Sir, when my grandfather had a little cut and I used to clean it, that kind of thing. Sir, if you have bedsores, if you are in that institution, that kind of thing. I am sorry if I put them in Barbadian parlance, but although I speak good English, I speak perfect Bajan.

Asides.

SENATOR D. McD. ALLEYNE: Sir, I could speak all day on the Queen Elizabeth Hospital.

Sir, I am going to move on to the Vauxhall Village. In 1993, the National Assistance Board went to the National Housing Corporation and acquired some land at Vauxhall, under the Chairmanship of Dr. Farley Brathwaite and \$1 million was voted to do the development work. The Government changed in 1994. It took the last wizardly Administration 10 years, 10 times the budget. These things hurt.

Sir, I was a Member of that Board and after the 10 years, the building was completed and it took two more years, with the windows dropping out and the doors dropping off before one patient went in and they are telling us about fiscal prudence. Sir, they are telling a new Government which is three months old about fiscal prudence? We cannot follow their example. We have to do everything opposite to them.

Sir, they are telling us about housing and we are not to invest money in housing. They took \$50 million from the National Insurance and built a building at Warrens. Sir, people forget, but I do not forget.

Sir, I know why Senator Thompson forgets that she was the Minister of Housing and I am going to come to that in a minute. Sir, that building to this day is the subject of a loss.

Sir, this last Administration created so many problems for us, and they want us to tell them what we are going to do next week.

Right now, the Government of Barbados, whether it is a BLP Government, a DLP Government, a NDP Government or the PPP Government, has to find some money to pay a contractor, because of lack of fiscal prudence. Sir, the story of the NHC is in a really sorry state.

Mr. President, I am a Member of a credit union and I remember when the former Minister of Housing, Senator Thompson, put up some model houses. I think they were Lady Birds, Bumble Bees, Cockroaches, all kinds of names.

Asides.

SENATOR D. McD. ALLEYNE: Sir, I am told grasshoppers.

Sir, people went to the credit union and organized their mortgages.

Mr. PRESIDENT: I draw to the Honourable Senator=s attention, did you say, cockroach?

SENATOR D. McD. ALLEYNE: Mahogany Birds, Sir.

Mr. PRESIDENT: I was not sure.

SENATOR D. McD. ALLEYNE: Sir, the point I am making is that they had funny names, representing insects.

Sir, people went to the credit unions and the banks and got mortgages and loans organised. They went back to the NHC ready for these houses. Sir, you know when you borrow money you start to pay interest on that money. Sir, but what we got were African snails.

In addition, Sir, we were having some high winds and I passed by the NHC and the house had about 16 pieces of rope, tying it to the ground. Sir, the next week when we toured the house, it had termites through it. Sir, they are telling a new Government about fiscal prudence.

Sir, the situation is even worse. Mr. President, when you or any Senator, on your way home this afternoon, I want you to go through Country Road, and you will see some old iron stakes coming out of concrete blocks at the corner of Country Road and Bank Hall. They have been there for eight years. Sir, that is the taxpayers= money. The money does not belong to Owen Arthur, Derick Alleyne, or Peter Brathwaite, but it is the taxpayers= money, which is left to rot, at the corner of Passage Road, Country Road and Bank Hall.

Asides.

SENATOR D. McD. ALLEYNE: Sir, White Park Road too. It is a four-road junction. Again, they are advising us about fiscal prudence?

The Barbados Youth Service, Sir, you know I am going to speak about this with passion. In 1992, the now Prime Minister was the Minister responsible for Youth Affairs. I was a Labour Officer in the Public Service. The Minister called my boss, and asked him for permission to second me to the Youth Service.

Sir, I do not talk about my qualifications, because those qualifications are about discipline. Sir, commitment and hard work are about heart. Sir, I went to the Youth Service and I worked some days from 8:00 o'clock in the morning, slept in, went home, my wife did not see me for two days sometimes, which was probably a good thing, I know you would say, Mr. President.

Asides.

Mr. President, the point I am making is that the Youth Service was built on hard work.

Senate A2, sequence 109, 5.10 p.m.

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SENATOR D. McD. ALLEYNE: It was a structural adjustment period. We did not have much money. As a matter of fact, some of us did not have any money. I never got a cent in overtime. No officer got a cent in overtime. Sir, we worked in conditions that were sub-standard, because you were building a programme.

Sir, I hear people in the Other Place accusing this Government of sending home people. I am going to get to the consultants too. Sir, in four years after the Government changed, the Director, the Deputy Director, the Assistant Director and all the programme officers were sent home, or run from Barbados. That programme has been all, but destroyed.

Mr. President, let me tell you some things that have happened. Before the Prison got to Harrisons Point, the former Government entered into an agreement to sell Harrisons Point to the highest bidder. It has been sold without making arrangements for the Youth Service. Sir, the Prison fell, like how the Alamo fell, and they snatched up the Youth Service, set the prisoners there, and from that day they have been nomads. First, they were dumped in the basement of the Ministry of Education and they had to run out because it was next to the printing room with paints and oils. This is a development programme which is trying to change behaviour and build character.

The Government then sent them up to Paragon and the Cadets threw them out, because the Cadets had their own programme. For about three months, they had nowhere to go. They then sent them to Weymouth in four offices with no parade square. They then moved them to the Garrison and they moved them again like nomads. Now they are at Warrens. Sir, in all those moves, they were placed in substandard facilities.

I heard Honourable Senators talking about the public servants and who do not work. I am going to touch that in a minute. Sir, the Youth Service hurts me, because at the same time the Government that went out on January 15, is walking about talking about a National Youth Service. They cannot run the one that takes in 100 persons. They mashed up that and then put on their agenda a National Youth Service to take in all young people. They cannot run 100, but they could run 10 000. Who are they fooling?

From a situation of building character, changing attitudes, we have a programme which had been destroying the professionalism of the staff, while at the same time, a Department called Community Development is raped of all its resources and its staff, with a reduced budget every year. Do you want me to come into contact with the Estimates, Sir?. Every year, the budget for Community Development got smaller and smaller.

