
THE SENATE DEBATES

(UNOFFICIAL REPORT)

PARLIAMENT 2008 – 2013

THE SENATE

Wednesday, May 14, 2008

The Senate met in the Senate Chamber, Parliament Buildings, on Wednesday, May 14, 2008, at 11.00 a.m.

PRESENT

His Honour Senator Dr. B. TAITT, D.H.L. (Hons.), M.P.A., LL.B. (Hons.), B.A. (President)

Her Honour Senator Miss K. F. IFILL, M.B.A., B.Sc. (Hons.), (Deputy President)

Senator the Hon. Miss M. P. O. McCLEAN, M.B.A., M.A., B.Sc., (Hons.), (Leader of the Senate) (Minister of State in the Prime Minister's Office)

Senator the Hon. H. L. BENN, E.M.B.A. (Marketing), (Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development)

Senator the Hon. A. B. WALTERS, M.A., DPSA. (Oxford), (Minister of State, Ministry of Labour and the Civil Service)

Senator the Hon. D. W. BOYCE, F.C.A., C.M.A., M.B.A. (Finance), B.Sc. (Econ.), (Minister of State, Ministry of Finance and Energy)

Senator Mrs. V. I. SANDIFORD-GARNER, M.B.A., CIM, Dip. Mng., (Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry of Community Development and Culture)

Senator Rev. P. A. V. MILLINGTON, M. (Theol.)

Senator Miss P. I. INNISS, B.Sc. (Hons.)

Senator D. K. A. GRIFFITH

Senator K. D. SYMMONDS, B.A., LL.B.

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

Senator the Hon. Mrs. V. E. Newton, S.C.M., F.L.A. M.A., LL.B. (Hons.) (Gt. Brit.), B.A.

(Spec. Hons.), (U.W.I.), L.E.C.

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

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

Senator R. O. MARVILLE, M.B.A., M.A. African Studies,

B.A. (Hons.).

Senator J. A. C. HUTSON, B.C.H., M.R.A.C.

Prayers were led by Rev. Father Errington Massiah.

MADAM DEPUTY PRESIDENT: The Senate is in session.

Senate A3 Sequence 2

11.20 a.m.

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ANNOUNCEMENTS BY HER HONOUR THE DEPUTY PRESIDENT

MADAM DEPUTY PRESIDENT: I have received notices of apologies for the absence of the following Senators:

Senator Sir Roy Trotman, Senator Peter Gilkes, Senator Derek Alleyne and Senator Elizabeth Thompson.

PAPERS

SENATOR the Hon. Miss M. P. O. McCLEAN: Madam Deputy President, I am commanded to lay the following:

1. Representation of People (Expenses) (Amendment) (No. 2) (Regulations) 2008;
2. Annual Report of the National Productivity Council for the period April 1, 2006 to March 21, 2007;
3. Annual Reports and Financial Statements of Needham's Point Development Inc., for the Financial Year ended December 31, 2005 and December 31, 2006;

4. Duties, Taxes and Other Payments (Exemption) (Gymnasium Limited) Order, 2007;
5. Annual Reports and Financial Statements of Needham's Point Holding Limited for the Financial Years ended December 31, 2005 and December 31, 2006;
6. Annual Report of the Caribbean Broadcasting Corporation for the year 2006;
7. Shipping (Incentives Sea SPI Distribution) (Caribbean Inc.,) Order, 2008;
8. Report of the Audit of the Accounts of the Unemployment Fund, for the year ended December 31, 2004;
9. Barbados National HIV Policy - A Frame for Action.
10. National Strategic Plan for HIV Prevention and Control, 2008-2013.

QUESTIONS TO MINISTERS

SENATOR the Hon. Miss M. P. O. McCLEAN: Madam Deputy President, on the last Sitting of the Honourable Senate, the Report of the Committee of Selection was adopted by the Honourable Senate. In that Report, it was recommended that Senator Elizabeth Thompson will replace Senator Symmonds on the Management Commission of Parliament.

Madam, I am, therefore, seeking formal approval of this recommendation.

The question was put to the Senate and agreed to.

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

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS

SENATOR the Hon. Miss M. P. O. McCLEAN: Madam Deputy President, I beg to move that Standing Orders 22(1) and 45(2) be suspended for the remainder of this day's Sitting.

The question was put to the Senate and agreed to.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

SENATOR the Hon. Miss M. P. O. McCLEAN: Madam Deputy President, I beg to move that the following Bills be read a first time:

1. Queen Elizabeth Hospital (Amendment) Bill, 2008;

2. Nurses Bill, 2008.

The question was put to the Senate and agreed to.

SENATOR the Hon. Miss M. O. P. McCLEAN: Madam Deputy President, I wish to draw to the attention of the Honourable Senate that correspondence would have been sent to Honourable Senators, indicating that the Queen Elizabeth Hospital (Amendment) Bill, would have been debated in the Lower House on Tuesday last, where it was passed. We, therefore, have received a Supplementary to the Order Paper, putting this matter today on Public Business. Madam, Notice of the Bill was given on 14th May, 2008, and therefore the Bill now comes before the Honourable Senate.

SUSPENSION OF SITTING

SENATOR the Hon. Miss M. P. O. McCLEAN: Madam Deputy President, given the fact there is a technical problem with our communication system, I beg to move that this Sitting be now suspended initially for five minutes.

The question that the Sitting be suspended for five minutes was put and resolved in the affirmative, without division and Madam DEPUTY President suspended the Sitting accordingly.

Wednesday, May 14, 2008

RESUMPTION:

MADAM DEPUTY PRESIDENT: This sitting is resumed.

PUBLIC BUSINESS

ORDER NO. 4 – QUEEN ELIZABETH HOSPITAL (AMENDMENT) BILL, 2008.

MADAM DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Senator McClean.

SENATOR the Hon. Miss M.P.O McCLEAN: Thank you, Madam Deputy President, this Bill seeks to amend the Queen Elizabeth Hospital Act, Cap 54 specifically to provide for a change in the composition of the Queen Elizabeth Hospital Board. Section 5 is amended by substituting a number of recommendations for the existing provision.

Madam, specifically the Bill seeks to empower the Minister of Health to recommend the appointment to the Board of 11 persons. Previously, he was empowered to appoint only two persons. There is a clear rationale for this amendment. Let me say that it is important that the

Honourable Minister has both the responsibility and the requisite authority to go with that. In any efficient and effective management structure, the individual who has overall responsibility and oversight must also have the authority to determine who is working on the organisation's behalf and certainly, who is answerable to him.

Let me say clearly that this is keeping with the sound management practices which are considered necessary. It also recognises the role of the Board as chief policymaker and advisor to the Minister and this is critical if he is to be in a position to ensure that the policies articulated by this Government are understood, accepted and implemented.

Madam Deputy President, the previous arrangements sought to put in place a number of representatives of specific interest groups. For example, there was representation of the Trade Union Movement and representation of senior citizens in this country and I could list individuals and all those interest groups that are represented. Sir, that is useful but it does not necessarily guarantee that the work of the QEH or that the skills that are necessary are brought to bear on the decision-making and management of an important institution such as our sole health care institution, the Queen Elizabeth Hospital. I want to stress that this amendment is certainly in support of the Minister's thrust to deliver good health care in this country.

Madam Deputy President, it is proposed specifically that included in the persons to be appointed to the Board are a set of important functional skills and competencies, namely, accounting, engineering, finance, human resource management and industrial relations. I want to say that in those areas there is scope for the Minister to identify persons who would have experienced, participated or have the interest of the various interest groups that would have been represented on the Board previously to sit and advise. There is a significant difference, however, in that the reliance on interest groups or representatives of interest groups, that reliance does not necessarily translate into skills and competencies in areas critical to the management of a complex health institution like the Queen Elizabeth Hospital. It is important when we look at the history of that institution and, certainly, the performance of that institution. The management team and, more specifically, the Board, over the life of the existing arrangement, it is necessary that the Minister, who is answerable to the people of this country, is in a position to shape and to ensure that he has a team that not only has the capacity but is able and capable of working with him. People who come to the Board situation understanding that while the interest of various sectors and various groups have to be served they also have to come to a Board recognising that, at the end of the day, they have to work collectively that the business of this people, that is, the delivery of critical

health care is, in fact, achievable and that we are able to see improvements in that respect.

Madam Deputy President, I am really saying that when we seek to appoint a Board, when we seek to empower a Minister within any Ministry and certainly within the context of the Hospital, our only public institution of that type, we need to ensure that we not only establish what I call the form of the Board, but we also have to ensure that form transforms into real substance and that it is translated into a team of individuals - I want to emphasize the word "team" - who are able within that structure to understand the critical issues that face this country and certainly face the Hospital.

We need to have people who would understand the engineering ramifications of an operation of that size. We need to have persons who understand issues of finance and, Madam, this could be a senior citizen. We need to understand the importance of human resource management within the context of an institution where professionals such as doctors and nurses and a whole range of ancillary personnel have to work together and In bringing those persons together, and having the option as Minister to select persons who can represent any interest group in Barbados. Persons who would bring to the boardroom of the Queen Elizabeth Hospital those skills. We are in fact looking at a situation where decisions can be made in a timely manner, where policy can be implemented in a manner that addresses the needs of this country and we do not have a situation, where individuals, having been sent by their respective agencies, whether the University of the West Indies, the unions in Barbados, the senior citizen's lobby interest et cetera, that they come to understand that they are part of the Minister's team working to implement the policies and programmes of the Government.

Madam Deputy President, I would say that the Honourable Minister understands the basic tenets of good management. He understands that what is needed on the Board is a cross section, not only of interest, but more importantly, a cross section of skills which, as I have said before, will be brought to bear on the solution of the problems facing the Queen Elizabeth Hospital.

Madam Deputy President, might I at this time speak to the problems at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital. It is known across the length and breadth of Barbados that the Queen Elizabeth Hospital has been plagued with myriad problems. We have had difficulties faced by the public in the Accident and Emergency Department, an area of the Hospital to which I would label the front door of the Hospital. That is typically the first point of contact for most Barbadians. That is the point where people go, as it says, Accident and Emergency Department. It is where people attend in their most traumatised stage. It is there that their relatives face a lot of trauma. It is there also that our public

health personnel are required to deliver critical service to Barbados. It is also there that we see lots of problems caused by a range of issues; shortage of staff; shortages of basic materials; literally a shortage of space.

Madam Deputy President, I am happy to say that in the Other Place, the Honourable Minister has indicated that in a short time, he would be addressing the issue of having to hold persons in the Accident and Emergency Department because of the lack of space on the ward. His proposal is to create two additional wards to free up some of the space that is now utilised by persons who have been seen and admitted to the Hospital but who cannot move from Accident and Emergency Department to do that.

Madam Deputy President, continuing on the problems at the hospital, we also have, as I said, the shortage of basic items, not only in the Accident and Emergency Department, but in all areas of the Hospital. I mentioned the shortage of beds on the wards. We also have staff shortages in all areas, medical doctors and ancillary positions. We know, of course, the issue of the shortage of nurses. Again, there are proposals to do something about that.

We also recall, if we can step back a little bit in time, to recognise that under the existing Board arrangement, at least in anticipation of putting the Board in place, decisions were taken to address the issue of the working arrangement with the Hospital by placing some nurses on leave, at a time when in this Hemisphere and around the world, I must say, Madam, there is a shortage of nurses. We have malfunctioning equipment, and I can go on and on.

Madam, you may ask the question: What is the significance of my listing these problems? It is at the level of the Minister. Let us start there. Certainly at the level of the Board, decisions must be taken in a timely manner to address the issues and challenges of this institution. If the Minister of Health does not have a Board, where he can determine what must happen to them when they do not perform, then we have problems. We can anticipate that the problems that have continued to grow, certainly in the last decade and more, will continue.

Madam, it is critical, therefore, that attention be paid to how much authority the Minister exercises. I can say that in the absence of his ability to appoint the majority of the Board, or all of the Board, then problems arise. Certainly, in the existing situation he had not even the authority to appoint not even a small minority. He had authority to appoint a very small minority of the Board, and we could see the consequences of that.

Madam, it is to reiterate the ability to act that will be, of course, handed to the Minister by the amendment of this piece of legislation. To emphasise the point again, the

proposal to empower the Minister to appoint 11 members of the Board is necessary. It is vital. It must be done now if the decisions are to be taken in a timely manner.

Madam, we have seen the Hospital limp from situation to situation. One must question, whether the cross-section of interests really were in a position to make decisions. I want to emphasise again that in looking at the proposed amendments, the Board stands to make decisions that are critical and the Board stands to bring to bear some very critical decisions.

The Hospital, if we look at it, needs to have in place a maintenance schedule. There is much information available internationally about the role and importance of preventative maintenance in a hospital. In all my theoretical research, so to speak, and in my constant visits to the Hospital, I have had, I suppose in some sense, the unfortunate experience of having to go to the hospital on several occasions to visit friends and relatives. Unfortunate to the extent that illness is not something we look forward to having to deal with.

It has also been unfortunate to the extent that when you go to what was once the premier medical institution in the region, that we see a situation where our very dedicated staff, whether it is our doctor, nurses, maids or maintenance people are frustrated by the breakdown of basic equipment. Equipment to sterilise surgical tools, equipment to sterilise eating implements, equipment to launder basic bed linens, and I can go on and on. Why is this happening? Why is it that we cannot get decisions taken. Certainly this Minister of Health would find himself stymied, if he continued to operate under the existing structure.

Madam, it is anticipated that the amendment to this Bill will allow the Minister to put in place, via a Board, that would function in a transparent manner. In a manner in which they are accountable, not to their agencies or their representative bodies, but to the Minister of Health, and by extension the Cabinet, and certainly of great importance to the people of this country. Of course, the Minister is accountable to Cabinet, which in turn is accountable to the people. If his hands are tied, because he did not appoint more than 20 or 3 people on a Board, then we can understand the challenges that arise there.

Madam, I believe that when we look at the issue of Human Resource Management, I did not see anything coming out of all the discussions in public fora, the Press, et cetera, about any serious effort on the part of past members of the Boards, to address what in any hospital or health institution is a critical area, that of human resource management. I am sure that we will all appreciate, and I am sure my colleagues may speak to this as well, human resource management in a hospital setting is critical.

Sir, we talk about our internal and external customers. If we cannot satisfy our internal customers through proper implementation of human resource development strategies, informed by individuals at the Board level who understand the necessity for these things, then we will have a workforce in the Hospital who is frustrated, overworked and which is, perhaps, undertrained. It is critical that we have persons answerable to the Minister, who can speak to good practices in relation to human resource management and Human Resource Development, not only in the broad context, but very specifically to Human Resource Development issues in the hospital setting.

Madam, if we look at the annual Budget of this Government and previous Governments of the Ministry of Health, and of course, as part of that Ministry, the Queen Elizabeth Hospital receives a substantial amount of money. The Ministry of Health receives the second largest part of the total Budget of this country. It is important that we have skills not only in accounting, where the individuals are able to account for expenditures and so on, but we also need to have skills in finance, because there are decisions in terms of acquisition of equipment, et cetera, costing and financing of various activities in the Hospital. That cannot be done properly without the necessary skills at the level of the Board to inform the senior management team, and to assist senior and middle management, et cetera, to understand the importance of issues of accounting and reporting and broader finance decisions.

I believe as well that recommending persons who possess qualifications in industrial relations will allow the Minister to identify persons who can very well understand and represent the interest of the unions in Barbados and the workers in Barbados. I believe it is critical that we focus on these things.

Madam, I want to go back to the whole business of the difference between what obtained in the past and what obtains now from a slightly different perspective.

Senate A3, sequence 07, 12.00 p.m.

I was able to listen to some of the debate in the Other Place and I found it interesting that persons sought to sensationalise, in a negative sense, the proposed changes. To me, it clearly suggested that they did not take the time to explore what was happening under their charge, and the failures of the existing arrangement.

Madam, when I think of the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, I did not see us realising as a country, I did not see us realising as persons who have interests in the welfare of relatives who have to access the service, I did not see us realising as taxpayers the kinds of benefits that were proposed. It probably rested largely in an oversight or,

perhaps, a lack of understanding of how a Board should have been selected in this situation.

Madam, the Queen Elizabeth Hospital is now poised to find itself being rescued and I want to use that word, "rescued" because this Government has committed to rescuing the Queen Elizabeth Hospital. In seeking to rescue it, we have to start at some very fundamental levels. We have to start at the top where people are shaped. I believe in a saying that the tone is set at the top.

In terms of the Queen Elizabeth Hospital the Minister of Health has set the tone in recommending these changes. He has set the tone to suggest that it is important that he has a team that represents cross-sections of skills and abilities, and in choosing those people that he has a team that will represent all that we sought to capture, or that the previous Administration sought to capture in its previous arrangements.

I believe that once you have that kind of Board where the Minister has these responsibilities, he will be able then to filter that tone down to the next level. We will have a situation because the Board now is in a position, as it seeks to ensure that this institution is rescued; that its management team at the senior and middle management buy into all that is proposed, in terms of getting the Queen Elizabeth Hospital back to where it was before.

In the past, I have heard people trying to suggest that we should not worry too much about the Queen Elizabeth Hospital. After all it is, perhaps, the best health care facility, when we make a comparison across the English-speaking Caribbean. To me, that is no comfort if we have seen the glory days of the Queen Elizabeth Hospital.

I recall as a young adult in my 20s when the Queen Elizabeth Hospital was seen as an excellent teaching hospital. In fact, I had a situation about three years ago, when an in-law of mine came back to Barbados, having done his internship at the Hospital, and was very distraught because as far as he was concerned, it was a shadow of itself and we have to ask ourselves why.

I want to emphasize, and I am sure that I do not have to spend inordinate amounts of time convincing my colleagues here in this Chamber of the importance of making this Amendment. I believe that as we look at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, as we look at the challenges it faces, as we look at what has not been done since the introduction of the Queen Elizabeth Hospital Act 2001, that changes are necessary. These are not cosmetic changes, Madam, but are changes that are critical to the proper running of this institution.

We have seen, under the previous Administration, the demise of the St. Joseph Hospital and, therefore, the

burden placed on the Queen Elizabeth Hospital has been even greater. When we have a situation where we had a Board that could not function and certainly a Board where the Minister of Health would have difficulties getting to implement his plans, we have a problem.

It is unfortunate that my colleague Senator is not here today because I am sure she could have spoken to some of the issues of her tenure as Minister of Health. Of course, that preceded this arrangement but, certainly, we could have dialogued around some of the shortcomings over the last decade plus, of the Administration of the Hospital.

Madam, as I said, I believe clearly that it is important to hear from my fellow Senators. I believe that it is not necessary for me to exhaust my full one hour because I believe the points that I have made about the efficacy of a Board that is answerable to the Minister of Health, a Board that represents a cross-section of critical functional areas in the running of any hospital, I would have made those points clearly.

I believe also that I have identified for my colleagues, the benefits of the amendments. I believe also I have stated clearly that the beneficiaries of the amendment would ensure that the Minister of Health has what is critical in terms of working to transform and to rescue the Queen Elizabeth Hospital.

The QEH is our sole public hospital. It has continued, despite its shortcomings to cater to the needs of this country. We have been able to retain at that institution, excellent staff from the bottom to the top. We have seen a situation where basic requirements such as the absence of paper to print out a report from a machine which allows a cardiologist to inform his or her patient of certain tests done. We have seen a situation where persons are unable to get basic repairs to air-conditioning equipment and therefore have to sit outside of the room designated to interview patients in a corridor within the confines of that particular Department. I believe, Madam, that this amendment will facilitate that problem.

I anticipate that all the promises made by the Minister of Health will start to be delivered as soon as he is able. He has started to do that, notwithstanding, his awaiting the ratification of these Amendments to transform the Hospital first, by addressing some very basic shortcomings. When I say, basic, I mean basic in terms of the ability to acquire simple equipment, to refurbish equipment, to buy basic supplies in a timely manner, to address the whole question of purchasing and the rolling out beyond those basic things, of a comprehensive reform policy.

I therefore at this time, Madam, will take my seat and allow the discussion to continue.

Asides.

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

MADAM DEPUTY PRESIDENT: I recognise Senator Symmonds.

SENATOR K. D. SYMMONDS: I am very grateful to you, Madam Deputy President.

I assure you that I do take some issue with the submissions made by the learned Leader of Government Business. I would want to begin by saying that the speech which we just heard has really thrown those of us who have carefully studied and sought to analyse the policy framework of the Government, not only health, but insofar as the governance of this country is concerned. It has thrown us, Madam Deputy President, into a quandary.

One cannot now emerge from This Place in a state other than one of abject confusion as to what the Government of Barbados stands for and where it stands on fundamental issues of governance.

Senate A3, sequence 07, 12:10:14

In fact, Madam Deputy President, I am going to go to some length to demonstrate the clear, frightening inconsistency of the Government on this issue. The position that the Honourable Leader of Government Business has just taken is of particular concern to me because I was, much the same way as you are, Madam Deputy President, a very young and keen enthusiast of political and public life when there was a document, which was prepared after many months of intense discussions, called the Haynes Report.

Madam Deputy President, a former Minister in the Democratic Labour Party, Dr. Richard Haynes, now Sir Richard Christopher Haynes - I think that is the proper appellation, now that he is in the closing chapter of a distinguished career - presided over the compilation of a Report, which was born out of a Commission that investigated almost every aspect of the operations of the Queen Elizabeth Hospital.

The composition of the Board, which is the real subject matter that attracts the better part of a two-week discourse in the Other Place and is before us here now, as recommended by Dr. Haynes reads in *pari materia*, in virtual exact language as that which is contemplated in the Schedule of the Queen Elizabeth Hospital Act, Cap. 54 of the Laws of Barbados.

In effect, what this Government has now come to do is to revisit the work of the Haynes Commission and rewrite the findings of the Haynes Commission without having demonstrated to me. I have not heard any argument made that any research or analysis had been done that reflects that this Government has paid as close a degree of scrutiny, as had the illustrious gentleman and his Commission to whom I have referred, so for the sake of changing an Act it would appear, this Act has been changed.

Madam Deputy President, I go further. It is also a very interesting thing to go back and read the history. I heard the mumbling under the breath of some Honourable Senators who should know better. Madam Deputy President, the reality is that the late Member of This Place, none other than the brother of the Honourable Leader of Government Business, then Senator Wendell McClean, was part of that Commission. His opinion, so strong as it was in support of the constitution of this Board as is now constituted, is attached to the same Commission. It makes for very interesting reading.

Madam Deputy President, again I commend to this Government, because I cannot stop it Madam, not that they pause, because the last time I did that from This Place, no pause was taken, there is no cause for a pause. Madam Deputy President, I commend it for the eyes and hopefully the edification of the Honourable Members of the Government.

Madam Deputy President, I think that the argumentation has been very circuitous. I do not know that the proposed changes constitute anything other than perhaps the sum total of zero to that which now obtains at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, and I would tell you why.

Madam Deputy President, the question has to be asked: Where did the power under the existing Act reside? I will go to the existing legislation. It is described at Cap. 54 in the Schedule as the Constitution and Procedure of the Queen Elizabeth Hospital Board. The power under the Act resided with representative bodies.

Madam Deputy President, I will tell you why that is an important thing. There was a grouping, which came to the people of Barbados not so long ago and pledged that they had great interest in decentralising governmental structure, that allows for real participatory democracy in Barbados.

The Honourable Leader of Government Business may find this language attractive, because I am reading from her Party's Manifesto, which says that they envisaged the decentralisation of governmental structure that allows for real participatory democracy in Barbados where public policy is not imposed from the top but results for the full

involvement of a wider society. That is grandiose, high-flown rhetoric, but what does it mean? In my respectful submission, it can only be understood to mean that you are seeking to widen the scope of participation in public matters and decision-making especially.

You come to the Queen Elizabeth Hospital Board, which in the Schedule of the Act, which constitutes the Board, is entitled, an interesting nomenclature, "The Constitution and Procedure of the Queen Elizabeth Hospital Board." Madam Deputy President, it tells you where the power of the Board is.

Madam Deputy President, when one hearkens back to this talk in the Manifesto about broadening participation, one would imagine that participation, which was grounded in the people and not in the language of the Manifesto imposed from the top, either the Minister, his directives and his minions and those who answer to him with fierce loyalty, those who would gather around him at the campfire when the fatted calf has been slain and is being proportioned out to the faithful. Those things, I am assuming, you would have wanted to see as being corrected.

Madam Deputy President, we have a situation where the constitution of the Queen Elizabeth Hospital under the current Act, which is being changed, has the power being vested in persons being nominated to the Board by the Barbados Association of Medical Practitioners, a relevant non-governmental organisation and a person nominated by the Barbados Registered Nurses' Association, another relevant non-governmental organisation, not in any way answerable to any Minister in the sense that one would expect that this Government, of all governments, would want to resist when you hearken back to what they said in their Manifesto, but again consistency is not necessarily the hallmark of this Administration.

Madam Deputy President, one person is nominated by the Congress of Trade Unions and Staff Associations of Barbados. Again, Madam Deputy President, I find it necessary for the second time in this Chamber in two speeches to publicly express my regret that Senator Sir Roy is not here because on the question of consistency, we need to hear a little more from a lot more of the people of Barbados, especially in this Chamber, on some of these issues.

Madam Deputy President, a person nominated by the private sector agency, another non-governmental organisation. A person nominated by none other than the Barbados Christian Council, that is done away with all together. In fact, as I would demonstrate, in the Bill, which is before us the Barbados Christian Council or persons who are participatory in the discipline of providing religious comfort to our people are not even contemplated at all. The

Barbados Association of Retired Persons also had the power to nominate a person to sit on the Board and it goes on.

Madam Deputy President, you begin with the inconsistency and ask the question why do we do these things to the people that we are supposed to be representing? Madam Deputy President, if there was ever a case made in favour of disenfranchisement, it has been made by this Clause that is now before the Senate. It is a Clause, which is saying - and I am going to use the language of the Honourable Leader of Government Business - that the amendment is in support of a thrust by the Minister to deliver what he sees as good - well, she did not say what he sees - she said good health care.

Senate A3 Sequence 8

12.20 p.m.

Madam Deputy President, I ask the question, how is the delivery of good health care compromised? How has the Minister here, or the Minister in the Other Place, demonstrated that the delivery of good health care has been compromised by having a person nominated by the private sector agency sitting on the Board? How has it been compromised by having a person nominated by BARP sitting on the Board? How is good health care delivery compromised, when there is a person who has been nominated by the Congress of Trade Unions and Staff Associations of Barbados sitting on the Board?

Madam Deputy President, those are the questions that have to be answered. One cannot just come to this Honourable Chamber and say that you are going to change the legislation and couch it in the language of delivery of health care. Madam, they went even further and said it is about accountability to the Minister. Well, that is almost laughable if it were not, at the same time, offensive.

Madam Deputy President, I must take issue on behalf of persons who have been impugned by the language of the Leader of Government Business.

Asides.

SENATOR the Hon K. D. SYMMONDS: Madam Deputy President, I will say again that the issue of accountability has been argued by the Leader of Government Business and that the issue of accountability, in my judgment, is one which takes us to a point that is deeply regrettable. Madam, accountability to the Minister is the limb upon which the Leader of Government Business is arguing that this Honourable Chamber should support this legislation. Madam Deputy President, quite frankly it says very little that is positive about the existing Board structure.

Madam Deputy President, I will never, in this Honourable Chamber, make a charge without seeking to substantiate it. It goes against, first of all, my professional discipline and against that which I believe is good conscience. Madam Deputy President, I lived through a painful experience in the Other Place, where he who now matters most in our constitutional affairs, practised that approach.

Madam Deputy President, I am going to say to you, you need not fear me on this issue. You may disagree with me at every stage but I will offer you the evidence of support. Madam Deputy President, I am saying to you that the legislation which is being sought to be changed, the existing legislation, carries the Financial Controller of the Queen Elizabeth Hospital as being part of the Board's structure.

Madam, when I hear the language of accountability being invited into this debate, I pause because I think that it must reflect on the office holder. Madam, the Financial Controller of the Queen Elizabeth Hospital is an office holder with the institution. Are you telling me the legislation is to be changed because accountability has to be better afforded to the Minister while, at the same time telling me that you are not impugning the Financial Controller? What then am I to understand is the imputation which is being made against the Director of Nursing Services at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital?

Madam Deputy President, when we are going down this road about changing legislation to get accountability to the Minister, if it feels that those who they expect to be accountable to the Government are not being accountable, then Government has a duty in Law to go through the appropriate course, in order to rectify that problem. Madam, I do not accept the correct point of departure is to bring a complete Bill before the two Houses of the Parliament of Barbados, to change it to suit the personal interest of what may very well be, when you think about it, might be out of a personal interest.

(Certain remarks made by the SENATOR the Hon K. D. SYMMONDS were ordered expunged from the records by Madam Deputy President.)

SENATOR the Hon. Miss M. P. O. McCLEAN: Madam Deputy President, I think the Honourable Senator is making statements which I consider to be inappropriate in reference to the Minister of Health.

Madam Deputy President, I would beg that the Honourable Senator would withdraw those comments and that he would maintain the level of dignity which is considered part of this Honourable Senate.

SENATOR the Hon K. D. SYMMONDS: Madam Deputy President, I believe that in This Place I am entitled to ask questions, and I ask questions that are allowed. Madam, my question is simply this. When we study these matters, are we or are we not saying that the issue of accountability ably argued - though I believe improperly argued - by the Leader of Government Business, reflects on the composition of certain office holders of the Board, in the persons of a Financial Controller and a Chief Nursing Officer?

Madam, if I am provoked, I could go further. There is also a Chief Executive Officer and a Chief of Medical Staff who sit on the Board. Therefore, if in the course of business and conduct of the hospital, in the professional judgment of the Chief of Medical Staff, they feel that a mandate or requirement of Government is not in the best interest of the people who they are professionally charged to look after - because Governments come and Governments go but a Hippocratic oath does not - then can we say that on the basis of accountability to the Minister the Act should be changed? Madam, these are the issues which must attract the minds of the Senate, I submit.

Asides.

SENATOR the Hon K. D. SYMMONDS: I do not mind how many people suck their teeth. I am here alone as Opposition Senator and I will take on all who come, in the interest of the justice of this case. I ask the question again, because a Hippocratic oath cannot change, as a professional in the medical field, you take an oath to do your best by the people whose care you have to manage. Therefore, if I am going to hear that a person, who is Chief of Medical Staff, is currently sitting on a Board of the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, a hospital which is empowered under the Schedule entitled: "The Constitution and Procedure of the Queen Elizabeth Hospital Board", if that person has a decision-making capacity as part of the Board and he or she feels that hypothetically a mandate of the Minister has been handed down...

Asides.

SENATOR the Hon K. D. SYMMONDS: Madam, I do not know of any mandate having been handed down but I know that in public life mandates can be handed down. I am not reflecting on any one Minister, let us take the personalities out of it. Madam, legislation would be passed in 1960 and would then find itself on the Statute Books in 2008, also several ministers could come and go. Therefore, the issue is, are you improperly circumscribing the decision-making power of a Chief of Medical Staff? Is that what is desirable in the interest of the people of this country? Should the decision-making discretion of a Chief of Medical Staff be circumscribed on the basis of what the

Leader of Government Business so brazenly comes here to argue, called accountability to the Minister?

Madam Deputy President, that was the platform the Leader of Government Business rested her submissions upon, and it is on that submission that I must argue in response. If now in retrospect people having heard and thought through the process feel that platform of the Leader of Government Business is more closely akin to that of a scaffold upon which the Government as a whole might one day hang, that would be a different matter. Madam, I say to you, I do not expect you to pause but I am going to raise the concerns, because I think they are legitimate.

Madam Deputy President, I go further. I contrast the old with the new I contrast the clause which is coming, with that which exists and I ask where is the advantage to the people of this country?

Asides.

SENATOR the Hon K. D. SYMMONDS: Let us not only deal with the form. It is easy to get up and talk about things that will make the delivery of health care better, and that people would get easier access to treatment, et cetera, but I do not buy that.

12.30 p.m.

I will tell you what I have studied carefully. I recognise that in the new Bill I am being told that a person who possesses qualifications as set out in Section 5(3) in relation to the following disciplines can sit on the Board: a person with accounting qualifications. Sir, that is brought into play and what is it replacing? On the existing Board you have a Financial Controller. Are we saying that the Financial Controller does not have accounting qualifications or not to suit the Government? Are you saying that the Financial Controller does not have management experience because we are now going to have a person with management operations?

Madam, it is a lot of long talk about the Leader of Government Business about the importance of management. What are you saying about the Financial Controller, Madam Deputy President. What is the case of the Government with respect to the qualifications in medicine and nursing which the Bill is prescribing, that you can sit on the Board if you have a qualification in medicine and nursing? Fine, but the existing Board which you are trying to change away from, change once again for the sake of change, the existing Board that you are trying to change away from has, as part of its core composition, the Dean of the School of Medicine. Now, pray tell, Madam Deputy President, what is wrong with that? The Chief of Medical Staff, the Director of Nursing Services for some ill-defined, arbitrary prescription that the person would possess

qualification in medicine and nursing but, of course, has to be accountable to the Minister.