Sir, from 2004, somebody past by a well and came up with a name OASIS and they had a project called OASIS. Sir, you have a programme that is developmental, building character. You destroy that, but you pick OASIS, because Oasis is about giving a weed wacker to cut lawns. That is what the young people of Barbados should aspire to do.

Sir, 145 persons were trained, but the Honourable Senator said yesterday that they trained 1 000. I know that she had missed a zero. They had a graduation for 145, so if they trained 1 000, over 900 did not graduate. I know the programme well, Sir.

Sir, the Youth Training Programme (YTP) and all of those other programmes have been starved of resources.

Sir, I am moving on to the Public Service, because I had to beg permission to say that I am employed as a workers= representative. Sir, I cringed when I heard the criticisms of public officers because I was one for 10 years. I told you of my experience at the Barbados Youth Service. It never changed when I was at the Ministry of Labour and it never changed when I was at Community Development.

Sir, in all spheres of employment in Barbados there are worker bees and drones. I always tell my colleagues that you cannot reform the public sector without engaging the private sector. It is the employment culture that we

have to address. A person working at the Sanitation Service Authority does not go home in isolation. The public sector is not in Iran and the private sector in Israel. It is an employment culture about behavioural change, relationships between managers and workers, and supervisors at the top and supervisors at the bottom that must be addressed.

Sir, when people make statements about public servants, they have to make statements about workers generally and their relationship to their work. Sir, I charge any person to show me the public officer, given proper instruction and supervision, who would not do his or her work.

Sir, I pass and saw workers in the private sector standing up on the side of the road, not because they are lazy, but because the marl-fill that is supposed to be dropped in the hole had not yet arrived. In the public sector, there are politicians who would take workers into the Public Service unknown to the Ministry of the Civil Service and give them temporary jobs. That was very rampant in the last Administration, especially in the Ministry of Education, under the now Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. President, if you have more workers than work, some of them have to play with their toes. The Ministry of Public Works and Transport was used as a social reform agency. People who could find work no place else were sent to the National Conservation Commission, the Ministry of Public Works and Transport, the Ministry of Housing and Lands and the Ministry of Health.

Mr. President, I worked at the Ministry of Labour at 'Verona House' as a Labour Officer and every Thursday people who were employed by the Ministry of Public Works and Transport, who were sent to the Psychiatric Hospital for treatment, would come by us for counselling, because that Ministry was used earlier on for people who could not find work any place else. It is not only the workers, it is the structure.

Sir, I have to move off Public Sector Reform, because I have to get to the consultants, because they are talking about financial prudence and victimisation. Sir, they had one particular consultant who used to get \$6 000 a month of the taxpayer's money to call in on the call-in programmes. He used to loiter up at the National Assistance Board under the guise of a Chairman. Sir, a month or two before the Election, 34 workers were brought on at the National Assistance Board and there was no budget. Sir, the thing about that particular consultant is that he never reported to the Minister. He has never written a report.

Senate A2 Sequence 110

5.20 p.m.

Friday, March 28, 2008

SENATOR D. McD. ALLEYNE: He was appointed under the Ministry of Social Transformation, when the Honourable Member for St. Michael South East was Minister, and he told me he was not speaking to AHammie La@. Madam, that was symptomatic because at the Urban Development Commission, the Permanent Secretary wrote to the Director, and he ignored her. She complained. The Minister then wrote to him and he ignored the Minister. The Minister asked that he be terminated. I do not know if it was the Prime Minister, the Deputy Prime Minister or who, but somebody intervened and told the Minister where to get off, yet they talk about the public servants.

Madam, in an institution and environment like that, how can anyone work? You are working in an office and every Member of the Barbados Labour Party, who lost in 2003, were employed as a consultant somewhere, whether it was at the Barbados Drug Service, whether as a constitutional Lawyer, reform officer or in the Ministry of Tourism.

Madam Deputy President, furthermore, they brought back persons who had skills. I heard Honourable Senators talking about persons graduating from the University of the West Indies and finding it difficult to locate proper employment. Madam, every one of them and friends of the Barbados Labour Party were sometimes paid \$8 000 for doing nothing.

Madam Deputy President, I was a consultant at the Commonwealth Youth Programme for a short while and before I got a cheque, I had to submit a report. I asked Honourable Senators on the Opposition to get up and produce a report from those consultants. If the Honourable Senator wants me to give him names, I could write them and come back in this Honourable Chamber and bring reports so that they could hush their mouths.

Asides.

SENATOR D. McD. ALLEYNE: Madam Deputy President, the Prime Minister sent a Member of Parliament, who was also a Minister of Social Transformation, to investigate the Other Minister, because they had problems at the Urban Development Commission. Madam, the Prime Minister sent a Member of Parliament to investigate another Member of Parliament.

Asides.

SENATOR D. McD. ALLEYNE: Madam Deputy President, I give this new Opposition credit. They have a lot of nerve. I give that to them, but I am not going to finish

with the consultants, I am going to come back to them every day, because it is about fiscal prudence.

Asides.

SENATOR D. McD. ALLEYNE: I do not know what he was sent to investigate, because we know that nothing is going to come out of that. It was a show to give the Barbadian public the view that something was happening. Madam, I heard Senator the Honourable Mrs. V. E. Newton speaking to decorum and to behaviour, and I support her, but I have always had a problem with the word “decorum”, because literally translated, it means Aof the God=s@, and there is only one God.

Asides.

SENATOR D. McD. ALLEYNE: Madam Deputy President I stand corrected. My Latin is about 30 years old and I am subject to mistakes.

Madam Deputy President, the Honourable Member made a call for decorum, respect and so on. Madam Deputy President, I want to say that we set standards at the top and for 13 years, the former Prime Minister of Barbados was allowed to walk around Barbados and abuse any and everybody.

SENATOR K. D. SYMMONDS: On a point of order. Madam Deputy President, I think that must impute the most improper of motives on that which is still an Honourable Member of the Legislative Chambers of Barbados. The former Prime Minister is a Member of the Other House.