Madam Deputy President, I am not pleased with it. I can tell you that if I stand alone like the boy on the burning deck, I am not pleased with it. I think it is ill-considered. I believe it is ill-advised and I think it bores ill for the country. I will tell you why I think it bores ill for the country. I came along throughout my childhood, my adolescent years, my years as a young adult, hearing person after person singing the praises of the Queen Elizabeth Hospital. It is ironic that only yesterday in the Other Place, the most distinguished and learned Attorney-General of Barbados described the Queen Elizabeth Hospital as the premier medical institution in the Caribbean. I think Government needs to get its case clear.

I sat here today and heard with my own ears the Leader of Government Business saying that it once was but not anymore. It seems that even in the Cabinet there is uncertainty as to the existence and the destiny of that institution but, Madam, that is to digress. The issue really is that I came along hearing that one of the pieces of magic about that hospital was that it was the premier teaching institution in the Eastern Caribbean. It is a teaching hospital and as such, generation after generation of not only Barbadians but let us place this within the context of a single market and economic space which is in the emergence stages, generation after generation of not only Barbadians but Caribbean doctors have had the benefit of instruction at that hospital.

Madam, part of its duty to the people of this country has to be that it must be placed in a position that it can continue along that path to honour that legacy, which is a rich tradition. I say to the Leader of Government Business that when I look at the composition of the Bill and I go through the accounting, finance and human resource management, which is her pep topic area and law, which is mine, medicine, paramedical services, not a word about the persons who may be best qualified to give direction at the level of the Board to the educational destiny of this institution.

Asides.

SENATOR K.D. SYMMONDS: Madam Deputy President, I see nothing in the Bill that gives me comfort that the educational mandate and the continued destiny of this institution, insofar as teaching is concerned, is going to be honoured in any real way by the changes which are being made. Madam, I say again, it may stick in the craw and if it offends so be it that this change for the sake of change and that once again, it is like the 100 days promises, mirage, smoke and mirrors. (12:35:59)(Latin)The more things change the more they remain the same.

Asides.

SENATOR K.D. SYMMONDS: Madam Deputy President, the fact of the matter is that issue cannot be wished away. We have a duty of care as a legislative body not only to go through this legislation with a fine toothed comb, but also to understand the philosophical direction of any piece of legislation which comes before us.

I think that if we are going to make a case for the transformation of the composition of the Board; if we are going to transform its constitutional structure and possibly procedure, I want to see and I want to be satisfied that the very critical role that the hospital has traditionally played as a teaching institution will be preserved.

Madam Deputy President, I see under the existing Act that we wish to abandon, that a person nominated by the Principal of the Cave Hill Campus of the University of the West Indies is entitled to be a Board member. I see that the Dean of the School of Clinical Medicine is entitled to be a Board member. I see that the Dean of the School of Clinical Medicine is entitled to nominate someone who is from the Research Department to be a Board member and I say that those things satisfy me.

Asides.

SENATOR K.D. SYMMONDS: I am not going into the Barbados Labour Party which prescribed over this piece of legislation. Let us depoliticise the issue so as to make it more palatable for both the supporters of the Government on the side of the Government and such that may exist anywhere else on any other side of this table, if at all.

Asides.

SENATOR K.D. SYMMONDS: Madam Deputy President, the fact of the matter is, no matter how much the Leader of Government Business heckles me, I am going to make the point that she does not want to have made, that there is an abundance of evidence that the Haynes Commission...

Asides.

SENATOR K.D. SYMMONDS: Yes, the Barbados Labour Party administration understood the importance of that educating role that the hospital played and that is why there was an abundance of room preserved on the Board. Sir, I am not condemning anything, I am asking a question and the question is simply this. What are the guarantees that are now to be made available to this Chamber that the preserve, the tradition, that rich legacy is to be protected. I think that is where the future comes. It is not for me to speculate on legislation which is yet to come to This Place but it is a fact to say that the nurses of this country will

soon benefit from a Bill that will pass before us. It is a fact to say that we cannot sensibly and seriously speak to any aspect of the professional development of the health sector in this country.

S/A3/12:40

Sequence 10

There are a lot of practising professionals in the health care sector, not only the doctors or nurses, but the fact of the matter is, you have to be prepared for all that is necessary, by way of institutional reinforcement, to ensure that the educational right and tradition continue. I am not going to buy for a moment the argument that the first priority has to be accountability to any Minister, because Ministers will come and they will go. The level of the accountability demanded will vary with the size of the Minister's shoe. The size of his appetite and the state of his conscience, if he or she has any. It is a dangerous limb upon which to premise the change of a piece of legislation. I am going to go further.

Madam, the legislation, in my view, also has to be carefully studied, notwithstanding all the talk about being an amendment, in support of the thrust to deliver good health care, et cetera, et cetera. It also has to be carefully studied to see whether it is really necessary.

Madam, I have had the opportunity to serve on Boards in this country, and I must tell you that without reflecting only on the experience of serving only on Boards, I could tell you from a professional position. I can tell you from a Ministerial position. All that is required, because at the end of the day, this is a small society and we all have to be prepared to do a little of human resource negotiation. A little bit of work with the human beings with whom we have to interact, and if you do not get on with somebody you try to get on. You try to make room so that the two entities can coexist, a thousand thoughts can contend. You have to try to get away from coming hot and sweaty to a Parliament, to change the law every time you feel it will suit your purposes. That is what you have to get away from.

Madam, you have to be very prepared to do a little bit of working with the individuals. What is the difficulty of saying to the Principal of the Cave Hill Campus, who is not a political person, to the best of my knowledge, you are empowered, Mr. Principal, under Cap. 54 of the Laws of Barbados, at the Schedule entitled the Constitution and Procedure of the Queen Elizabeth Hospital Board, to nominate a person to sit on the Board. We as a ministry are concerned that there is a clear deficiency.

I am assuming now that all that I have heard from the Leader of Government Business, which I do not believe

is correct. I am assuming that it is correct. On that assumption you could have picked up a piece of paper and a pen, and allow The Principal to know that you are concerned that there is a deficiency in the quality of accounting, or seem to have a problem with the Financial Controller on the Board. So you say to the Principal that you are empowered to nominate. We would be appreciative, Sir, if as you contemplate those whom you nominate, you could assist us in rectifying that which we perceive as a deficiency. Are you going to tell me that could not work? You have to bring a piece of legislation in order, according to the Leader of Government Business.

Asides.

SENATOR K.D. SYMMONDS: You will have a time to speak. I am not humbugging you. I hope you speak better than you did the last time.

Madam, you can call on the Principal the same way, quite frankly, that the same course could have been taken if you wanted to get assistance with an engineer, or if you wanted to get assistance with anybody. A man is entitled to send who he wants, but I am entitled to say to him that these are the concerns that we face. Part of the problem is, that is why I went back to the whole document that brought this Government here, the Manifesto.

Part of the problem with this Government as it is constituted now, it has forgotten the Manifesto that brought it here. The same Manifesto that said you do not impose it from the top, that you try to defuse power, that you try to work with people, that you try to empower interest groups, that you try to share your view and your vision with these individuals across the society, but today, nearly four months after the fact, all of that has gone through the shoot. It matters no more. Do you know when it will matter again? It will matter again in a few years time when you are trying to run around hot and sweaty to rectify the damage that is done. Some would say too late shall be the cry, but I am not going there just yet.

Madam, there are alternative routes that could be taken. I am not satisfied that the only way in which... in fact, I feel that to say to the Congress of Trade Unions and Staff Associations of Barbados, who are constitutionally empowered under this Board to nominate and have a person sit, to say to them that you need to change the Law, so that you can have an industrial relations-minded person, or a person with industrial relations qualifications, is to insult in the most fundamental way the Congress of Trade Unions and Staff Associations of Barbados (CTUSAB). I say so.

Madam, I also say that is why I believe this thing raises a litany of woes. It is confusion. It is inconsistency.

There is lack of clarity of thought. There is lack of consistency of purpose. It is all over the shop.

I will also say that if you feel that the best way you can get a person who is trained in medicine, nursing or paramedical services to sit on the Board, is to change the legislation which provides that the Chief of Medical Staff, the Director of Nursing Services to sit on the Board, is to be perpetually offensive to the holders of that office.

I am not one to try to tell the Government how it is to do its business. I think the Government has made it clear that they will do what they wish to do, how they wish to do when and if it wishes to do. That is the preserve of any Government, not only this one, but I have deep reservations, Madam, as I said to you. I think it contributes the sum total of zero by way of advancing the interest of the people of Barbados.

I think it is highly retrogressive in nature. Needless to say it offends the Manifesto of the Democratic Labour Party's Pathways to Progress in the most intolerable way, but again there is a consistency on that part, and I give the Government credit for that because I know of a Democratic Labour Party that said that there is no social contract in a Manifesto. That, perhaps, is the part that is being honoured here today.

Madam, we are at the stage where, faced with the unprecedented situation, I served in this Chamber before, and I never knew that the President, not in his Chair, was to sit and heckle a Member. There was a time, a richer tradition perhaps, a more hollowed tradition, when Presidents did not descend into the arena to wage war, to muddy and dirty themselves with combatants. If that is the route that we go, then I want the record of this Chamber to reflect I accept it. I will not resist it, Madam Deputy President.

Madam, the voice of the President was heard loudly and clearly. May be not to you but to me. It is an unmistakable voice. Outside of the Chamber they are those who recognise the voice well and would say, wait, I hear a "no teet" bulldog, but inside the Chamber that could not be said.

Madam, I say this much. If the President wishes to descend into the arena, then the Opposition serves notice that he will be treated as any ordinary combatant and contestant, no quarter asked and none given.

I thank you, Madam Deputy President.

SUSPENSION OF THE SITTING

SENATOR Hon. Miss M.P.O. McCLEAN: Madam Deputy President, I beg to move that this Sitting be suspended until 2.00 p.m.

The question that the Sitting be now suspended until 2.00 p.m. was put to the Senate and agreed to, and Madam DEPUTY PRESIDENT suspended the Sitting accordingly.

12.50 p.m.

Sequence 11

Senate A3, sequence 13, 2.05 p.m.

RESUMPTION

Madam DEPUTY PRESIDENT: This Sitting is resumed.

Honourable Senators, before the Suspension was taken, Senator Symmonds was speaking and in the course of his speech, he made references to the Minister of Health in the Other Place. These remarks were in breach of the Standing Orders of the Senate, in that they were imputing improper motives to the Minister. I therefore direct that these references in respect of the Minister, be struck from the record.

I recognise Senator Inniss.

SENATOR Mrs. P. I. INNIS: Madam Deputy President, I rise to give my wholehearted support to the Bill to amend the Queen Elizabeth Hospital Act Chapter 54, which speaks to the provision for the change of the composition of the Queen Elizabeth Hospital Board and, in essence, Madam Deputy President, speaks to the proposed empowering of the Minister to appoint some 11 Members to the Board.

Madam Deputy President, I have to begin again by saying how very honoured I am to be able to speak to this Bill and to be able to have my words penned into history in support of such a Bill and in support to anything, which would help to alleviate some of the problems that are being faced in this society.

Madam Deputy President, we have heard time and time again of the woes that are experienced at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital. It seems to me, as I listened to Senator Symmonds, that you probably have to speak and so you say anything. It seems further that it may be some opinion that to stand in this Honourable Chamber is just an opportunity to "pomposette", to make speeches of grandeur and to have an excellent rebut.

Madam Deputy President, I think that what is being echoed is a change in thought. This Bill represents an attempt by a government, which has heard the cries of people who were dying, to make a change.

Madam Deputy President, we heard this morning of a number of reasons why, in essence, it was preposterous to decide that a Minister... Madam Deputy President, let us keep it in excellent context. The Minister of Health, National Insurance and Social Security and the other ministers have been given a mandate by the people of Barbados, not the members of a Board. It is those persons who Barbadians said less than four months ago they are putting at the forefront because they want to see a change.

Madam Deputy President, this is a concept that I experience every day. As I listened to the Honourable Senator speak this morning - I will come to just one or two things, I am sure I would not be long - of the reasons it could not happen and the reasons it was out of place, I remembered that there are persons who have died ... and that there are many Barbadians who simply say that the Queen Elizabeth Hospital has failed.

Madam Deputy President, I am not speaking anything that we have not heard. The context of this amendment is an attempt by the Minister to be able to have some say as it relates to those persons who would be given responsibility to sit on the Board. This amendment is as a result of the Minister wanting to empower persons who he believes share his concepts. Do they want him to go to the Chancellor of the University of the West Indies and ask him to appoint someone who would envisage the image and the concept that the people of Barbados have entrusted on him? Does the Minister have to go to the trade unions and ask them to nominate someone to sit on the Board? The Minister is the person with the responsibility, and if anything breaks loose, you would hear first off that it is the Minister's fault.

Madam Deputy President, I think that it is fair and right for anyone who has heard of the suffering of the people, to be able to have a say in the selection of the persons who would run the Board. Madam Deputy President, the Minister did not say that he is going to pick Tom, John and Harry. He said clearly that he would choose persons to sit on the Board who are expert in industrial relations, accounting, human resource management and finance who he thinks can carry on the vision that he has for Barbados. That must be a Minister's responsibility.

Madam Deputy President, you are telling me that because a Moyne Commission, a Haynes Commission and Mr. Wendell McClean were in agreement with an old policy, which said to let the Principal of the University of the West Indies, the Barbados Association of Medical Practitioners and the Barbados Registered Nurses'

Association choose someone for the Board, that he should let "Sam Couch and the Duppy" come in and choose someone for the Board?

Madam Deputy President, this amendment is saying to me that we have a problem at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital. The people of Barbados have given responsibility to the Minister of Health, National Insurance and Social Security to correct those problems. Therefore, the Minister has to have a say in who runs the Queen Elizabeth Hospital. Why is this under so much discourse?

Madam Deputy President, there are those who say that I tend to be very emotional and passionate about issues. Madam Deputy President, this one runs straight to the core because it is myself and other members who have been candidates and represented the people of Barbados who have to listen to the people. This morning I had to listen to a mother who still calls me because her daughter died about seven months ago after having an asthmatic attack and having been taken to the Queen Elizabeth Hospital. She is convinced that it killed her child. It is persons like ourselves who get the call every other day.

There is another constituent who is now in Washington who had to leave here with her son who has a condition because the Queen Elizabeth Hospital could not afford them the proper care because the past structure of the Queen Elizabeth Hospital had horrendous troubles. She called me this morning to let me know how the child is doing.

Madam Deputy President, I myself had a serious attack and I said to myself that there was no way I was going to the Queen Elizabeth Hospital. Madam Deputy President, right now, the Democratic Labour Party and the Minister are making changes and until those changes come I am not going there unless I cannot help it.

Madam Deputy President, what we are talking about is not grandeur. It is not an attempt to just have a response. It is in support of an action by the Minister of Health and by a group of people who believe they need to do something to make a change. If I am the Minister, I must have some responsibility. This is where the beginning and the end of the issue lies.

Madam Deputy President, with all of that pain that I bear for persons who constantly call me, anything that can make things better I am in wholehearted support of.

Madam Deputy President, I thoroughly endorse this Bill. I endorse the attempt to try and make, not only these changes to the Queen Elizabeth Hospital Board, but the other changes.

2.20 p.m.

Madam, to the point made this morning regarding the Queen Elizabeth Hospital as once being an institution of high academic pursuit and training, I might well be wrong, but according to my directions as laid out and shown with the proposed amendment where the Board will consist of a number of persons, one of them being the Chief Executive Officer or a nominee, one being a doctor, one person involved in nursing aid, one person involved in paramedical services, the Board will, in essence, have at least four persons who are medically oriented, medically directed and medically dictated. Therefore, there is no question that the Board lacks the proponents to advance medical direction. Therefore, to speak of such would be folly.

Madam Deputy President, we heard ranting this morning to suggest that the whole concept of accountability will be dispersed by the amendment and that the whole concept of power to the people would be eroded. All that has happened with this amendment is that the Minister will be given the responsibility, and will be empowered to put persons on that Board who he believes and who have shown to him that they are able to run the affairs of the Queen Elizabeth Hospital.

Madam Deputy President, the part that really amazes me is the manner in which there can be opposition about an attempt to make a change, or an attempt to make an improvement. This opposition is be coming from persons with whom the attempt has catastrophically failed. It is absolutely amazing. Madam, I would not instruct a person on even the smallest of tasks, let us say on how to fly a kite. How could I direct a person how to fly a kite, when I would have shown that I have failed to get that kite flown. Madam, if I cannot cook and every time I cook the food tastes badly, how can I direct another person how to cook. Madam, I would have lost my power and authority to speak on the matter.

We do not have to go to long drawn-out delays and long propaganda about what is right and what is wrong. They have not said anything. Madam, most important too is that this is not about a piece of land or a job, this is about people's lives.

Madam, I sometimes think that maybe we do not keep to the reality. When it comes to the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, we are dealing directly, wholeheartedly and unceremoniously straight up. We are dealing with the lives of people, and if there is one person in Barbados who is going to make a claim that they feel the treatment at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital would cause their demise, or has caused the death of a loved one, that would be enough for me to say I am not satisfied and that if someone is attempting to make a change, I will give that person the chance to make that change.

Madam Deputy President, furthermore, I would even instruct persons who made a mess of it that maybe they should shut up, but that is only my interpretation. Madam, we are all entitled to our opinion but in a matter of this, where we are dealing with giving a Minister the power.... As a matter of fact, I am in such support of anybody in Barbados who is looking for change.

Madam, people call you and ask you to make the change. They do not call the Queen Elizabeth Hospital. They do not call the Permanent Secretaries. They find your home number and call and ask you to make the change. Therefore, are you going to tell me that even with such an understanding, even with the concept of democracy, you are going to take me back to the Haynes Commission of Inquiry?

Madam Deputy President, we have heard persons in the Other Place speaking about political nonsense, yet they have failed the Queen Elizabeth Hospital. They spoke of Barbados judging us harshly on having the ability to enact changing a Board. Madam, for something as simple as that, not for people dying, not for the lack of all that is essential at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, but for just dealing with bringing things in hand, they are saying that Barbadians will judge us harshly.

Madam Deputy President, we have heard them saying in the Other Place how could we justify the exclusion of trade unionists? Well, to my mind, if it fails, I will take the chance that maybe there are persons on that Board, who may not have to carry the title of trade unionist, to represent Barbadians and all those who are ill and come within the walls of the Queen Elizabeth Hospital.

Madam Deputy President, I am very thankful that attempts are now being made to deal with matters at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital. I am thankful that the Minister has not, like some persons in the Other Place, said how this great change will affect the lives of 200 persons. That it would catastrophic for those 200 persons. Madam, here we are speaking about more than 200 or 2 000 persons. We are speaking about an entire population.

Madam Deputy President, I support this Bill and hope it is the beginning of great changes in Barbados. The Queen Elizabeth Hospital needs it. We cannot wait any longer for the Queen Elizabeth Hospital to fall from decadent to decadent.

Madam Deputy President, I thank you.

SENATOR J. A. C. HUTSON: Madam Deputy President, I would just like to make a few comments in relation to the composition of the Board. I personally would like to see a smaller number of Board Members. I find small numbers work better than large numbers.

Madam Deputy President, I am saying so without knowing the workload. Madam, another thing that worries me is that members of staff of the hospital should not be appointed as members of the Board. I would have thought that a senior surgeon or someone in a similar position would be the right person to put on the Board, because that person would be able to tell the other members what is going wrong and what would need to be rectified.

Madam, if the right person is chosen, maybe he could fill the posts of the other members in medicine, nursing and paramedical services. As I said, I definitely feel that someone senior in the hospital should be on the Board because of the fact that person works there and knows what is going on and could report back to the Chairman.

Madam Deputy President, I thank you.

SENATOR the Hon. A. B. WALTERS: Madam Deputy President, I rise to support the amendment to this Bill. As I listened this morning very carefully to the Opposition Senator, there are a number of things I would want to put on the table very early on. Madam, I went back to the original legislation, so that we could have put into context what the Queen Elizabeth Hospital Act, 2001-14 is all about.

(15)2.30 p.m.

They have established the Board to be known as the Queen Elizabeth Hospital Board that shall administer and manage the hospital in the manner specified in this Act. At Section 5(2):

“The Board is a body corporate in which subject to this Act, Section 21 of the Interpretation Act applies.”

At Section 5(3):

a. “The members of the Board shall possess the expertise, business acumen, professionalism and experience that would allow for the proper discharge of their function.”

b. “the individuals who have demonstrated competence and outstanding achievement in their field of endeavour and (2) commitment to community public service.”

Madam Deputy President, we appear to be discussing a piece of legislation without some appreciation of the past. This primary care institution, the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, was opened in 1958. The Queen Elizabeth Hospital Act was put on the Statute Books in 2001, was amended shortly after 2001, and amended again in 2005, and there is an amendment which is being

discussed at the moment in 2008. The institution has remained a government department until the Queen Elizabeth Hospital Act in 2001. It did not have a Board. It was a Government department under the direct supervision of a Minister of Government. I think we should take on board in 2008 that hospital and health care institutions have become complex institutions, so complex that you need to have new management mechanisms to manage them in the 21st Century.

Madam Deputy President, health care institutions through their very nature of the social care and health care professionals create a dynamic for either good or bad health care. If you do not get that dynamic right, it is likely that you would have bad health care and there are sometimes expensive consequences. To the extent that health care has changed in my life time because I happen to have memories of the old General Hospital. Somewhere back in the 1950s, having fallen through a window and having to spend about 24 hours in the Casualty of the General Hospital. I understand clearly about having to go into a casualty for a long time.

I have also had the experience in my adult life to have managed in a health care institution in the United Kingdom at a period when the constitutions of Boards were being changed significantly and I worked at one of the foremost post graduate medical schools where that institution also changed.

Madam Deputy President, there is also a perception in Barbados that the Government provides health care as a national service through the Ministry of Health and in the case of the Queen Elizabeth Hospital under a Board of Directors. In many private sector organisations and institutions, it is usual that the shareholders and the majority shareholder are given the opportunity to determine the composition of the Board. I believe that in this instance there is going to be some change.

I have said before that this is not the first time there has been an amendment to the Queen Elizabeth Hospital Act because there have been three changes previous to this one. We have a situation where up until 2001 and shortly thereafter, all of the employees would have been employed in the general Public Service reporting directly to the Governor-General and not necessarily to a Board and certainly not necessary to the Queen Elizabeth Hospital Board. Normally, in private sector institutions the business of policy formulation of the institution is undertaken by the Government through a Minister.

I would have thought that since July 16, it would have been most likely that there would have been a number of changes in policy and, therefore, this is one of the changes which is being made within the Ministry of Health in terms of the Government's policy in relation to the

Queen Elizabeth Hospital Board. What is it that we are attempting to do here? We are installing an effective executive structure through the amendment of Section 5 of the First Schedule of the Act. As I read very early on in my submission at Section 5(3), the Board should be made up of members who have certain levels of expertise that would allow for the proper charge of a function.

The previous composition of the Board allowed for the Minister to appoint only three members of that Board and to rely on either non-governmental organisations, Trade Unions and other types of associations to provide the other members of the Board. Sir, in some other institutions that would be considered a recipe for disaster.

The composition of the Board serving, using this amendment Bill 2008 would consist of persons who have some expertise in finance, accounting and in human resources management. Sir, when we speak of human resource management, the manner in which human resource management is couched, one still hears the words “personnel management” as opposed to “human resource management” and with a complex organisation of this size, comprised of a number of disciplines ranging from medicine, nursing, pharmacology, paramedics, administrative staff and staff of general skills, artisans, engineers and maintenance staff. You can recognise that there are a number of issues which will appear on the horizon from time to time. You need, quite frankly, persons with some Human Resource, management and development skills to be managing in this type of environment.

Madam, industrial relations is an area where very few people want to tread, maybe because of the hostility which exist in an environment of industrial relations, and it would make very good sense to have persons who have been trained in this area on the Board advising the Minister.

Madam, one of the flaws I often thought of in the composition of the Queen Elizabeth Hospital Board was the appointment of a Director from Congress of Trade Unions and Staff Associations of Barbados. When the major union representing a majority of the employees within the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, in fact, came from the National Union of Public Workers (NUPW). There were also difficulties in dealing with another trade union out of the Barbados Association of Medical Practitioners. There are all kinds of infighting within the whole industrial landscape within the hospital.

In fact, only a week ago, one of the trade unionists called me to warn me that there were likely to be some industrial relations problems within the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, relative to the junior doctors who had joined the National Union of Public Workers less, than probably two

years ago. There are still issues there which need to be resolved, and this area of having an industrial relations presence on the Board, is one which is necessary.

Madam, sometimes, quite frankly, it is not a good thing to have trade unions represented on a Board, because there are occasions when you are discussing some very serious issues concerning your own people, you have to ask them politely to leave the Board Room. Sometimes the trade unionists who are representing, make all kinds of noises to show why as a member of the Board, they would not wish to leave the Board Room, but there are sensitive issues which you do not wish to have in that Board Room situation. I am all for worker participation and this is where you do not necessarily need to have an employee within that setting, but you need some responsible person coming out of the Trade Union Movement.

Madam, in terms of engineering, a hospital is, quite frankly, some parts of it could be considered an industrial undertaking. You need to have a variety of skills in the hospital to make it function properly. You may need to have mechanical engineers. You may need to have electrical and electronic engineers, and you may need to have good maintenance persons.

One of the problems about the 50-years existence of that institution is that over the years Governments of both complexions have not done a lot of the maintenance work, which is required in a hospital. I say that almost tongue-in-cheek, because medicine, like electronics, changes almost minutely. Therefore, when you purchase new equipment it becomes obsolete within a year or two, and if you do not maintain it, it is of no use to you or the patients whom you intend to place in that hospital.

Madam, at the other end of the spectrum is the whole business of the management operations. We have had some difficulty with management of the Queen Elizabeth Hospital over the years. I hope that this particular amendment will seek to correct some of those management issues, which appear at the hospital from time to time. I think we have as part of our recruitment and selection process, a Board that has to be transparent. It has to find a way of selecting the right resources for the various positions, regardless of whatever political complexion they may be. We need to have people who are going to manage that institution properly.

Madam, medicine and nursing. Certainly these are two of the areas where the hospital would need good advice. I believe that the amendment also, in terms of the composition of the Board, speaks to the question that the Parliamentary Secretary in the Ministry of Health is a member of the Board and the Chief Medical Officer, who is an employee of the Ministry of Health, is a member of the Board, as opposed to having the senior medical person,

who is the ex Officio. I heard a lot about a person being Ex Officio and being able to make contributions. They are purely there to offer whatever advice, and the Board can determine on occasions, if the ex Officio will be a part of any or all of their discussion.

Madam, the two areas that I would want to spend some time looking at, are the areas of Information technology and paramedicines. We have not paid a lot of attention to the paramedical profession, to the extent that some of them are left out. Even in terms of our National Insurance Act, they are certain paramedics who cannot issue certificates, and therefore are not considered if they make a diagnosis, no payments could be made to you, if they say that you are required to be off ill. Therefore, paramedical, which is new, that information technology which is also new, from the point of view that a lot of our equipment is now computer driven. Those are two additions which we will have to pay some attention to.

The area of law certainly, from what I have seen over the last few years, the business of malpractice is becoming prominent. A number of Barbadians if they do not receive the appropriate treatment in the hospitals are beginning to sue. Certainly that is an area of concern.

14.50 p.m.

I would want to recommend that we focus on the law, as opposed to going necessarily to the Bar Association to get someone to sit on the Board. We have to give the Minister authority to put a certain amount of people, who have the public or community interest at heart as members of the Board.

At the end of the day, the Queen Elizabeth Hospital is about treating patients. Somebody has to manage it. We can either turn back the clock and go back to the public service type position, or we could go to new systems of management and move to a Board.

Ultimately, the Minister is responsible and would take whatever flak he has to take in the public domain. Therefore, he should be given the authority to ensure that he has a Board that he can work with. The Board will be made up of Barbadians, who have the skills and who have the community interest at heart. I think that is the point that has to be made.

Thank you, Madam Deputy President.

Asides.

Madam DEPUTY PRESIDENT: I recognise Senator Millington.

Senator Rev. P. MILLINGTON: Thank you, Madam. It gives me great pleasure to discuss briefly the Queen Elizabeth Hospital amendment Bill. I have said to my colleagues in the other place and in this place that we need to articulate clearly, what this new Government has found on assuming office, otherwise people may be confused with who was responsible for the mess. I think on this occasion I have to go back a little, so that we could understand what the Minister of Health is intent on doing.

After 14 years of Government, the former Government has allowed patients to have to get their own toilet paper. This is reality. This is not Hans Anderson's fairy tales or it is not Aesop Fables but these are realities. I deal with the man in the street and on the ground, and many of us have friends or relatives, who have gone into the hospital and had to take their own personal stuff. Therefore, that has been well articulated.

The point I am trying to make graphically is that we have assumed a Government, where we really have to rescue the QEH. The Democratic Labour Party, this new Government has a reputation of being the Government of the people and for the people. We were elected by the people to come here under a ticket of change, and we have elected to make that change.

I want to give an example of what the Minister of Health has to deal with. A new Oxygen Plant at a cost of \$1.5 million, which has the potential to save \$1 million annually, was bought but it cannot be started, due to the problem with the electrical system. The electrical system is not competent or is not modern enough to deal with the plant, so we have a brand new plant that cannot work because the electrical system is faulty.

We also have faulty and broken down equipment in the laundry department, which have the potential to jeopardise the health of workers and patients because the equipment breaks down so often, that excess money has to be paid in overtime. These are just a few of the things. After 14 in Government, simple things like new dryers and washers have to be dealt with by our Government.

The Democratic Labour Party has assumed the Government and these are the fundamental issues. We are not talking about rocket science. We are not talking about putting a man on the moon. We are talking about refurbishing or replacing old faulty equipment.

I am pleased to say that the Minister of Health, the Honourable Member for St. Philip West, Dr. the Hon. D. C. Estwick, is moving with alacrity to rectify the morass of problems that he has inherited. I am confident, like the other Honourable Senators on this side; that these problems will be rectified.

Madam Deputy President, I want to address something that was said by Senator Symmonds, with regards to the Haynes Report. This Government is under no obligation to accept anybody's report. If we look at something and we think it has value, we will not discard it because it was proposed or started by the other side, but if in our estimation something better and different can be done, we will do it. Therefore, it is not a matter of saying that this person made a report and we should adopt it. We are not going to do that. This is a new administration, new Government and new ideas, new approach. Everything is new. I believe this is a Government of the people for the people and we definitely have the people at heart. Therefore, you will see that within a very short period of time, that things will change in the Ministry of Health at the QEH, because something is being done.

I always want to say one of my pet phrase: this Government puts people before projects. When you look at the stark difference we have a \$300 million highway and you still have to bring your own toilet paper to the QEH. The contrast is so stark and so glaring. You have high tech big spending here and over here you have a need for basis amenities. To me, it is a case of misplaced priorities. Again, this Government has been elected by the people of Barbados to make sure that all of these things are going to be rectified.

I am very impressed with the changes that have already been made at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital. I remember going there around 11.00 p.m. in the night and asking the security guard, who was the lady sitting by herself, with no weapon. I asked her if she was not afraid. She said she was frightened but it was her job.

Sir, within a few days of taking office, the Minister of Health was able to immediately make some simple changes, no capital expenditure, but commonsense changes to make sure that the hospital was more secure and that any and everybody could not walk through there anytime of day or night, such as strangers coming in through the back when it should be staff only. Therefore, I want to make the point here that this Government is committed, as it relates to the compilation of the new Board, because any competent business is going to employ persons who will look after their interest.

We have been elected by the people. The Minister is responsible for health and he is going to put persons in place, whom he perceives. If somebody else has a job to do, they may have a different perception. I think it is remiss of anyone to want to suggest to the Minister what he should do, when clearly he has a handle on what needs to be done. We have to give him time to do what has to be done.

I believe that you need specialist people. I did not want to bring it up here but my own brother was the

hospital director, having been trained in hospital administration in Washington, with a Masters degree. You cannot bring any and everybody and put in the position of management because they have a management degree. The hospital has a staff of more than 2 000 people and you must have specialised training to manage it. It is like forensic auditing. You just do not take a man because he has a level 1, level 2 ACCA, and tell him to do forensic auditing. It is a specialist job. I think that the Minister's approach is to be commended, the fact that he has requested specialists' people to run a specialist organisation.

Senate A3, sequence 18, 15:00:14

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Senator Rev. P. A. V. MILLINGTON: You have all types of people, doctors, surgeons and maids. I believe that the Minister is doing the right thing. Madam Deputy President, because of that, I want to wholeheartedly support the Minister's desire to have this Bill amended that we could have the correct persons on the Board.

Madam Deputy President, somebody would always be dissatisfied. We cannot have any and everybody on the Board. We cannot have 25 members on the Board. Madam Deputy President, I am sure that there are other members of the society we would like to include, such as ministers of religion, the Red Cross, the 4H, et cetera. Madam Deputy President, the Minister has decided that he would appoint persons who have the requisite skills to get the job done. Therefore, on this basis, I want to support this Bill and recommend it.

I thank you very much, Madam Deputy President.

SENATOR Dr. F. L. CHANDLER: Madam Deputy President, I certainly agree with having all of the disciplines identified represented on the Queen Elizabeth Hospital Board. The hospital must be run as a business if it is going to be sustainable. The disciplines identified would support the four pillars of business, which are management, operations, human resource and finance. Of course, good industrial relations are necessary for the smooth running of any institution. Madam Deputy President, because it is an hospital, it does not mean that the majority of the Board members must be in the health care profession.