Madam DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Is the Honourable Senator taking objections to the statement?

SENATOR K. D. SYMMONDS: Madam Deputy President, I think it has to be withdrawn.

SENATOR D. McD. ALLEYNE: Madam Deputy President, I withdraw that statement, but let me say why I came to that conclusion. Madam, people in here said that they are going to be frank and this country would always hide from being frank and pretend that they want to be frank. Sir, we set standards to our young people and the people at the top have a responsibility to be frank and honest and to deal with bad behaviour at the top, so that it does not permeate our society.

Madam Deputy President, I listened as the name of the Honourable Senator sitting next to me was dragged across the Lower House, in the presence of Senator Symmonds, and there was not one word of rebuke from anyone.

SENATOR K. D. SYMMONDS: On a point of order. Senator Alleyne is now reflecting inappropriately on the Speaker in the Other Place. It could only have been an inappropriate comment if the former Speaker had ruled. Madam, we cannot go down this road of impugning the integrity of former Members of Parliament and Honourable Members of Parliament in this way. Madam, it is said that a good speech may not always be remembered, but that a bad speech is never forgotten or forgiven and Senator Alleyne is in danger of falling into that latter class.

SENATOR D. McD. ALLEYNE: Madam Deputy President, I am not here to have my speech measured by Senators. I am here to make a contribution to this debate. Some people could give me 100 per cent, some could give me 10 per cent, but I am trying to be as frank and as honest as I possibly can in this debate.

Madam Deputy President, I was the Personal Assistant to the Leader of the Opposition and I sat in the Lower House and I heard a Member of Parliament got up and described the former Leader of the Opposition, in 2003, as a person he would not name his retarded child after. Madam, a Member on the Floor of the same person=s Side got up and objected to it, because that person felt it was inappropriate. The Speaker does not have to guide your behaviour. You could get up every minute and object to it.

If any Member on my Side makes any disparaging comment about any Member in here, I will object to it, because it is about decency and we have to set standards.

Madam, persons could object to my making statements about the behaviour of the former Prime Minister, but the majority of Barbadians are aware of the fact that I also suffered under his tongue at the airport.

Asides.

Madam DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Order, please.

SENATOR D. McD. ALLEYNE: If he wants to set standards, it is not only about shouting across the Floor, it is about the leaders setting examples for us to follow and for our children to emulate. You cannot have people walking about saying that any leader of any country is disrespected across the Region for his language. Madam Deputy President, I went to the Lower House about six years ago and saw the way they were treating the staff there. Sir, they would not follow the Rules of the House. The bell was ringing and they refused to come to the House. They treated the staff with disrespect.

Madam Deputy President, this is my first contribution and I am going to do it passionately, because I am going to sit here quietly and I am going to enjoy it. As I

said, when in 1986, they asked me, I thought it was for old people. Madam, through you, I am saying to Sir John Stanley Goddard, Senator Newton and Reverend Harold Crichlow, that I am going to enjoy this Sitting. I promise you it will never be boring.

Madam, I want no quarter, because I am not in a giving mood. I say to this Honourable Senate that the Appropriation Bill, as presented by this Government connects with the people. I say that politics is about who gets what, when and how. Therefore, over the last five years, the cry in Barbados was for change, not because of Thompson or Arthur, but because the people at the bottom felt that the crumbs were not big enough. They were going right through the aquifers.

5.30 p.m.

Friday, March 28, 2008

SENATOR D. McD. ALLEYNE: . . .

Mr. PRESIDENT: The Honourable Member has five more minutes.

SENATOR D. McD. ALLEYNE: Mr. President, the Barbados Football Association had a match on Wednesday. I am sorry I did not get there. Barbados won one love and I would like to congratulate them. I would like to say that they were charged a bill of \$38 000 to use the venue. Sir, that may seem reasonable, but when you consider that it was costing the Government \$50 000 to keep the place closed, I feel they owe the Barbados Football Association some money.

Mr. President, I am asking Senator Symmonds through you, what he thinks about those economics. If he thinks they owe the Barbados Football Association some money because if they got it opened, we should be glad we owe them a debt.

Sir, the point I am making is that this Government is faced with paying for that stadium. We do not know how much more money is owed because every day there is a new bill or somebody makes a new claim. Sir, we cannot bring an end to the outlay and it is not finished. We have to find fresh money, new money, \$10 million that the Child Care Board could use, and Sir, that edifice down there, would be opened for cricket three times a year at the most because nobody seems to be interested in going to Shell Shield Cricket, the Test Match and one day cricket.

Sir, it is opened six days a year, may be, and no plan was put in place for the use of that facility. There was no idea what was going to happen to it when it was finished and I heard in the Other Place, the former Prime Minister

telling the new Government not to give the association another cent.

Sir, I thought he would have negotiated first a contract, so that people know who put in what and what I would put in but, Sir, nothing so happened. He did as he liked and wants this Government to penalise people without investigating the situation.

Sir, I am asking in this Chamber if it is possible to bring all the players involved together and let us work out a plan for that stadium.

Mr. President, I do not know how much it costs but it is a shame that any Senator from the last Government or any Member from the Other Place to talk about financial prudence when that edifice stares us in our face without a plan for its use.

Mr. President, you know how much money the last Government took, scattered it like leaves in autumn and whoever wanted some, picked some up? Sir, the hurtful thing is that the money did not belong to them. The money belonged to the taxpayers of Barbados. All of us have to pay it back and generations to come will have to pay it back. Sir, it is sad.

Mr. President, finally, I am coming home on work permits. Sir, an earlier Senator was making the contribution that we need to build more safeguards and commitments by people seeking work permits, but we have Lawyers in Barbados, who apply for 45 work permits at one time. We have construction companies who apply for 50 work permits at one time and there is no guarantee about houses and where these people are going to live.

Sir, what happens is that people come in and have nowhere to live and they live in dilapidated houses. Sir, they rent beds now. You sleep at night and I sleep at day. Sir, in this country, we have the return of bed lice because if it is insanitary, those things breed, so we have a challenge, not only to the work permit issue, but to health.