Madam Deputy President, the Honourable Leader of Government Business has noted that the person who has the responsibility must also have the authority. The Minister is now to appoint the majority of the Board members. Madam Deputy President, in keeping with the social compact philosophy, I think that the Minister, although he has the ultimate responsibility, should choose the Board members in consultation with the Social Partners

so that he could not be accused of choosing members based on political affiliation, but based on their ability.

Madam Deputy President, I think too that the Chief Executive Officer should be a director but the other members of the management team could be called to meetings when they are appropriate agenda items to be discussed.

Madam Deputy President, we all know the difficulties that the hospital has gone through in the past and is still going through. I agree with the Honourable Leader of Government Business that the Board members should work as a team. Madam Deputy President, I believe that not only the Board members, but the members of management and the staff should all be working as a team if the hospital is going to be changed.

Madam Deputy President, we have seen problems with resistance to change in the hospital in the past. I hope that these problems would be overcome and we would be able to make the hospital one of the finest hospitals there is or the finest that it can be and that the public would no longer have to fear going to the hospital in case of an emergency. I hope that day would come soon because I certainly fear it. Only two weeks ago, I had a personal emergency with my mother and to me the Queen Elizabeth Hospital was not an option, so I really hope the day would come when we would not fear going to the hospital.

Madam Deputy President, I support the Bill in principle, but I hope that these few comments I have made would be taken into consideration.

I thank you very much.

Senator the Hon. H. L. BENN: Madam Deputy President, I rise to give support to the Queen Elizabeth Hospital (Amendment) Bill, 2008. Madam Deputy President, I believe that the Minister of Health, National Insurance and Social Security has made a very wise decision in his capacity as Minister to do the things that he has to do. I am sure that he did it in full consultation with the Social Partners.

Madam Deputy President, I believe that the new Board would seek to make the Queen Elizabeth Hospital more efficient. It is there to cater to a wide cross section of the community, all citizens of Barbados. If the concern is that the Board members are members all of the political party, my question is why not.

Madam Deputy President, I know that under the last Administration, if there were eight members on the Board, nine of them belonged to the Barbados Labour Party. I get the impression, Madam Deputy President, that the Barbados Labour Party Members of Parliament in both

Houses, get the impression that there should be no change to anything the Democratic Labour Party came and found. From the time of the Estimates debate, and from the debates on Tuesdays in the Other Place and the debates from this Chamber, the impression is given that if the Democratic Labour Party new Government touches anything that the Barbados Labour Party put in place, it is an indictment against the fellows.

Madam Deputy President, I want to make it clear, as Senator Millington said, that Barbadians have said to us and to the Barbados Labour Party that they need a change. Madam Deputy President, the Democratic Labour Party is not just changing a Board for changing a Board sake. We want to bring justice. We want to ensure that we bring the Queen Elizabeth Hospital from the brink of woe that was being experienced.

Madam Deputy President, if the only thing that the new Board, comprising of finance and accounting; human resource management; industrial relations; engineering, civil or electrical; management operations; medicine; nursing; and law, does is to reduce the waiting time in the Accident and Emergency Department, I would be happy. If the only thing that they do is to improve the quality of service by the Ambulance Service, I would be happy. If the only thing the Board does is to reduce the level of frustration among the Queen Elizabeth Hospital staff, I would be happier still. If the only thing that the new Board does is to bring a system to bear on the functioning of the laundry and those other ancillary areas, I would be happy. If all the new Board does is to improve the quality of meals served to the patients, I would be happier still. If the new Board could make a better use of the resources at the Hospital, I would be happy.

My father spent some time in the hospital many years ago before he died and my mother also spent some time there as well and we had to journey to the hospital with toilet paper. I used to journey there most Saturday mornings with some soup to feed my old lady with because some afternoons and evenings when I went there and saw the level of meals there, some mince beef that looks as though some warm water was just thrown over it to just dilute the blood in it and bring it out... They get cold meals sometimes.

Senate A3 Sequence 19

3.10 p.m.

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SENATOR the Hon. H. LaV. BENN: Madam Deputy President, I am not trying to criticise the staff of the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, including the cooks or the kitchen staff, but I cannot remember two occasions in the

time I visited my mother, which was almost every day, that I have ever experienced her being satisfied with the meals that she got. Therefore, I think that if the Board could seek to do certain things like that, then I would be happy.

Madam Deputy President, if all the Board could do would be to restore the dignity of the professional staff, such as registered nurses, et cetera, then I would be happy. Madam, when someone goes to the school or to the university and then goes abroad, to be trained as a nurse, then to come back, that person would have a level of dignity and pride in what they do. Therefore, if all the Board could do, would be to restore that dignity to the professional staff, then I would be happy.

Madam, a few years ago, one of the reasons we had a number of problems amongst the nurses and in the teaching profession was that under the Barbados Labour Party, they brought hardship to those persons who had to study; some persons had to study either at half pay or with no pay, while they had mortgages and other things to pay. Therefore, if this new Board could sit and look at the training needs of its staff, this Senator would be happy. If the only thing the Board does is to give opportunity to staffing the Queen Elizabeth Hospital from within the corridors of CARICOM, rather than going to faraway place, to bring people here who cannot speak English properly, then I would be happy as well.

Madam Deputy President, I am not as concerned as other Honourable Senators about what Opposition Senators are concerned about. It is their responsibility to seek to ensure they try to keep the Democratic Labour Party on the defence. It is their responsibility to try to give the impression to the general public that nothing is happening. Therefore, if the Democratic Labour Party Government puts its tail between its leg and ducks away from the battle at hand, at the end of whatever period that is given to us, the public would be able to judge us and the Barbados Labour Party Senators and Parliamentarians in the Other Place would be able to say "I told you so", they did nothing. The Democratic Labour Party continues to examine all of the areas of endeavour given to it, and I am confident that the Minister of Health, along with his team and with the support of Cabinet, will seek to place the Queen Elizabeth Hospital at a level that will make it proud and make it as a living example among the other health care institutions in the world.

Madam Deputy President, I, like Senator Chandler, gets worry sometimes, that is why I believe that God has kept me in such perfect health, because He knows that if I were to get sick, I would not want to make the Queen Elizabeth Hospital my first choice. I do not have the resources to go other places but I thank the Almighty God for my health. Madam, I am sure that within a short period of time, with the restoration of dignity amongst staff by

giving staff that brighter outlook, we would see a brand new attitude being displayed by the people. Madam Deputy President, I know some criticisms were levelled at the formation of the Board under the Barbados Labour Party, but the Democratic Labour Party did not say that it would do away with that Board and that it would go back to the original structure. What we are seeking to do is to bring a number of professionals, and if you would look at the makeup of the Board of the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, you would see that it relies on somebody from the financial department, to bring their expertise to bear; when things are discussed at the human resource level, there is somebody there; when you have to talk about the hardships being faced, someone versed in industrial relations is there; an engineer is there because there are lots of equipment at the hospital and there will be some times when that engineer would have to make choices with respect to purchasing equipment. Madam, someone representing the other disciplines is also on that Board.

Madam Deputy President, I feel happy to support the amendment to this Bill and I wish to urge all Barbadians, particularly the Members of both Houses of Parliament who support the Barbados Labour Party, to give these new arrangement the opportunity to function. Madam, they must not criticise only for the sake of criticising.

Madam Deputy President, as I close, I remember a statement made by an Honourable Senator on the First Sitting of the Senate. That Senator said that they wish this Government would perform like the West Indies Team, on its worst day. It was both an ungracious and ungrateful comment, and if they are going to liken us to the performance of the West Indies Team, I do not want Honourable Senators to come here and make statements just to make the headlines and editorials but rather to make those statements perhaps for the comic strip where they belong, but do not liken us to the cricketers.

Madam Deputy President, that is the reason why our cricket is so weak, because cricketers get the impression if they make double figures, they could get in the papers and if they get two wickets in an innings, they could make it into the sports pages. I am saying, come in and score a century and take more than five wickets in the Honourable Senate, so that your statements could carry weight and could do justice in this country.

Madam Deputy President, I thank you.

Senator the Very Reverend H. E. CRICHLAW: Madam Deputy President, I rise to support to this Bill before this Honourable Chamber but with some reservation. Madam, this issue is not as simple as we thought, this is a very complex issue and I am grateful to Senator Walters for adding his comments to those of

Senator McClean. I think that has made it clearer, certainly to me.

Madam, most people in Barbados still think the Minister of Health is responsible for everything that happens at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, and according to the law, this is not so. As Senator Walters has pointed out, there is a corporate body, which is the Board of the Queen Elizabeth Hospital that is responsible. Of course, the Minister has certain functions, as stated in the original Act. Madam Deputy President, what this Bill is seeking to do, is to give the Minister of Health the authority to appoint a Board of his choosing, within the limits that are given.

Madam Deputy President, I think the dispute this morning, which Senator Symmonds gave, was normal philosophical matter, that is, Government said it was trying to empower people, and so the decisions would be based on opinions at the ground level.

3.20 p.m.

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SENATOR the Very Reverend H.E. CRICHLAW: The dispute which Senator Symmonds started was really an almost philosophical matter, that is that the Government said it was trying to empower people and so the decisions would be based on opinions coming from the ground level. In actual fact, this amendment is really coming from the top down. I do not think that is relevant to the actual debate that should be conducted on this matter. According to this, all that we heard over the years about the hospital should have been directed to the hospital Board. As Minister Walters pointed out, we shifted from the public service to the hospital Board and I do not think that many people really understood that and because public health has always been done by Government they still think that position remains. I have been in contact with the Queen Elizabeth Hospital for about 40 years and usually when people criticise the hospital and I think we have had enough of it and I really think that we should stop making such criticisms of the hospital if we who are parliamentarians are saying that we would not like to be ill because we would fear to go there. I think we are not being quite fair to the hospital. The doctors and nurses give excellent service in the hospital and anyone who visits the wards will say this is so. Sometimes we see letters in the Press complimenting the nurses for the care that they give and if you simply stop there, you would have a good impression of the hospital. Where it goes wrong I think is when you go downstairs, that is away from the wards, then you realise that everything is not all right with the hospital.

Madam Deputy President, that brings the complexity of the matter to the fore because the hospital is not just doctors, nurses and their assistants. The hospital, as was

pointed out by Senator Walters, is made up of so many different parts. It is all designed to provide medical care, that is the object of it all. Sometimes I wonder whether people who are doing jobs that are not definitely connected with patient care understand how very valuable their contribution is to the hospital.

Madam Deputy President, it is no good having the finest doctors and nurses in the world and the equipment is not working and so, I think that the present Government should stop talking about the hospital and just go on and do what has to be done and, if you must, call the media in if you have done these things. Do not say we will do so and so because so many successive Governments have been doing the same thing. They say that such and such a thing must be done and years pass and the things are not done. So many Ministers of Health visited the Psychiatric Hospital and saw that things there needed changing and they thought they would build a new Psychiatric Hospital and this is about 400 years that Ministers of Health have been looking at the Psychiatric Hospital and nothing much has been done over those years. I really feel that people in Barbados are tired of hearing the ills of the Queen Elizabeth Hospital and what they need is to see that things are changing. You would not have to call in the media to find that out. If a member of the public could go to the Accident and Emergency Department and be served in less than one hour, that news would spread like wildfire throughout Barbados because normally you wait for a whole day and night sometimes and when you are promised service you never get it or it comes months after. In the law courts, justice delayed is justice denied but in the hospital, medical attention delayed may mean death, the denial of the right to live and so, we cannot play around with the health of people. Madam, not many of us can take a plane and go to a hospital in Canada or America, very few people in Barbados can do that and the Queen Elizabeth Hospital is there for everybody.

Madam Deputy President, here we must think primarily of those who cannot afford to pay anything for health. We in Barbados have taken on the tremendous task of providing gratis some of the most important areas of life, free medical attention, free education up to the level of university; free this and free that. We may not be able to do all these things but I think that health is the most important of all these things. I really feel that there are a number of minor things as Senator Millington has pointed out that could be done overnight. Sir, one would have thought that since the hospital changed hands from Government to a Board to be responsible for managing the hospital that these things would be done without all the red tape but that has nothing and what we need to do now is to get on with this new equipment. Sir, some are expensive and they become obsolete very quickly but people's confidence must be restored in the Queen Elizabeth Hospital.

S/A3/15:30

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SENATOR the Very Rev. H. CRICHLOW: ...at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, and every person who work there must feel that they have something to do with helping to restore people's health. It does not matter what phase, even if it is repairing a lift, fan or what have you. We must not just think of the doctors. The nurses are very hardworking people, they carry a lot of burdens from home to the hospital and there they have far more to cope with. We have to be very compassionate in our thinking about those who work in areas where so much of their emotional and spiritual energy is used.

I noticed in the list of people to be on the Board, there is no one who is looking after the spiritual care of the patients. I would recommend that the Hospital Chaplin be invited be a member of the hospital's Board, because the emotional, spiritual and psychological components in healing are very important.

Madam, I wish the new Minister of Health all the best as he gets down to tackling problems, and I do make one final plea to all those who are listening to the debates today, to give the hospital a chance. We have heard enough. We do not want all those ills repeated over and over. It is just causing more and more people to lose confidence in the hospital. It is not fair to the doctors, nurses and the assistants who help to restore our health when we go there. I certainly have no fears about going to the Queen Elizabeth Hospital. I would like those listening to me not to develop this terrible fear of becoming ill because you would not know where to go. It is not true.

Thank you very much. I am much obliged to you.

Madam DEPUTY PRESIDENT: I recognise Senator Newton.

SENATOR HON. Mrs. V.E. NEWTON: Madam, Acting President, I rise today to support the concept of the Bill. I am not going to speak at length about the services at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, because there is nothing being said here today, that some of us have not heard for the past 9 or 10 years. What is said to me is that some of the problems at Queen Elizabeth Hospital are attitudinal, some of them are management problems, possibly brought about by the lack of money, because after all a hospital is an expensive institution to run, and no matter how much money you can provide, whether it is \$150 million or \$500 million, I am sure that at some point you will find some of the services are falling down, and it could be poor management brought on by lack of finance or just simply

poor management, but whatever it is, one has to commend the new Government for trying to bring new initiatives to deal with very old problems.

Madam, I personally am not convinced that too many of the problems will be solved in a hurry, but then one cannot just throw your hands up and say, these problems are as old as we can remember, and we can leave them there. Therefore, any initiative, at all, to deal with the problems that are existing, are welcomed and we have to encourage them.

Madam, having said that, I read the section, which is the main part of the amendment before us today, which provides that the Board of the hospital, shall consist of 13 members who shall be appointed by the Minister by Instrument in writing.

Madam, that provision is nothing new. If you look through the Statute Book of Barbados you will find that provision in several pieces of legislation setting up Boards. However, I think that a lot of the disquiet caused by the way in which the section is drafted, might be lessened if there was an amendment to the amendment. I have not canvassed to get any support except from one person for the proposed amendment, but since I think it would be beneficial, I am going to read it any how.

Madam, what I would suggest is that after Clause 3. (2):

"The members of the Board to be appointed under sub-paragraph (1) shall compromise..."

I would insert a new sub-section 3 after the list which says something like this.

"Provided however that the Minister shall consult with the relevant associations and bodies in the making of appointments under Section 3(2)."

Then I would renumber sub-section (3), (4) and (5 to make them (4), (5) and (6).

Madam, some may say that if this amendment were to be introduced, it would somehow diminish the power of the Minister. That is not so, because as some of us know the act of consultation can be just a letter. It could be a letter to the Bar Association of Barbados saying, I am going to appoint someone to represent the legal profession on the Queen Elizabeth Hospital's Board, and have you got any suggestions to make. We would hope that whatever association such a letter is written, would look among its members and provide the names who would best, in the opinion of the President, Board, or whoever, would best represent the interest of that particular profession. It does not mean that the Minister if he has a different view has to

accept the recommendation, but, at least, no one would be able to accuse the Government of being autocratic, or not consulting with bodies set up to represent professions, such as those that are outlined there. That is the only recommendation I would make. I am one who believe that if you elect a Government, you must allow it to govern, but at the same time that Government must be tempered with reason, and it the Government must always be conscious to reduce avenues of criticism where they might occur.

Madam, an amendment such as that would not detract from the Minister's power, but, in fact, it would make it seem that the Government is sensitive to public opinion, and is willing to hear views especially if it is dealing with professional associations.

Thank you, Madam.

Madam DEPUTY PRESIDENT: I recognise Senator Goddard.

SENATOR Sir John Stanley GODDARD: Madam Deputy President, let us recognise ...

15.40 p.m.

Sequence 22

Wednesday, May 14, 2008

Senate A3, sequence 23, 3.40 p.m.

Senator Sir JOHN S. GODDARD: Thank you, Madam.

Madam Deputy President, let us recognise that a general hospital is an extremely important institution, in any and every community. Let us also recognise that it is one of the most, if not the most difficult institutions to manage, because it brings together such a wide range of skills and disciplines.

We have to admit that the QEH has been in a state of decline for many years. We are not proud to say it but we would not be honest if we did not admit it. I have been an inpatient there on two occasions and a visitor on several other occasions. Therefore, what I am saying, I have seen with my own eyes and I have listened to the testimony of others but we all as Barbadians want to see it improved. I think the new Government has a right to change the composition of the Board, if in its opinion, it would lead to improvement.

I think they have covered all the major disciplines as listed, such as accounting, engineering, finance, human resource management, industrial relations, information

technology, law, management operations, medicine, nursing and paramedical services.

Therefore, I would think that the composition of the new Board should be very much better than the composition of the old Board, which was based on representation. This is not based just on representation, but it is based on essential skills, knowledge and services. Changing the Board is just the first step.

Those of us who have been involved in management know that there is a tremendous difference between a Board and management. A Board has to do with review, approvals, policy, strategic planning, and direction. Management which will be accountable to the Board has to deal with the day to day operations of the institution.

Therefore, what we have here at the top is the Minister of Health, elected and appointed by the Prime Minister, and he is responsible to the Cabinet. He in turn appoints members of the Board who are accountable to him. The Board in turn has to appoint competent management and hold them accountable for achieving the desired results and following the strategic plans that the Board has set and approved. This applies not only to a hospital but a division of responsibilities and accountability at every level is good management practice in any institution. This is not beyond us.

Let us be honest. In some instances the QEH has become an embarrassment to many Barbadians, including me. When I go through there and see elevators that have been out of order, not for months but for years, when I see washrooms boarded up or whatever reason, I am not proud of that. When I see the corridors just want cleaning, maybe just a little soap and water or a broom, I am not proud of that I want to be proud of this institution.

On the two occasions that I have been there as an inpatient, I had to go abroad on the recommendation of the medical specialist because the equipment that was needed to complete the diagnosis was broken down. Fortunately for me, the medical specialist knew the right person abroad and sent me there, posthaste. Time was not on my side. This should not happen.

Madam Deputy President, equipment in any institution, company or organisation has to be maintained. If it is not maintained, it will not provide the service for which is required. It goes beyond equipment.

The same applies to the records. In this age of information technology, there must be proper records of patient care. I am referring and comparing this with what I have seen abroad, where the doctor comes and pick up what the nurses have prepared and in an instant, that doctor knows your complete history and medical situation.

Patient records are vital, but not only patient records, records of drugs in the hospital, so that you are not going to run out, or have such a large supply of a particular drug that it becomes outdated before its time.

There is also a need to have records of parts. Every equipment needs spare parts but if you do not know what you have, when there is a breakdown, what are you going to do? Here we are talking about patient care. Whatever I am saying refers to patient care and it may be a matter of life and death. Therefore, we cannot afford to compromise on quality.

I hope this new Board will do the right things. I support the whole idea but they cannot manage. A Board can never manage but a Board remains responsible for management, and there is a fundamental difference between the two. This Board has to ensure that it discharges its responsibility for ensuring that the institution is properly managed with the right people, in the right places at all times, that those persons are trained and retrained and their knowledge updated. Madam, in the final analysis, it all comes back to improving patient care.

I thank you, Madam.

Madam DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Senator Marville.

Senator R. O. MARVILLE: Thank you, Madam Deputy President. I was wondering if I was left this long, because of the fear that I would speak in French, not because I cannot but I promise I would not.

I speak as a continuing student of political science and management and as somebody who teaches governance. I find it impossible to make a judgement on governance on the passing of a Bill and let me put it this way. My record on governance is not something that anybody can question easily. I was stopped writing a newspaper column because I wrote about governance. I was prepared to hold the former Government's feet to the fire on the issue of governance and I am prepared to the same with this one.

It is interesting that the Opposition came up with this notion of thinking there would be change. Albert Einstein once said that it is extremely difficult to arrive at any solution to a problem with the same mind set that caused it. I am therefore, not very likely to be willing to listen to quibbling about accountability to the Minister as distinct in my mind, from the Minister who was never accountable to himself of anybody else.

The issue is there has to be change and if this change makes good sense in management terms, it will probably have the effect that we all want to see. I am not going beat about the bush. I am not going to say that you should not

criticise this or that. We are not criticising individuals as such but criticising the system.

Senate A3, sequence 23, 15:50:14

Wednesday, May 14, 2008

Senator R. O. MARVILLE: We are not criticising individuals as such, we are criticising the system and what it came down to. Madam Deputy President, what it came down to is something we cannot be proud of. Therefore, we have to move it onward not backwards. We never believed in that and I do not see how we could ever believe in it now.

Madam Deputy President, one of the specific issues here is the issue of representation versus technicians. Madam Deputy President, I could tell you quite clearly that representation usually ends up as a political issue. Representative groups have representative positions, and representatives of various bodies, whether it is the church or the trade unions or what have you, tend to be a means of anticipating conflict. If you put technicians in the job, you are anticipating productivity. I think this is an important change.

Madam Deputy President, I listened carefully to everybody but particularly to the colleagues on my side of the table and I understood quite clearly what Senator Hutson was asking in terms of numbers. I am not quite like George Bernard Shaw. I do not necessarily believe that the only thing better than a committee of two is a committee of one. I am always interested in some sort of viability. Thirteen seems like a large number, but in view of the area that it intends to cover, I am prepared to suspend any judgement and believe that the Minister has made his consultations and has come up with what he thinks is a very workable solution. Madam Deputy President, whatever does better for the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, is in itself good.

Madam Deputy President, let me explain that my notion of empowerment of the people does not mean giving people who have no knowledge of a particular area the right to dabble in it. In terms of the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, empowerment of the people, as far as I am concerned, is making ordinary people feel comfortable when they have to go to that institution and not afraid. That is genuine empowerment. For that reason I would say that I really have very little difficulty. I would accept the proposal made by Senator Newton. It gives it some sort of transparency if you like, but otherwise I am happy to support this Bill.

I thank you.

SENATOR Mrs. V. I. SANDIFORD-GARNER: Madam Deputy President, as I rise to support this Bill I would just like to reemphasise that the Government's attempt at revising the Queen Elizabeth Hospital Bill, Cap. 54 is based on this Government's commitment to the people of Barbados to improve health care in this country.

Madam Deputy President, before I go into my discourse, I would just like to have an aside. The Honourable Senator on the other side representing the Opposition commenced his presentation by referring once again, as we always hear, to the fatted calf. We heard that very often these days.

Madam Deputy President, someone murmured an aside that probably the goodly Senator felt that he has missed his share. Madam Deputy President, through you, I would just wish to remind him that we found a carcass, not a fatted calf.

Madam Deputy President, I know that the Honourable Senator must defend his Government position. We have been accused of making change for change sake, but I would wish to say that this is not the case.

Madam Deputy President, most of us are aware of the former Government plans to build a new \$700 million hospital. The former Prime Minister is quoted in December 2007 as saying that he was looking forward to a fourth term because that would have given the opportunity to open a new health facility in Barbados. We also heard the former Minister of Health speaks of plans for a new \$700 million hospital in Barbados.

The idea of massive refurbishment, which we are now putting forward for the hospital does not seem to be acceptable to the former Administration. Madam Deputy President, I would wish to ask why would a country has to consider an option of massive refurbishment as opposed to incremental and continuous maintenance. It seems as if previously there was no philosophy of maintenance and no ethic of building and continuing to repair. We had a management ethic akin to an oil-rich State. This Government, through its plans for the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, which we are discussing today, is looking to see how it could build on what it has in the best way possible and in the most cost-effective way possible for this country.

Madam Deputy President, while there were grandiose plans afoot to build a new \$700 million facility, the Government of the day continually underfunded the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, and that must be said. Salaries alone, as we know, were \$120 million a year. The previous Government capped it at \$110 million a year. How on earth could we have functioned effectively as an institution with a budget that was not even able to pay salaries?

Madam Deputy President, one did not know the previous Board's position on this. We had a previous Board representing every interest group, but we never heard their position on the underfunding of the Queen Elizabeth Hospital. Madam Deputy President, the Board comprised of the various interest groups mentioned by those present here today, the Barbados Association of Medical Practitioners; the Congress of Trade Unions and Staff Associations of Barbados; the private sector agency; and the Barbados Christian Council, yet we are all aware that the Queen Elizabeth Hospital was literally brought to its knees in the past five to ten years. Madam Deputy President, where are we today?

Madam Deputy President, in March this year, 24 cancer patients went to the Media to tell Barbados that they have been suffering for months because there was no radioactive cobalt in the Queen Elizabeth Hospital. Where was the Board when we could not pay to bring in cobalt for our cancer patients? What was their position on this?

The past Board failed in its mandate to improve patient care within that institution. Those are not my words, those are the words of the Barbados Association of Medical Practitioners. In August last year, the Barbados Association of Medical Practitioners said that the previous Board had failed in its mandate to improve patient care. It said that the hospital was not meeting its financial obligations. The representative of the doctors also complained that the Board was not meeting its commitment to meet with them on a quarterly basis as it had promised. These are the general board meetings now, not the quarterly meetings with Barbados Association of Medical Practitioners. It did not meet in May. It did not meet in June. It actually only had ad hoc committee meetings. It was not functioning effectively.

Senate A3 Sequence 24

4.00 p.m.

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Mrs. SENATOR IRENE SANDIFORD-GARNER: Madam Deputy President, you would have heard criticisms in the Other Place about the omission of the unions on the proposed composition but in 2006 the National Union of Public Workers called on the Board of the Queen Elizabeth Hospital to resign, and this is what they said:

"The situation at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital has worsened, not improved, since the advent of the Board appointed by the previous Minister in September 2005."

Madam, therefore, almost one year into its existence, the Board of the Queen Elizabeth Hospital was being called on to resign.

Madam Deputy President, I will go to the list of representative agencies on that Board, because I think we need to emphasise why we have to try a different method, why we have to look at an alternative composition and to an alternative approach. If we speak about the BAMP, which was there then, they themselves called for the resignation of the Board. We had a person nominated by the Barbados Nurses Association, who was nominated by the previous administration, yet nurses continue to endure extreme hardship at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital. We had a person nominated by the Congress of Trade Unions and Staff Associations of Barbados, yet the National Union of Public Workers was calling on the Board to resign. We had a person nominated by the BARP and yet anyone visiting the Queen Elizabeth Hospital would have seen that the elderly at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital - and this is now on a personal and humanitarian level - were some of the most disadvantaged persons on wards.

Madam Deputy President, I have seen elderly people not being able to feed themselves. I have seen them having their foods taken away at the end of the feeding period because of the fact there was nobody there to feed them. The food was put there and if someone next door who was visiting, who was not sympathetic enough to feed them, that food would have been taken away untouched. Madam, therefore, how did the composition of that Board in that dispensation, affected patient care in a positive way and on an individual level at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital? Madam, the facts speak for themselves.

Madam Deputy President, this Government has allocated \$381 million in the Estimates for health care in this country. The current Minister is also within his rights to appoint persons with skills set, to ensure that the sums allocated to the Queen Elizabeth Hospital would be spent wisely and that the institution would be managed and monitored by persons equipped to do so. Madam, the current Minister is within his rights to appoint persons with skills set, who will execute this mandate to bring health care system in this country back to the high standard that is expected by Barbadians.

Madam Deputy President, Senators Chandler and Goddard hit the nail on the head earlier when they spoke about the four pillars of business, because as far as I am concerned the Queen Elizabeth Hospital lacks proper management. Madam, an old math teacher of mine at Queens College used to say that a blind man on a trotting horse could see that the previous dispensation was not working, that the former arrangement was not working.

Madam, our new Minister is a medical doctor, with more than his fair share of experience. He is also an individual who we know would have consulted with other experts in the area, to come up with the present composition. I must also say, in many instances today,

many of his interventions have shown a level of vision not seen in health care in this country in a very long time. Madam, I do believe it is incumbent upon all of us as Barbadians to allow this new mandate and new dispensation to take shape and to work. I am asking all Barbadians to give this new composition and this new approach a chance to work.

Madam, I thank you.

SENATOR the Hon. Miss M. O. P. McCLEAN:
Madam Deputy President, I believe my task in wrapping up this debate on the Queen Elizabeth Hospital (Amendment) Bill, 2008, is going to be an easy one. I must say, starting with the last speaker, she has very well, in a very brief but comprehensive exploration of the necessity to revisit and revise the composition of the Board of the Queen Elizabeth Hospital and the powers of the Minister of Health to appoint the Board, would have demonstrated the necessity to do so. Other speakers would have also demonstrated that necessity, therefore, I do not believe I have to reiterate those points.

I, however, want to speak to the comments made by the Opposition Senator. The Honourable Senator went to pains to speak about the Haynes Report, and specifically to acknowledge his great respect for Sir Richard Haynes, the Chairman. Madam, I certainly will endorse that. Similarly, while I dearly love my brother Wendell and his tremendous ability, he was, first of all, an economist and of course his passing would have symbolised that he was a mere mortal. Madam, there was much in the Report that could be utilised and I would not shy away from saying so, however, I want to suggest that the issue of the management of the hospital in relation to the Board, that Report would have erred. That has been clearly demonstrated in the last presentation by my fellow Senator.

I also want to emphasise that there is nothing contradictory with the pledge of the Democratic Labour Party Manifesto and its efforts to date, to ensure there is participation in its fullest sense. It has also committed itself to good governance and I believe that in the context of this discussion, good governance has to pertain. In that respect, I would want to acknowledge the short and very powerful contribution of one of my colleagues on the other side, an Independent Senator, where emphasis was placed on the whole issue of good governance and the notion of what true empowerment means. True empowerment does not mean promoting someone to his or her level of incompetence. Therefore, in this case, as I pointed out in my opening comments, what is critical in the management of a complex institution, such as the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, is to have in place persons who are capable of facilitating the making of sound decisions.

I want also to emphasise that consistent with best practice in the area of corporate governance, and we are talking about the management enterprise.... It is a public enterprise in the form of a hospital delivering medical services to the public, but it is nonetheless an enterprise, and if we say we are going to run it like an enterprise, we have to adhere to and try to achieve best practice. What I would say in respect of best practice is that the trend in good corporate governance has been to move away from the inclusion on the Board of Directors of executive directors in the majority. The convention, however, is to create opportunities for consultation and input into the decision-making processes. Therefore, as the composition of the Board as proposed is put in place, there will be scope for the directors of the hospital, through the Chairman of the Board and other directors, for the Minister to engage in active consultation with all those interest groups.

We heard we had nurses representatives on the Board and the nurses were not happy; we heard we had representatives of the medical association and they themselves were not happy, even with their representative being a Member of that Board, and by extension they were not happy with some of what obtained at the level of decision-making of the Board.

4.10 p.m.

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SENATOR the HON. MISS M.P.A. McCLEAN: I believe there is nothing difficult in terms of consulting in those areas while at the same time achieving good corporate governance; while at the same time bringing to the Board and to the decisions of that Board the expertise and the knowledge of those pillars of management identified. I think it is important to reiterate the point made by previous speakers that when we look to manage an institution we have to be able to draw on the competence in those critical functional areas, accounting, finance, human resource management, human resources operations, et cetera and we have heard of those things.

Madam Deputy President, if we look at what is new, I do not see any difficulty with the process of consultation. I recognise the suggestion of Senator Newton when she spoke about consultation and I believe that if this Government must live its commitment to transparency and consultation et cetera it goes without saying that in the selection of these persons to serve on the Board, those things would be borne in mind.

Madam Deputy President, on that note, I want to again reaffirm my support the Queen Elizabeth Hospital (Amendment) Bill, 2008.

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

SENATOR K.D. SYMMONDS: Madam Deputy President, I rise on a point of privilege before we go to that step only to embrace the argument of Senator Newton. I have listened carefully to that which the Leader of Government Business has had to say with respect to the recommendation that there be an amendment to the amendment. I fear, however, that the Leader of Government Business has rested the matter only in the context and in the bosom of what this existing Government will do. When I spoke, I do recall making the point that Governments come and Governments go but the analogy I used was that in 1960 people would have come to this very Chamber and passed legislation and it is still in effective on the books of Barbados today. With the very best wishes in the world, therefore, I do not know that it is satisfactory not for us to seek to amend the amendment, thereby placing into law the requirement for there to be consultation because while the Leader of Government Business and her Government may very well be perfectly willing to do the consultation, and that issue is not being taken now, there will be successors, the legislation will still be part of the books and the preserve that Senator Newton is trying to protect is that requirement of having consultation take place with relevant stakeholders down the road not necessarily in the purely immediate partisan political circumstances but we have to remember that legislation is specific.