Mr. President, I am asking this new Administration to move swiftly to put a protocol and system in place to help the Immigration Department make decisions about the issue of work permits.

Sir, I am grateful to you for your consideration. I know I may have been emotional but that is Senator Derrick Alleyne's style and Sir, any time I offend you, pull me in. To other Senators, I am grateful for the rapt attention.

Mr. President, I thank you.

Mr. PRESIDENT: I thank the Honourable Senator and I now call on the Leader of Government Business in this Senate to windup the debate. Is there any other Honourable Senator who has not spoken who would like to speak? Senator McClean, you have the floor.

SENATOR the Hon. Miss M. P. O. McCLEAN: Thank you Mr. President, let me start my wrap-up by first thanking all Members of the Senate. I want to say a special "thank you" to Senator Ifill in her absence, and to Senator Griffith. I believe that the scepticism of many about the appointment of two young people to the Senate, their belief that this was mere window dressing, that belief was shattered from the time we started this process.

Mr. President, not only in this week=s discussions and deliberations have they demonstrated their capabilities, their courage, their potential, but they have demonstrated that the future of this country is in good hands.

Sir, as I said to Senator Ifill yesterday as she was informed that she was going to take the Chair at the beginning of the day=s proceeding, that demonstrated good work brings more work.

Mr. President, on the role of the Senate, I want to acknowledge the advice of a senior Senator, Senator Newton about 'decorum' and recognise that, as the previous speaker said, passion perhaps should not be seen as a lack of decorum, but must be seen for what it is. Certainly, if I speak on behalf of persons who have sat here for the first time that they will abide by the traditions and conventions of this Honourable Chamber.

Mr. President, let me start by also saying that like the other Senators, I was truly appreciative of the contribution of Senator Boyce and it must be lauded. Sir, at the level of the individual of Senator Boyce himself, it represents and reflects the level of commitment that he has demonstrated from the first day, so to speak, from the ringing of the bell, when he was asked to serve.

It represents the sheer number of man-hours that he has personally put in, to review, modify and to complete these Estimates. He has brought to that exercise sound knowledge, experience and an understanding, not only of things financial as an accountant, but things economic as a trained economist. However, he has demystified, for a lot of us lay persons, some of the traditions of economics, because economics tends to sound very abstract for many people and perhaps esoteric, because of the style of presentation of things economic, traditionally.

5.40 p.m.

Sequence 112

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SENATOR the Hon. M. P. O. McCLEAN: Sir, I think that in doing that, it is not only the form in which he has presented it, but it demonstrates the substance of what he has done in this exercise.

Sir, I listened to calls from the Representatives of the Opposition to talk about an agenda, to show us, in their words, where the new Administration=s agenda is, within the numbers of the Estimates.

I think that we will leave here today and no doubt all Barbadians, who have been able to hear and if it is well reported, would read and listen in the media to the sound logic that has gone into the Estimates as set out. He has demonstrated, and so would have other Senators on This Side, that the business of Government and the running of a country is about continuity, as would have been said before.

A new Government does not abandon what it has inherited. It has to sift through and identify what is essential, and we heard that today in very specific terms. It has to identify what circumstances it has inherited, allow it to do in the short-term. It has to prioritise. It has to assess the situation, and it does not happen in three months.

Sir, I challenge the Honourable Members of the Opposition, to tell us when their Administration started, at what point in the life of the first term they would have gone full swing into their agenda, to use the term. The reality is, you cannot do that over-night, and it is not prudent, to use the word that we have been hearing a lot about so far. It is not sensible to try to do that.

I am happy to see that time has been spent preparing a strategic plan, which is a working document, which would tell you that situation analysis is ongoing. Therefore, before we can launch into anything, we have to assess what happens. You can make promises and you should make promises, but the ability to fulfil those promises is very much contingent on what you have to work with.

It is by no coincidence that I think my dear colleague, Senator Alleyne, opted to bat last, because I think it offered a potent reminder of the wastage and of the disrespect for the people of this country, in terms of the mal-attention or the misguided, or misuse, the wastage, the poor stewardship that was manifested. That is a fact. It is being discovered day after day.

Sir, he spoke about consultants. About seven individuals within the Prime Minister=s Office who would have taken home in one financial year, in excess of \$700 000, and from my investigations, there was little or no evidence, certainly, depending on the classification of the

consultancy, where there should be evidence. There was no evidence of performance. I want to stick on that for a little while.

Sir, there was a gentleman, that I heard, speaking with passion on the platform, and I understood, and it took some finding, but the contract for that consultancy was found. If I am correct, it probably spanned may be 10 years. It certainly spanned several Ministers, and from my understanding of the gentleman=s experience, he had no experience to analyse, advise or make certain decisions in critical management areas of commerce or business, but he was paid approximately \$8 000 per month, based on qualifications as a person who spent much time training several persons, over several years and working in management. I believe that some Members present would know about those things, through their interaction in the classroom or elsewhere.

I can say categorically and as was indicated by Senator Alleyne, the name can be provided and the investigation can be done, and the details can be brought here. The reality is, the specific individual to whom I referred, was not on any occasion, and no records have been found and diligent searches have been made, able to produce a single report.

In fact, the information that was brought in my investigations, because it was important that we start to do this, was that what came every month was an invoice. If you heard the practice that is used by some entities, and certainly in the private sector, an invoice follows some kind of progress report, completed report, or some evidence of work. Sir, not only some evidence of work, usually that work has to be perused, to make sure that it meets the standard of the person contracting the services of the individual.

Sir, the point I am making, as we seek to set out funds to be used, as we seek to identify revenue sources, it is done against the back-drop of what we found, because what you think you have, may very well be far from what is, and the only way to establish that, is to do your investigations, to do your assessments, and to move on.

Sir, the reality is, though, we cannot pause to do those things. Business has to continue. I want to speak a little bit about the whole question of how we do business.

Sir, there were some concerns expressed, for the ability of this new Government to deliver in 100 days. I think there was some suggestion - I would have to use a paraphrase. I would have to rifle through my many notes to find the exact phrase used by the Honourable Senator on the Other Side, who probably questioned the sense of making 100-day promise.