SENATOR the HON. MISS M.P.A. McCLEAN: Madam Deputy President, I was trying to seek a clarification certainly as a new member of this Chamber I needed to be guided and I was querying whether or not the Honourable Senator is acting appropriately in relation to his rising on a point of privilege. I had asked that the Bill be read a second time and I believe that those matters should be taken when we go into Committee. I am, therefore, guided by those who have a longer tenure than I do on this matter.

SENATOR K.D. SYMMONDS: Madam Deputy President, if I am given the assurance and the undertaking that the House will hear me on this matter in Committee, then I have no difficulty but, as I have said to you, it is a matter which we need to address our minds to.

The question was put to the Senate and agreed to.

SENATOR the HON. MISS M.P.A. McCLEAN: Madam Deputy President, I rise to move that Senator the Honourable Velma Newton be appointed to serve as Temporary Chairman of Committees.

The question was put to the Senate and agreed to.

On the motion of SENATOR MRS. I. SANDIFORD-GARNER the SENATE resolved itself into Committee on

the Bill, SENATOR THE HON. V.E. NEWTON as Temporary Chairman of Committees in the Chair.

COMMITTEE

SENATOR THE HON. V.E. NEWTON: This Honourable Senate is now in Committee.

Clause 1 was called and passed.

Clause 2 was called and passed.

Clause 3 was called.

SENATOR K.D. SYMMONDS: Madam Chair, I would like to propose a short five minute Suspension so that we might be able to look at the wording of the proposed amendment just to make sure that it can fit neatly into the legislation, on the assumption that it would meet with the Senate's approval.

MADAM CHAIRMAN: Senator Symmonds has suggested that the Senate suspends for five minutes to look at a proposed amendment.

On the motion of SENATOR the HON. MISS M.P.A. McCLEAN, Madam DEPUTY PRESIDENT resumed the Chair and reported accordingly.

SUSPENSION

SENATOR the HON. MISS M.P.A. McCLEAN: Mr. President, I beg to move that this Sitting be suspended until 4.30 p.m. today.

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

S/A3/16:19

Sequence 26

Wednesday, May 14, 2008

RESUMPTION

Madam DEPUTY PRESIDENT: The Sitting is now resumed. When the session was suspended for five minutes, we had just looked at Clauses 1 and 2, and were just about to Clause 3 stand part. It my understanding that Senator Chandler is going to propose an amendment to this amendment to the Queen Elizabeth Hospital Act. Senator Chandler:

16.30 p.m.

Sequence 27

Wednesday, May 14, 2008

Senate A3, sequence 28, 6.30 p.m.

Senator Dr. F.L. CHANDLER: I propose that the following clause be inserted after section 3.1.(2). Provided however that the Minister shall consult with relevant associations and bodies in the making of appointments under section 3.1(2)

Senator the Very Rev. H. E. CRICHLLOW: I beg to second that, Madam Chair.

Madam CHAIRMAN: The proposal is that a new section 3.1.(3) be inserted immediately after section 3.1.(2) and it has been seconded by Senator Crichlow.

Senator Miss M. P.O. McCLEAN: Madam Chair, before we move the question, I believe that there must be some debate on this matter. Since I am on my feet, I want to say that I certainly do not support the proposed amendment. I think in my previous presentation, I indicated that I am quite comfortable; that what it seeks to do will be achieved without making that amendment. I therefore would want to register my opposition to the proposed amendment.

Madam CHAIRMAN: Senator Symmonds.

Senator K. D. SYMMONDS: Madam Chair, in addressing this matter, I think it is necessary for the Chamber as a whole to contemplate not only the current state and climate of public affairs but to have an eye to the future. Prior to the suspension, I was in the process of making the point that it is the very nature of all legislation; that once it has passed the two Chambers of Parliament and has been proclaimed by the Governor-General, it sits on our Statue Books, indefinitely. This may be 50 years, when all of us here are gone and buried, assuming that we are, in fact, buried.

The reality is that we are not so much seeking to contest what is in the heart or the intention of the Government today. I take the Leader of Government Business at her word; that in the contemplation of those who will be invited to sit that there will be a discourse or dialogue with the relevant stakeholders; but that in and of itself does not speak to the concern.

The concern is a futuristic concern. It is the nature of the legislation that we are talking about. All legislation has to bind not only the current Government but, I respectfully submit, future Governments, until that legislation is repealed.

Therefore, for argument sake, 20 years from now, when the Democratic Labour Party relinquishes office then you may have another party coming into office.

Asides.

Senator K. D. SYMMONDS: I am being abundantly generous.

The Party will also be bound by the legislation; and thereafter; and thereafter; and so it continues until repealed.

What we need to do as legislators, is not only to appreciate and accept, which I do, the intention of the Leader of Government business, but I think we also have to be minded that the law must be certain. The law can only be certain, if it is our intention that the process includes consultation with stakeholders. Therefore, we cannot leave that to chance. It has to be reduced into the letter of the law because that is the only way future Ministers of Health, thirty, forty, fifty years down the road, will be bound by the intention of the legislature today.

This is my understanding of the governance procedure. I am willing to hear other Senators but I think that the issue is not so much the immediacy of that which is in the heart and the mind of the Leader of Government Business and the Cabinet but, what is more important, it is an issue of what will bind and govern the country on this matter down the road.

Madam Chair, to that extent, I think the legislation has to be clear and it has to be certain. To do so, one must have written into the body of the law, the amendment as moved by the distinguished Independent Senator.

I thank you, Madam Chair.

Madam CHAIRMAN: Senator Inniss.

Senator Mrs. P. INNIS: Thank you, Madam Chair.

I have taken note of the suggestion of the amendment to the amendment and I would have to say I appreciate that it does have some merit. I believe that in all due conscience, it is right for the Minister to look at this proposal for consideration. I do not see that there is a contention with that. In essence, we can pass the Bill and ask the Minister to look at it and consider it for its merit and then bring it back in whatever form of short amendment that is necessary.

I say so, Madam Chair, from early because you have to make allowances and considerations for legality. The Minister may want to consider this amendment to the amendment. He may want to have legal advice and direction. This is a very critical matter. In doing so, we do,

in no way minimise the consideration for the amendment but that it takes a correct course, in that it is considered by the Minister and then, such amendment. Therefore, from that position, I am not in favour of such an amendment at this time.

Thank you, Madam Chair.

Senator Rev. P. MILLINGTON: In my speech, I made it clear that the primary concern of this Government is to expedite quickly, without delay, the alleviation of discomfort in the Accident and Emergency Department, and any delay to the passing of this Bill would be a vote against the people. It is not a matter of politicising or semantics, and because I believe the Minister is keen to start to work, and to see that he keeps his promises to the people of Barbados, I am not in favour of amendment to the amendment and therefore I would have to say no.

I believe that the immediate passing of this Bill to facilitate the easing of the woes of the QEH, should be our primary concern and we do not want to get involved in delays. Therefore, I have to say that I do not support the amendment.

Madam CHAIRMAN: Senator Goddard.

Senate A3, sequence 28, 16:40:14

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SENATOR Sir JOHN STANLEY GODDARD: Madam Chairman, I am in no way questioning the keenness of the present Minister of Health or his enthusiasm to get the ball rolling as we say, but out of an abundance of caution, this amendment would not deal just with this Minister of Health, it would deal with future ministers of health. Therefore, I do not see how the delay that has been referred to could be substantial, and so I am in favour of the amendment to the amendment.

I thank you.

Senator the Hon. Miss M. P. O. McCLEAN: Madam Chairman, I rise again to emphasise the need to do what is in the best interest. I want to emphasise again that I heard the cautions, but there is another caution that I would want to also express. In our haste to amend the amendment, while I see legal persons or attorneys-at-law in our midst, I question whether we should rush to draft such an amendment here. In addition to that, there have been views expressed that no harm would be done to the process if the proposed amendment to the amendment is made. Therefore, I should perhaps call for a divide on this matter in order for us to proceed.

MADAM CHAIRMAN: The proposed amendment to Clause 3 reads as follows:

“Provided however that the Minister shall consult with the relevant associations and bodies in the making of appointments under Section 3 (2).”

The question that Clause 3 as amended stand part was put to the Senate. A division was called for. The Bell was rung. The Senate divided as follows:

NOES: Senator the Hon. Miss M. P. O. McClean; Senator the Hon. A. B. Walters; Senator the Hon. D. W. Boyce; Senator Mrs. V. I. Sandiford-Garner; Senator Miss P. I. Inniss; Senator Rev. P. A. V. Millington; Senator D. K. A. Griffith - 7

AYES: Senator K. D. Symmonds; Senator J. A. C. Hutson; Senator R. O. Marville; Senator Dr. F. L. Chandler; Senator the Very Reverend H. E. Crichlow; Senator Sir John Stanley Goddard - 6

Clause 3 was passed.

On the motion of Senator the Hon. Miss M. P. O. McClean, MADAM CHAIRMAN reported to Her Honour, the DEPUTY PRESIDENT the passing of one Bill in Committee and MADAM DEPUTY PRESIDENT resumed the Chair and reported accordingly.

On the separate motions of Senator the Hon. Miss M. P. O. McClean, the Bill was read a third time and passed and cited as the Queen Elizabeth Hospital (Amendment) Act, 2008.

Senate A3 Sequence 29

4.50 p.m.

Wednesday, May 14, 2008

SUSPENSION OF SITTING

SENATOR the Hon. Miss M. O. P. McCLEAN: Madam Deputy President, I beg to move that this Sitting be now suspended for 15 minutes, to be resumed at 5.10 p.m.

The question that the Sitting be suspended until 5.10 p.m. was put and resolved in the affirmative, without division and Madam Deputy President suspended the Sitting accordingly.

4.51 p.m.

Wednesday, May 14, 2008

RESUMPTION

MADAM DEPUTY PRESIDENT: This Session is resumed.

ORDER NO. 1 – RESOLUTION TO APPROVE THE GRANT OF A LEASE IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 5 OF THE CROWN LANDS (VESTING AND DISPOSAL) ACT, CAP 255 TO BARBADOS CONFERENCE SERVICES LIMITED OF A PARCEL OF CROWN LAND TOGETHER WITH THE BUILDING THEREON, KNOWN AS SHERBOURNE CONFERENCE CENTRE SITUATE AT TWO MILE HILL IN THE PARISH OF ST. MICHAEL.

MADAM DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Senator McClean.

SENATOR the HON. MISS M.P.A. McCLEAN: Madam Deputy President, I rise to move the passing of a Resolution to approve in accordance with Section 5 of the Crown Lands (Vesting and Disposal) Act, Cap 225, the vesting in the Barbados Tourism Investment Incorporated parcels of Crown land to Barbados Conference Services Limited of a parcel of crown land together with the building thereon, known as Sherbourne Conference Centre situate at Two Mile Hill in the parish of St. Michael.

Madam Deputy President, as you and members of this distinguished Chamber are aware, the facility known as Sherbourne Conference Centre has played a significant role in the life of Barbados as a conference facility, notwithstanding some of the initial objections to its establishment and around it and also, notwithstanding its ability in the last several years to show a profit. I believe that it is critical that Barbados continues to have at its disposal and by Barbados I mean the various commercial interests, the public agencies of the country and certainly as a tourist facility, persons interested in doing business with this country.

S/A3/17:20

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SENATOR HON. M.P.O. McCLEAN: ...persons interested in doing business with this country, that we have a facility that can stand alongside some of the best facilities in the region and, in fact, in the hemisphere.

Madam, only this weekend the people of Barbados saw the hosting of the Annual BIMEX Exhibition. I think for those who would have had the opportunity to participate in that Exhibition either as a visitor, or prospective customer of some of the business entities that

participated, we would have seen in that facility the opportunity to showcase some of the best Barbados has to offer.

It is against that background, it is necessary to ensure the existence of Sherbourne. In the process, however, of vesting this facility and the relative lands, there are a number of issues that will have to be addressed by the Government of Barbados, the Ministry of Tourism, and certainly the entity responsible for the management of the facility. This Government feels that the utilisation of that facility can be improved upon, thus expanding its usefulness. We believe that notwithstanding the several exhibitions that have been held there, local, regional and international conferences, there is scope for the expansion of activity.

Madam, we have in Barbados many churches, and some of them do use the facility; we have many schools and private citizens who are able to use that facility as a conference facility, wedding reception facility, et cetera. Of course, it is important to recognise that it is not only, perhaps, useful for conferences, but it should be seen as one opportunity to increase our cultural offerings to the citizens of this country and the region.

It is therefore anticipated that this facility will not only be considered a conference facility, and I am happy to note the renaming of that facility to the Lloyd Erskine Sandiford Conference and Cultural Centre, and that is, of course, a fitting tribute to the gentleman who conceptualised, and who was perhaps laughed at, in the early days, about this facility when it was proposed. It stands in Barbados as a beacon to the vision of that gentleman, but it also stands as a symbol of what a small country can do.

I am happy to say that as a former Director and, indeed, Chairperson of the Bridgetown Cruise Terminal, Barbados in the year of hurricane Ivan, 2004, was able to respond quickly to the Florida Caribbean Cruise Association, after the Cayman Islands was devastated by that hurricane, and put on, perhaps, one of the best cruise conferences. It was also that facility that was used to host the first conference of the FCCA, the Caribbean conference that it has on an annual basis, moving around the region. It was because of the existence of that facility, that we were able to do so.

Madam, it is expected, therefore, that part of the consequence of the continued vesting of these Crown lands will be at last the opportunity, after more than a decade, to complete, for want of a better description, the back end of Sherbourne Conference Centre. We note over the life of the previous administration, while it was immediately recognised for its value, indeed it houses the offices of the Ministry of Tourism, it was not seen fit to complete the

operation. We believe that there is scope to do so, and this will be done. That is certainly one of the plans of this administration, and I can commit to saying, that a critical part of those plans would be the addressing of efficiencies.

Madam, we are at a point in our world affairs, where the issue of energy and the rapidly rising prices of fuel of oil and the growing scarcity of certain commodities, given the demand for fuel and the exploration of bio fuels, ex cetera, the matter of energy conservation is uppermost on all of our minds. I believe that with the completion of Sherbourne Conference Centre, the to be renamed facility, this gives the Government and people of Barbados, certainly the people in construction, an opportunity to explore the use of solar energy.

I have been witnessing some very exciting work being undertaken in the use of solar and wind energy on a small scale. There are a number of Barbadian households who are using solar energy, or a combination of solar and wind energy to power their houses. It is at the point where there is much scope for research and development.

In Barbados for several years we have utilised solar energy for heating water, but there is a much more exciting, and complicated of course, technology of solar to general electricity. I believe that we can use the opportunity, as I said, to explore with Sherbourne, as it expands, the need to look at energy conservation, certainly in the completion of the building, but we also need to go back and do some serious energy audits.

Madam, as I said earlier, one of the concerns coming forward is that it seems unable to show a decent profit, if a profit at all, but that does not have to be the case, and it would require, as we continue to operate the facility, first of all, some kind of assessment of the challenges posed by the current structure in terms of energy utilisation, and where the results of an energy audit can show that we can reduce our cost of operation that would certainly be appropriate.

Madam, it is important, of course, that as we do so, some serious attention be paid to the ongoing maintenance, preventative and corrective, of course.

I want to perhaps speak to the whole issue of maintenance, because in discussing Sherbourne as a facility, not only lands, but lands and buildings, it is of concern that we maintain the quality of not only the outer structure, but the inner structure of that facility. It is also critical that these facilities be insured.

I recall a discussion with one of colleagues, on the other side, about the issue of insurance to ensure that should there be any tragedies, human or manmade, that we

do not suffer losses that cannot be recovered in full or in part, by insurance.

Madam, I think that in looking at this matter of Sherbourne, outside of speaking to those issues of improvement, and facilitating and enhancing our tourism product offerings, certainly a big part of tourism is its conference offerings, it is perhaps not necessary to overstate the obvious. Sherbourne is critical to our tourism product. It is critical to our commercial activities of various types; whether it be private individuals organising entertainment packages, whether it is churches organising conferences, retreats, et cetera; or whether it is Barbados selling itself as a conference destination.

Madam, of course, as I talk about Sherbourne as a conference destination, we also need to recognise that paralleling this must be the development of hotel accommodation, and we will get to speak to that in this Chamber. If we look at our Order Paper, we will very soon speak to some issues very much related to tourism.

17.30 p.m.

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Senate A3, sequence 33, 5.30 p.m.

Senator Miss M. P.O. McCLEAN: If we look at our Order Paper, we will soon speak to some issues very much related to tourism development.

I want to say that I fully support the proposal to vest these crown lands and the buildings thereon to the Barbados Conference Services Limited. I believe that the time is right for the Ministry of Tourism to sit with the Board of Barbados Conference Service Limited and to explore ways in which we can enhance, as I said before, the efficiency of operations; to explore the expansion of the scope of these operations, looking to see where there are additional niche markets to be tapped into, persons who locally, regionally, or internationally can make greater use of those facility. This will be done against the background of a revisiting of the utilisation of the space that currently exists and certainly the creation of the additional facilities on the south coast.