Sir, the reality is, if you make promises and you have no time lines, promises then become comforts to fools. The reality is, within a time line, it puts us in a position to put our hands, hearts, heads, Government and the people=s resources to the wheel and start to deliver. It is about prudence and discipline.

Sir, the reality also is, we probably cannot deliver on everything, because, again, as you sit on the outside and you plan and strategise, you are doing that to some extent in darkness, to use that analogy. It is when you step into the room and you turn on the light, you will see what there is. As we seek to do that, we will be honest with Barbadians.

A lot of these promises are not hot air, and there are not about just giveaways. It is about recognising that as we move on to take this country forward, the focus and emphasis on the previous Administration was less about the average people, less about addressing the social needs of this country, notwithstanding the poverty alleviation programme, which was for a large extent, and if the analysis demonstrates this, they were paying the water bill, light bill, National Housing Corporation rents, and the question you would have to ask is, who were the beneficiaries of those? Time will reveal that.

Sir, it is about taking a bigger step, to recognise that all of the things that we have identified in this country, as the things that attract foreign investors to buy high-end condominiums, to stay in luxury hotels, will disappear if we do not address the needs of the people of this country, if we do not ensure that we have well-educated persons, persons who are healthy, persons who feel that they have a stake in this little island and they are important, because if they are not important, they will soon turn on visitors.

They will soon turn on the politicians who get into their fancy vehicles and condos that they established and their gated communities or whatever, because at the end of the day, if the average Joe or Jane in this country, does not feel that they have a stake in this country, they will get angry. We talk about alienation in sociology, and it would happen. We have seen it in other communities.

5.50 p.m.

Sequence 113

Friday, March 28, 2008

Estimates - Senate A2, sequence 114, 5.50 p.m.

SENATOR the Hon. Miss M. P. O. McCLEAN: The beautiful thing about this country, certainly in post-Independence, I was around a decade before Independence, and I have seen this country grow.

Asides.

SENATOR the Hon. Miss M. P. O. McCLEAN: I am not ashamed to say my age, Sir.

Sir, this country has grown in a way that has been beneficial to the entire population. It has grown because we have benefitted from education. I want to stick a pin there and speak to education because, I think, that I made some comments in my opening remarks, which some people seemed to have probably not followed exactly what I was trying to say. I read, for example, some comments in the newspaper which misrepresented me. I also want to speak a little in the light of the comments from Senator Newton.

Sir, like previous Administrations, certainly it was under a previous Government of the Democratic Labour Party that free university education as we have come to know it, became a reality. I therefore want to emphasize and I will be personal now, I speak about the university, that as the sitting President of the University of the West Indies Alumni Cave Hill Chapter, I strongly believe and support free education.

I want, however, to make the point that I made before and I want to emphasise it, that as this Government puts the largest amount of its money within these Estimates, its expenditure to Education that we cannot afford, where we are pursuing a laudable strategy of trying to produce a graduate in every household, to have a situation where money is poorly allocated. I will speak to how I see poor allocation, because I do not think people understood the point I was making.

The point that was made was that basically, we have a situation that is unfolding in the last several years, where students can no longer repeat the Fifth Form. Sir, because they can no longer repeat the Fifth Form, they will leave school and probably accumulate their CXC's outside of the system, privately.

Where they actually complete CXC's, those persons who are the best performers will be retained in the Sixth Form schools, or they will get the places in the Barbados Community College. The marginal performers who do not go into the job market, or cannot find a job market, because of the policy of widening educational opportunities at the University, are able to enter with a lower matriculation.

Sir, for those who do not understand that notion, it is a situation where priority is given to persons with either "A" levels, or the equivalent, as first choice, and those who then have CXC's come in after. They are able then to enter, either under a part-time programme, where they may have to do remedial courses, or make up courses, so to speak.

However, the unfortunate reality is that a semester at the University for the taxpayer, is substantially more money than a semester at Ellerslie, Queen's College, the Barbados Community College, St. Leonard's or whatever. The point I am making is that results are showing, and I have been doing my research. In fact, I have not had to do research because over the years, former students who are now lecturers at the university call me every end of semester and complain saying that you need to talk about this, when I was in another place. Sir, I will talk about it here now because, I think, as a policymaker now, I can do something about it. Sir, what is happening is that some of those young people are eager, but ill-equipped.

Sir, I am asking the question or the position I put to the Ministry of Education and certainly to the Cabinet, when we look at this again, is that as we allocate those funds, we may be shooting ourselves in the feet, if we seek to cater to young people in that situation, while trying to meet the targets, because two things will happen.

The cost would escalate and we would have to revisit that target of one UWI graduate in every household, or we will find ourselves saying that we cannot afford to send you to university. My recommendation is, to study what is happening, revisit what we are offering in the Sixth Form schools, see if we can expand those, and then we would be utilising those educational funds to the maximum.

Sir, I think it was necessary for me to spend some time, because if we are talking about fiscal prudence, we have to look at one of the major areas of expenditure, in order to ensure that we address the most efficient, most effective and beneficial use of our resources. It is not a position of seeking to deny anybody or not wanting people to access the university.

I am saying that as the campus is beautified, as we have some hard-working persons led by the Principal, we also have to focus on the outcomes. Sir, I think that the focus on outcomes has to be a guiding principle and that is, in fact, a guiding principle of this Administration.

I want to say something about housing and I think it is very clear that this is an issue that has to be addressed. I spoke to it briefly, but I will go back to it. There is the fear, and a justified fear, that public funds and specifically the National Insurance Scheme funds, should probably not be used in low-income housing.

I want to suggest that references have been made to sub prime mortgages and the danger of those things. I do not classify low-income housing as sub-prime mortgages. A sub-prime mortgage is a situation, where financial institutions - let us look at North America for a minute - have identified some high-risk persons in the market for

mortgages. High-risk meaning that they probably do not meet the standard criteria for repayment, and they see it as a business opportunity to make money and what they sought to do was to change those persons premium interest rates.

In other words, what they sought to do was to do a take-off between the risk of lending to some person who should not get the money to borrow in the first place, and the return of a higher interest rate. Sir, the unfortunate reality is that they did too much of that and it went bust.

Sir, low-income housing is a situation where an individual will go to his or her credit union, commercial bank or other finance institution and say that: "I think I can afford a house that costs \$100 000. This is my salary, this is my wage" and the person says: "Based on your expenditures and your job situation, we can lend you the money." Sir, it is no different to a person going and borrowing money for \$600 000. The idea is that the person who goes to borrow for \$600 000 needs to demonstrate his or her capacity to pay.

In the situation of low-income housing, what you are saying is that it is an area in which Barbados has lagged behind and there is a market. The reality is, again, from my experience as a director of a commercial bank, and as a director of a credit union, poor people pay their debts better than wealthy people.

Asides.

SENATOR The Hon. Miss M. P. O. McCLEAN: I sat and saw for several years, individuals in this community who could afford to pay, based on the lifestyles I saw exhibited, never repaid their loans. I left an institution and bet if I could find the information, they still have not yet paid, but poor people pay their debts. Therefore, it is still not a case of putting money in people's hands who cannot pay. This, I think, is what was understood and I will emphasize it, because I think it is important that we go away understanding that it is a sound financing strategy. It is also on the parallel side, a sound investment strategy that the National Insurance fund has to make decisions about investment.

Sir, looking at the balances, I think the Honourable Minister saw that it was an opportunity for us to deliver, in a way that is doubly beneficial, because it is saying that we will make the money available to financial institutions for lending, provided, of course, that the terms and conditions allow the National Insurance Scheme to get an adequate return. Sir, I think that is not understood. Then we will have to speak to that over and over again.

Sir, I think that clarifies, clearly in no uncertain terms, what is intended.

Mr. President, I want to say, again, just to reiterate, and I think that Senator Chandler in her presentation made the point that, when we look at agriculture, a significant amount of money is made in terms of gardening.

Senate A2, sequence 114, 6.00 p.m.

Friday, March 28, 2008

SENATOR the Hon. Miss M. P. O. McCLEAN: I think the important point she was making there is that as we seek to address the question of food security, it is important to recognise that there is a lot of scope.

I want to suggest, and certainly my colleague who had to leave earlier to deal with some matters relating to his Ministry, who may be back, has recognised that one of the beautiful things about agricultural production is that it can be changed in a very short space of time. A lot of crops that are critical and are of nutritional value to us can be produced in under three months.

In terms of addressing that broader issue of the cost of living, it is possible to quickly make a significant dent in our food import bill. Mr. President, such a strategy has to have not only short-term or even medium-term elements to it, but long-term elements. The issue of surplus production is also very much a possibility.

Mr. President, as Senator Chandler was speaking yesterday, I reminded Senator Benn that for a long time we in the Caribbean have talked about making certain parts of the CARICOM family the food basket. I remember, I think it was last year, when there was a story of a glut of tomatoes. I think Senator Hutson spoke about his dilemma as a farmer.

Mr. President, at the time we were having those gluts, I happened to have been in Antigua and there was a shortage. Tomatoes were selling in Barbados at \$1 per pound and in Antigua they were selling at EC\$8 per pound, but of course the question was, how do you get them from there?

Mr. President, I like an expression my former geography teacher, God rest her soul, used to say when I was a student. It does not take a grain of brain and an ounce of commonsense to figure out that you have to have transportation. I came up in a tradition of cooperation starting from the days of the Friendly Societies.

Sir, my father, and my grandfather who I never knew, but who, from what I was able to collect from my father, actually invested in the Black Starliner. For those who do not know, that was in Marcus Garvey days. That is my tradition. I am sure Senator Symmonds would relate to

this, because I think his grandfather was also in that kind of tradition.

Mr. President, the point I am making is that the notion of pooling is something which could offer a solution. Sir, the Honourable Prime Minister has been exploring, not only accessing products, but getting them to Barbados. I see no reason why my colleague, Mr. Financier himself, cannot do the necessary research to identify how we, as Barbadians and Caribbean people, cannot invest in the kind of vehicles to move products across the Caribbean. How many million people do we have? I have always used the model of 1 000 in the context of the credit union, a movement that has 1 000 people. Sir, if you put \$1 000 to that, how many million dollars is that? The point I am making is that we recognise that as we focus on people, we are not certainly giving them hand-outs. We are identifying strategies which would engage the people of this country.

Sir, all of that cannot be reflected overnight in Estimates, but it is in the agenda. As we clean up what we have found, then we would be able to free our hands to move to the next level, and that is important.

Mr. President, we are looking to offer a whole range of housing solutions, but the reality is that every Barbadian cannot buy a house and many Barbadians would never be able to buy a house. Therefore, this Government is committed to establishing a number of new rental properties. However, you cannot build those in 100 days, but you can start the work to do that, as with many other projects. Sir, on the question of how could you do this and all of these giveaways and so on, this can happen and it will happen.

Mr. President, there was a reference during the past couple of days to cost over-runs of \$750 million. With any project there is some allocation for cost over-runs, but typically, budgeted over-runs do not exceed 10 or 20 per cent.

Sir, I do not even want to speak about the Warrens Project. That hurts my heart, because that project that started out at less than \$45 million will end up costing us over \$100 million. Sir, I estimate that by the time we are finished, the legal fees would be in excess of \$10 million, and that is serious.

We have attorneys in our midst who would tell me that \$10 million is no money, but for the average Barbadian \$10 million is a lot of \$100 000 houses. Financial Analysts would also see that and they could also tell you that even if you subtract 50 per cent of those cost over-runs and allocate them to genuine over-runs or over-runs that could have been legitimately accumulated with fiscal prudence and proper project management and all that would be

necessary, we would probably find ourselves with \$375 million over that time period to put into all kinds of things.