Asides.

Senator Miss M. P.O. McCLEAN: Therefore, I would want to propose that we support the Resolution to approve the grant of a lease under Section 5 of the Crown Lands Vesting and Disposal Act, Cap. 225 of Barbados in the Conference Services Limited, lands and buildings, as I said before, situated at Two Mile Hill.

I will have an opportunity again, Madam Deputy President, to maybe share a couple more ideas. But as I said before, I do not believe that we have to stand and be engaging in soliloquies to speak of matters that are obvious. As I said before, this is a facility that is critical to our social and tourism development in Barbados. The continued use and expansion of this facility are necessary and this vesting is a critical part.

I thank you, Madam.

Asides.

Madam DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Senator Symmonds.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I assure you that I intend to be very brief. I want to begin by thanking the Leader of Government Business for provoking my memory. I am sure that knowing the Leader of Government Business, she must have done so deliberately to make me to reflect on the excellent use that the conference centre has been put to and by extension, obviously, to reflect on the very clear demonstration of the way in which the Barbados Labour Party rescued the direction of the Conference Centre from what may have otherwise been a destiny shrouded in indecision.

Madam Deputy President, it is to another matter that I would want to lend my voice ever so briefly, and that is the fact that it has been named after a former Prime Minister. I have said in the other place and I say it here now that I think it touches on a matter which we as a country needs, as part of our developing maturity in public affairs; to define a protocol for the way in which this country treats to and relates to its former Prime Ministers.

Part of the problem, as has been well argued before, is that there is no present Prime Minister who believes that he will be a former Prime Minister.

Asides.

Senator K. D. SYMMONDS: This is a fact. It happens on all sides. We have had about five since Independence. I am sure it has not been raised for the first time here now. It certainly was not raised for the first time when I spoke to it before, but I do think that the country needs as part of its maturity to have a protocol in place, as to how we treat to former Prime Ministers. Whatever the political divide has been, whatever support or lack of support there has been, the fact of the matter is that a Prime Minister has been our principal, not only legislative officer, but a governmental figure, and in many cases carries a massive burden on behalf of the people and the country, Barbados.

I think that there are some basic courtesies which should be looked at automatically, for example, a car, a personal assistant. There are a number of things that you can look at but I do not want to throw them out here now. This is not the very course way in which I think the matter should be approached. I do believe that I should raise this matter for the attention of those who now govern, in the hope that there will be a break in that rich tradition or, perhaps, not so rich tradition of Government sitting in office, but not reflecting on what will be the fate of those who leave the country after that particular term of office has come to an end.

Madam Deputy President, this is the extent of my submission.

Asides.

Madam DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Senator Griffith.

Senator D. GRIFFITH: Madam Deputy President, I am pleased this evening to stand and offer my views on the Resolution before us to vest the lands, known as Sherbourne Conference Centre to the Barbados Conference Services Limited. In so doing, I too would like to acknowledge the intent to rename the facility after Sir Lloyd Erskine Sandiford, to be called, the Sir Lloyd Erskine Sandiford Conference and Cultural Centre. The cultural aspect will lend significantly to the presentation I intend to make this evening.

I believe that having had the vision to develop such a centre, despite faulty memories on the Opposition side, we can now thank the administration of Sir Lloyd Erskine Sandiford for having the vision to at least begin the process of developing a centre that will lend to the development of Barbados, not just for the immediate past but in the future.

Sir, we now need to consider the role that we can utilise it for, in terms of conference services, but as I said, I intend to focus on the cultural aspect. Barbados has such great cultural offerings and I believe that in the near future, we will see the development of our tiny island, as a significant force for driving culture, not just in Barbados but in the Caribbean region and, in fact, on the world scene. Madam Deputy President, to get to that stage, we must then look at the facilities we have to offer for developing cultural products.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we must acknowledge that there has been a significant need in the market in Barbados for a facility that can bridge the gap between very small theatres and those the size of the gymnasium. It is long overdue that we should have completed the Sherbourne Conference Centre, so that the people of Barbados could benefit from an addition to the pool of venues available for activities. We now can look forward to seeing more

development in theatrical arts. We can look forward to seeing dancing being promoted, and to the launch of the film in Barbados recently, having our own feature film developed.

I believe that these facilities can be used to further our tourism product and further our GDP. We need to look at unique and new ways of fostering development in Barbados. This facility must play an integral role. We must understand that there is no comparable facility in the eastern Caribbean, even today well over a decade after it being completed.

Therefore, we must look to understand what we have that is unique, which we can offer. How can we draw in on our Caribbean neighbours:

1. To encourage revenues flowing in for this venue.
2. To develop the products that we can continue to offer?

Senate A3, sequence 33, 17:40:14

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Senator D. K. A. GRIFFITH: As a young person, entertainment continues to be one of those areas that is of interest to me. Entertainment in Barbados has suffered from a lack of focus. For too long culture has been defined simply as a wuk up culture. I believe this Administration has a clear vision of culture. I believe great things would be coming in the future, such as taking steps like this to ensure that development could continue to happen and to ensure that the Barbados Conference Services Limited can develop the Sherbourne Conference Centre to reach its full potential and stop it from languishing, because it has been languishing for the last ten years.

The true potential of this facility has been hidden. We must remember we should not hide our lights under a bushel.

Madam Deputy President, we need to look at the cultural aspects specifically. I do believe it would continue to have a role to play in conference development and probably a very significant role to play in attracting major international conferences to Barbados. From the local level, having that capacity there, is important. Developing the theatre that should have been completed well before this time is critical so that we could now look at hosting major international theatrical performances that can be linked to our tourism product. Madam Deputy President, there is no reason why Barbados should not be a year round sought after venue. It is about time we move past just plain sun and sea and see that we have other potentials pull factors to draw people into this island such as offering an entertainment component that can be put on in summer,

where the climate is not a consideration for most tourists, but rather entertainment. Madam Deputy President, make no bones about it, when summer rolls around, we are competing with Europe, Oktober Fest in Germany and rock concerts in England. Therefore, if we want to have an holistic product for tourism, it is necessary to consider other sources or other areas for pulling people into this country.

Madam Deputy President, in order to do that, we must lay the groundwork by developing our capacity to host things like entertainment events and conferences.

Madam Deputy President, in short, my support is lent to the vesting of this property because it is critical and crucial to the overall development of a product that would be a part of the continued growth of our country. We can no longer just depend on the old models. We need to find new and innovative ways. We need to think about niche markets. The one thing that we can say about the Sherbourne Conference Centre is that it has filled so many niches that we did not originally conceptualised.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, when we had the signing of the Shiprider Agreement, I remember the past Administration touting how wonderful a facility it was, even though they had been the naysayers that had said it was not going to be anything but a white elephant. Madam Deputy President, that conference in and of itself proved the value of that facility.

Madam Deputy President, people have said that we should not have vested the people's money in something that had far more intrinsic value than monetary value. Madam Deputy President, one could never deny that Sherbourne Conference Centre has been transformed into a place that has a deep social linkage to the heart and the core of Barbadians.

Madam Deputy President, you would not have been able to see events like the Barbados Music Festival where we celebrated local artists, including Rihanna, whom we so happily congratulated a couple of weeks ago on attaining her first Grammy, the first of many hopefully. The ability to host such deeply culturally sensitive events on our own in a facility that is owned by the people of Barbados is something that we can all be proud of. It is something that ultimately when we speak of attaining development goals and all of the other lofty ideas and ideals that we have that is a core underpinning mechanism because we cannot say we want to reach these goals without looking for pathways to achieve them.

Madam Deputy President, we need to understand that development of the infrastructure to achieve these things is crucial. We cannot therefore have the Sherbourne Conference Centre tied up in a myriad of whatever

problems. We need to focus on what are the needs and what are the areas that we could develop, and invest in developing this centre so that we can all benefit, and most importantly, that the children and the future children of this country would have a place to develop true culturally sensitive materials.

I thank you, Madam Deputy President.

Senator the Hon. Miss M. P. O. McCLEAN: Madam Deputy President, I think that the two contributions we had both recognised the necessity and the importance of the Sherbourne Conference Centre and the proposed cultural facility.

I want to particularly commend the voice of the youth. That sounds kind of patronising, but it is not. I believe that the last Honourable Senator represents the voice of the youth and the future. In going forward, he has very well articulated the importance of the Sherbourne Conference Centre. He has used the term, and I quote his words, the deep social linkage that it has forged in this community. Madam Deputy President, with those words, I want to support strongly the proposal to vest these lands. I therefore take the opportunity to thank you for your kind attention and beg to move that the Resolution do now pass.

The question that the Resolution do now pass was put to the Senate and agreed to.

ADJOURNMENT

Senator the Hon. Miss M. P. O. McCLEAN: Madam Deputy President, this concludes Government Business for today, but before I move the adjournment I asked that Senator Marville be allowed to speak.

Senator R. O. MARVILLE: Madam Deputy President, I would be very brief. A few days ago a 7.9 earthquake hit the centre of China and has caused considerable loss of lives and suffering. At this moment, one of our colleagues is in China being hosted by the equivalent of our Senate. My wife and I were also the beneficiaries of that hospitality.

Madam Deputy President, I think that in the name of this Honourable Senate, we should pass a Resolution offering our condolences to the people of China. I have before me the Resolution which reads:

"IT IS HEREBY RESOLVED that the Honourable Senate of Barbados expresses its profound sadness and condolences to the Government and people of the People's Republic of China on the immense and tragic loss of life and the suffering occasioned by the earthquake in the Sichuan Province of the People's Republic of China."

SENATOR K. D. SYMMONDS: I beg to second that.

Senate A3 Sequence 34

5.50 p.m.

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Senator Sir JOHN STANLEY GODDARD: Madam Deputy President, I beg to second that.

The question was put to the Senate and agreed to.

SENATOR the Hon. Miss M. O. P. McCLEAN: Madam Deputy President, I ask that the expressions of sadness and condolences be conveyed through our Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

ADJOURNMENT

SENATOR the Hon. Miss M. O. P. McCLEAN: Madam Deputy President, I beg to move that this Honourable Senate do now adjourn until May 21, 2008, at 11:00 a.m.

The question that the Honourable Senate do now adjourn until May 21, 2008, at 11:00 a.m. was put to the Senate and agreed to and MADAM DEPUTY PRESIDENT adjourned the Senate accordingly.

5.51 p.m.

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NEWTON, Senator HON. Mrs. V.E.
SANDIFORD-GARNER, Mrs. SENATOR IRENE
SANDIFORD-GARNER, Senator Mrs. V. I.
SYMMONDS, Senator K.D.
WALTERS, Senator the Hon. A. B.

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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. Committee, Clause 3, Senator Dr. F. L. Chandler. Either side of the take-slips at about 4.30 p.m. the source carries Senator Chandler's opening words twice ('Madam, I proposed that the following clause...' and then 'I propose that the following clause be inserted...'). The fuller version is printed and the fragment (about 7 words) has been left out. Please confirm.

Q3. Committee, Clause 3, Senator Sir John Stanley Goddard. Either side of the take-slip 'Senate A3, sequence 28, 16:40:14' the source carries the same opening sentence of Senator Goddard twice. The fuller version is printed and the first copy (about 27 words) has been left out. Please confirm.

Q4. Committee, division on Clause 3. The source records the question as 'that Clause 3 as amended stand part', with Noes 7 and Ayes 6, and then 'Clause 3 was passed'. The vote appears to have been on Senator Chandler's proposed amendment, which was lost. Printed as in the source. Please confirm.

Q5. Suspension, about 4.20 p.m.. Senator Symmonds proposed a five-minute suspension, but the motion is to suspend 'until 4.30 p.m.', is addressed to 'Mr. President' and records that 'Mr. PRESIDENT suspended the Sitting', although the Deputy President was presiding; on resumption she refers to a suspension 'for five minutes'. Printed as in the source.

Q6. Take-slip, about 4.30 p.m.. One take-slip reads 'Senate A3, sequence 28, 6.30 p.m.', presumably 4.30 p.m., and Sequence 28 is used again for the 4.40 p.m. slip. Printed as in the source.

Q7. Heading, Order No. 1. The heading cites the 'CROWN LANDS (VESTING AND DISPOSAL) ACT, CAP 255', while Senator McClean cites Cap. 225 in her speech. Printed as in the source.

Q8. Questions to Ministers; Papers, item 2. The motion to approve Senator Elizabeth Thompson's appointment to the Management Commission of Parliament stands under the heading 'QUESTIONS TO MINISTERS'; the National Productivity Council report is

for 'April 1, 2006 to March 21, 2007'. Printed as in the source.

Q9. Speaker labels and forms of address. Senator McClean is labelled with the initials 'M. P. O.', 'M. O. P.' and 'M.P.A.' in different places, Senator Goddard once as 'Goddard', and Senator Benn as both 'H. L.' and 'H. LaV.'; Senator Newton addresses the Chair as 'Madam, Acting President' and Senator Symmonds once as 'Mr. Deputy Speaker'. Printed as in the source.

DEBATE SUMMARY

(Editorial summary — not part of the record.)

The Senate met on Wednesday, 14th May, 2008 at 11.00 a.m., with Madam Deputy President, Senator Miss K. F. Ifill, in the Chair; prayers were led by Rev. Father Errington Massiah. Apologies were received from Senators Sir Roy Trotman, Peter Gilkes, Derek Alleyne and Elizabeth Thompson. Senator the Hon. Miss M. P. O. McClean, Leader of the Senate, laid ten papers, among them the Representation of People (Expenses) (Amendment) (No. 2) Regulations 2008, the Annual Report of the Caribbean Broadcasting Corporation for 2006, the Barbados National HIV Policy and the National Strategic Plan for HIV Prevention and Control, 2008-2013. The Senate approved Senator Elizabeth Thompson's replacing Senator Symmonds on the Management Commission of Parliament, Standing Orders 22(1) and 45(2) were suspended, and the Queen Elizabeth Hospital (Amendment) Bill, 2008 and the Nurses Bill, 2008 were read a first time.

Senator McClean moved the second reading of the Queen Elizabeth Hospital (Amendment) Bill, 2008, which amends section 5 of the Queen Elizabeth Hospital Act, Cap. 54 so that the Minister of Health recommends 11 members of the Board instead of two, chosen for skills such as accounting, engineering, finance, human resource management and industrial relations rather than as representatives of interest groups. Senator K. D. Symmonds, the lone Opposition Senator present, said the speech left him in confusion about the Government's policy on governance, argued that accountability solely to the Minister was regrettable, and asked what guaranteed the hospital's teaching role; Senator McClean objected on a point of order to his references to the Minister.

After the luncheon suspension, Senator Miss P. I. Inniss, Senator the Hon. A. B. Walters, Senator Rev. P. A. V. Millington, Senator the Hon. H. L. Benn and Senator Mrs. V. I. Sandiford-Garner supported the Bill, Senator Millington stressing the problems in the Accident and

Emergency Department and Senator Sandiford-Garner noting that in 2006 the National Union of Public Workers had called on the Board to resign. Senator J. A. C. Hutson preferred a smaller Board, Senator Dr. F. L. Chandler said the hospital must be run as a business, and Senator the Very Rev. H. E. Crichlow supported it with reservations. Senator the Hon. Mrs. V. E. Newton supported the concept but proposed a proviso that the Minister consult the relevant associations and bodies in making appointments; Senator Sir John Stanley Goddard and Senator R. O. Marville also spoke.

Senator McClean replied that consultation would take place without such an amendment, and the Bill was read a second time, Senator Newton taking the Chair of the Committee as Temporary Chairman. On Clause 3 Senator Chandler, seconded by Senator Crichlow, moved Senator Newton's proviso; Senator Symmonds and Senator Goddard argued that the law must bind future Ministers, while Senators McClean, Inniss and Millington opposed it as unnecessary or a cause of delay. On a division the amendment was lost by 6 votes to 7, Clause 3 was passed,

and the Bill was read a third time and passed as the Queen Elizabeth Hospital (Amendment) Act, 2008.

Under Order No. 1 Senator McClean moved the Resolution to approve the lease of the Sherbourne Conference Centre at Two Mile Hill, St. Michael to Barbados Conference Services Limited, describing it as critical to the country's social and tourism development and mentioning the recent BIMEX exhibition. Senator Symmonds used the occasion of its renaming after Sir Lloyd Erskine Sandiford to urge a protocol for the treatment of former Prime Ministers, and Senator D. K. A. Griffith spoke on entertainment and culture. The Resolution was agreed to.

Before the adjournment, Senator Marville moved a Resolution, seconded by Senators Symmonds and Goddard and agreed to, expressing the Senate's sadness and condolences to the Government and people of the People's Republic of China on the earthquake in Sichuan Province, to be conveyed through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The Senate was adjourned until 21st May, 2008 at 11.00 a.m.