Mr. President, I do not think that there is any one budgeted item, if my memory serves me correct, that is of \$375 million to any one particular category in the Estimates. Therefore, I believe strongly that as we go forward, our agenda is clear. It certainly was clear in December when, on the ringing of the bell, the people were able to see and hear what was promised. They bought into what was promised and we have been told by the Leader of this Government, that we made commitments to the people of this country and we would keep those commitments.

The commitment for getting to places early, may seem as a minor matter. Sir, when you go to speak to a group of people, you do not keep them waiting, as I used to have to stand several times as Director of the Bridgetown Cruise Terminal, for a function to start, which the Minister was to attend. Sir, all you would hear is that the Minister would be here in whatever and we had to wait half of an hour and so on.

Sir, we are told to respect the people of this country. We are their servants. Mr. President, if you start paying attention to something as small as that, I cannot imagine that mis-appropriation, misuse and mis-management of finances would be taken lightly. The point I am making is that as we seek to achieve all that we have promised, we will do so in measured ways and in ways that allow for continuous assessment.

Mr. President, as you would have heard from my colleague who spoke about the issue of our commitment to our Public Service, we would do so in ways that recognise that we have to deliver to all of our stakeholders. That is the final consumer to all of Government services, the people, and we have to do so in ways that commit to the persons who deliver those services, thus the level of training that is envisaged.

We would do so in a way that recognises that the trustees that we put there as stewards, starting from the people who sit on Boards, would be brought in for training - the Honourable Senator did not speak about that - to recognise that they, like their Ministers to whom they report, would answer to the people.

Senate A2 Sequence 115

6.10 p.m.

Friday, March 28, 2008

SENATOR the Hon. Miss M. P. O. McCLEAN: We believe in those things, not in form, but in substance, because unless we can do that, we are being less than

honest, not only to ourselves, but we are actually betraying the people of this country.

Mr. President, I want to talk a little bit again, just to re-inforce the importance of the need to earn foreign exchange and to save foreign exchange. This, of course, is essential. I believe, as I used that example of \$750 million, that being prudent in carefully managing and holding our finance officers in the Ministries, in our Statutory Corporations, and the multiplicity of organisations of hybrid nature, for want of a better word - that would have been creating - that manages or control Government resources and making decisions on behalf of the people of this country, as we do that, we will do that in a way that makes proper use of these resources.

Sir, I will share a simple example, something as simple as air travel. When we look at the kinds of expenditure we see in those areas, there is room for savings, even in terms of negotiating with suppliers. I think the Honourable Senator Boyce spoke about procurement. Those are areas in which we seek to reduce wastage. Sir, the point I am making is that as we seek to reduce wastage, it is reflected in the numbers we have seen in the budget.

Mr. President, there were questions raised yesterday, as I said before, about where are the funds allocated in the Estimates to get these things done. Sir, the truth is that if we cut the fat off, if we manage our resources properly, if we pay special attention to how monies are spent and we hold people accountable, we would recognise that a lot of savings would be reflective in what we do and we would, therefore, be able to operate on what we have.

Sir, that is not to say that we have not been put, to some extent, in a straight jacket, based on what we have been finding. However, it is important that as we deal with those things, it is also important to recognise that if we compare the numbers from Financial Year 2007/2008, the reality is that there have been several increases across several Heads. That is evident.

Mr. President, I am very comfortable that we should be able to meet all those targets. I do not need to go over in detail. I think that the presentation, as was said before by Senator Boyce, was not only comprehensive, it was very clear and it represents a very solid approach to starting out as a new Government. It represents a solid approach to financing Government's activities. It represents a very solid approach to doing business, as we see it needs to be done.

Mr. President, I want to touch briefly on a question that was raised about the implications of the current crisis in the US economy, and there are several interpretations of that. Of course, we know what they say about our situation. If the United States of America sneezes, we catch a cold,

but I believe also that we would catch a cold if we were to leave our chest exposed. Sir, the reality is that what we need to do is to understand what are the strictures that would be placed on us and we have to act to suit.

Mr. President, I want to look at that in the context of tourism. I believe that as we talk about these things, we cannot only see the threats, we have to see the opportunities.

Sir, notwithstanding the difficulties that the America economy is going through, from a tourism perspective, people will still travel and we should capitalise on that because two things are happening. If you do not have too much money to travel, you do not travel too far.

Secondly, if you do not have too much money to travel, you are not going to go to a place where your currency is not worth as much as it used to be. Our dollar is pegged to that of the US dollar and therefore there is no change in the exchange rate of Americans coming to Barbados.

However, if that person goes to London, Paris or Rome, and is using the Pound Sterling, Francs or Euros, they would find that their money does not take them very far. Therefore, if we are to sit and hold our heads and bawl and say that there is a crisis in America that would be very stupid. I believe that our tourism officials should utilise that information to recognise that there are very many opportunities that exist in that situation. Sir, if these officials cannot see that, I believe something would be wrong, but I believe they can see it and it can be seen very clearly.

Mr. President, we basically would be using the budget of the Barbados Tourism Authority in a way that does not shoot ourselves in the foot. It will be used in a way that goes after serious niche markets across that continent. We will not be throwing money at anything.

Asides.

SENATOR the Hon. Miss M. P. O. McCLEAN: Mr. President, the issue of the continuous rise in oil prices, is a reality with which we have to live. The truth is that the previous Administration did not address the issue in the short-term and as they said, sought to hold prices, but that cannot continue forever. Therefore, there has to be a balancing of expected increases, with a push to get people to recognise that as increases occur, they have to conserve. That has to be a reality. We also have to think in terms, as we seek to conserve, how does Government facilitate that process.

Mr. President, there is no magic solution to these things. If there were one, I am sure the former Minister of

Energy would have put it on the table a long time ago. That is the reality. There are some hard things that we will have to deal with, but again, what it says is that we cannot go around pretending that all is well in areas where they are not well. We will have to address them and I am confident that will happen.

Mr. President, I believe that as we have deliberated today, yesterday and the day before, that Barbadians would have heard what you heard, which is that this Government is one that does not take a short-term perspective on issues.

This Government recognises that what we do in the short-term will have medium and long-term ramifications, that we cannot offer sugar-coated pills all the time and certainly what we have offered are not such things. We have seen the deficiencies of the previous Administration. We have recognised where they have failed and, in many instances, failed miserably, and we have committed ourselves to making a difference.

Mr. President, on that note, I want to commend these Estimates to you and support the Appropriation Bill, 2008.

On the separate motions of SENATOR the Hon. Miss M. P. O. McCLEAN, the Bill was read a second and third time and passed.

ORDER NO. 2 – RESOLUTION TO MOVE THAT THE
REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE OF SELECTION TO
THE HONOURABLE THE SENATE BE
ADOPTED

SENATOR the Hon. Miss M. P. O. McCLEAN: Mr. President, I beg to move that the Report of the Committee of Election be adopted.

SENATOR the Very Reverend H. E. CRICHLLOW: Mr. President, I beg to second that.

The question was put to the Senate and agreed to.

6.20 p.m.

Friday, March 28, 2008

ADJOURNMENT

SENATOR the Hon. Miss M. P. O. McCLEAN: Mr. President, I beg to move that the Senate be now adjourned sine die.

Mr. PRESIDENT: I want to take this opportunity to say to Honourable Senators that it has been a pleasure being here these last three days. I thank you for your co-operation and your good presentation, which will last us a long time.

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.

6.20 p.m.

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CRICHLLOW, Senator the Very Reverend H. E.

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MARVILLE, Senator R. O.

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NEWTON, Senator the Hon. Mrs. V. E.

SYMMONDS, Senator K. D.

THOMPSON, Senator Miss H. E.

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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. Opening. The source opens at a resumption ('This Sitting is resumed.') with no PRESENT list, prayers, Order heading or motion for the second reading; the Bill debated is identified only in the speeches as the Appropriation Bill, 2008. Printed as in the source. Please confirm whether earlier material is missing.

Q3. Order No. 2. The heading refers to 'THE REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE OF SELECTION', while Senator the Hon. Miss M. P. O. McClean moves 'that the Report of the Committee of Election be adopted'. Printed as in the source.

Q4. Take-slips. One take-slip reads 'S:No. A2(76)10.20 p.m.', presumably a.m., and another reads 'S/A5/12.10 p.m.', presumably A2. Printed as in the source.

Q5. Speaker labels. Senator Griffith is labelled 'SENATOR D. K. A. GRIFFITH' in most places and 'SENATOR D. K. K. A. GRIFFITH' and 'SENATOR D. K. A. K. GRIFFITH' in others; Senator McClean's initials appear once as 'M. P. O.' and once without 'Miss'. Printed as in the source.

Q6. Speech of Senator R. O. Marville. The President's interjection reads 'Senator, I draw to your attention that it is very holy.', following Senator Marville's reference to Voltaire on the Holy Roman Empire ('Voltier'). The wording may be garbled. Printed as in the source.

Q7. Speeches of Senators Walters and Griffith. Quotation marks in the source are rendered as 'A' and '@' in places (for example 'A Pathways to Progress@'), and apostrophes as '=' ('families= plantation', 'country=s'). Printed as in the source.

Q8. Speech of Senator D. McD. Alleyne. One speech heading for Senator Alleyne carries only '. . .', just before the President's warning that he had five more minutes. Printed as in the source.

DEBATE SUMMARY

(Editorial summary — not part of the record.)

The record of Friday, 28th March, 2008 opens with the Senate resuming, on the third day of its debate on the Estimates and the Appropriation Bill, 2008, with Madam Deputy President, Senator Miss Kerryanne Ifill, in the Chair until the President, Senator Dr. Brandford Taitt, arrived and took the Chair during the morning.

Senator the Hon. A. B. Walters, in his first speech in the Senate, spoke on employment rights and industrial relations, saying the Government was committed to a full suite of employment rights legislation, including on sex, gender and race discrimination, to the revision of 1940s labour laws, to training courses in supervisory and human resource management, and to strengthening the Social Partnership. Senator the Very Rev. H. E. Crichlow congratulated the President and Deputy President and spoke on education, overcrowded primary schools and the care of teachers, police and nurses. Senator R. O. Marville urged a radical approach to Public Service reform, regretted the loss of trained people to North America, and proposed uses for bagasse as paper, animal feed and fertiliser.

After the luncheon suspension, Senator D. K. A. Griffith spoke on community spirit, employment for young people, rents for apartments, the value of Barbados cotton and black belly sheep, and called on the Public Accounts Committee to examine the Auditor General's comments on contracts and tenders. Senator the Hon. Mrs. V. E. Newton, for the Opposition, described the session as robust and political, spoke on standards of English and the Auditor General's reports, and warned against using National Insurance Scheme funds for risky investment; Senator the Hon. Miss M. P. O. McClean rose twice on points of order to say the Minister of Health had spoken only of financially sound investment.

Senator the Hon. D. W. Boyce said the Estimates met critical needs, among them health, while holding the deficit to 2 per cent, made no provision for wage increases pending negotiation, and noted continuing work on a Financial Services Commission for non-bank financial services, the losses of the BNOC and offshore petroleum regulations; Senator Miss H. E. Thompson, on a point of order, explained how the public's stake in offshore oil would carry no risk. When Senator K. D. Symmonds rose to complain that Senator Boyce had not been given a time to wind up, the President ruled that he was exercising the discretion of the Chair and asked Senator Symmonds to desist from lecturing the Chair.

After a suspension until 4.40 p.m., Senator D. McD. Alleyne gave his maiden speech, criticising the former Administration's handling of the Queen Elizabeth Hospital and its claims to fiscal prudence; Senator Symmonds raised several points of order, and Senator Alleyne withdrew two remarks, one at the request of the Deputy President.

Senator McClean wound up, thanking Senators Ifill and Griffith, speaking on food security, unpaid loans and

the rise in oil prices, and commending the Estimates. The Appropriation Bill, 2008 was read a second and third time and passed. Under Order No. 2 the Report of the Committee of Selection was adopted on her motion, seconded by Senator Crichlow, and after the President thanked Senators for their co-operation over the three days the Senate was adjourned sine die.