
THE SENATE DEBATES

(UNOFFICIAL REPORT)

PARLIAMENT 2008 – 2013

THE SENATE

Wednesday, May 21, 2008

The Senate met in the Senate Chamber, Parliament Buildings, on Wednesday, May 21, 2008, at 11.10 a.m.

PRESENT

His Honour SENATOR Dr. B. M. TAITT, M.A., B.A. (Hons.), M.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.A., B.Sc., LL.B. (Hons), M.A., M.B.A. (Minister of State in the Prime Minister's Office) (Leader of the Senate)
SENATOR the Hon. A. B. WALTERS, DPSA (Oxford), M.A. (Minister of State, Prime Minister's Office)

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

SENATOR P.W.B. GILKES

SENATOR D.K.A. GRIFFITH

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

SENATOR Mrs. V.I. SANDIFORD-GARDNER, CIM, M.B.A., Dip. Mng. (Parliamentary Secretary in the Ministry of Community Development and Culture)

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

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

SENATOR Miss H. E. THOMPSON, LL.B.

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

SENATOR Sir JOHN STANLEY GODDARD, K.A., B.Com., F.C.A. (Hons.), LL.D. (Hons.) (U.W.I.)
SENATOR the Very Rev. H. E. CRICHLAW, G.C.M., B.A. (Hons.) (Dunelm)

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

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

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

Prayers were led by Rev. Father Errington Massiah.

Mr. PRESIDENT: The Senate is in session.

ANNOUNCEMENTS BY HIS HONOUR THE PRESIDENT

Mr. PRESIDENT: Honourable Senators, I have received a letter from Senator J. A. C. Hutson, requesting permission from the Honourable Senate, to take leave of absence from this Honourable Senate during the period June 27, 2008 to July 27, 2008.

PUBLIC BUSINESS

ORDER NO. 1 – SECOND READING OF THE NURSES BILL, 2008

SENATOR the Hon. Miss M. P. O. McCLEAN: Mr. President, I rise to speak to the issue of the Nurses Bill and the proposed repealing of the Nurses and Midwives (Registration) Act, Cap. 372.

Mr. President, as you are aware, like any other profession, the nurses' profession is an important one which has to be regulated and which has to engage in practices which would ensure the integrity of the profession. It would also ensure there is provision for the continuous development of the profession in its broader sense, and of the individuals who comprise that profession.

11.20 a.m.

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SENATOR the Hon. Miss M.P.O. McCLEAN: Sir, it is in the context of the importance of maintaining high professional standards in this profession, as in any other profession, that this legislation is proposed. It speaks to several issues and it seeks to amend or revise previous legislation dating back to 1932, and with subsequent amendments and revisions in 1962 and 1973.

The existing legislation speaks to the matter of regulation and training of practising midwives and nurses. The proposal is to repeal the Nurses and Midwives Registration Act, Cap. 372 and, in doing so, replacing it with this new piece of legislation. It will, certainly, seek to enhance the oversight of the profession in a number of key areas; in the area of registration, in the area of regulation and in the area of discipline.

Mr. President, if we look at the situation in Barbados, as in any other country, nurses are one of the fundamental pillars of health care delivery in any society, and as I have said before, certainly in the case of Barbados. Of course, one may wonder, when we look at recent developments in the almost immediate past, if we go back to 2005, for example, the actions of the previous Administration would have led one to question whether or not we were treating that profession with as much care and attention as we should.

Mr. President, I might want to say something to clarify that point. Sir, as you would recall when we looked at changes made to the administration of the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, there were some decisions taken which required nurses to indicate whether they would have signed on with the incoming Board or, alternately, to stay within the Public Service.

Sir, without going into a lengthy discourse on the events which transpired, one of the concerns and consequences of that particular approach led to a number of nurses, critical to a profession where we are seeing, across the world, internationally, there are shortages of nurses, and we have a situation where a number of critical persons trained, experienced, some of them in highly specialised areas were basically sent on leave for some time, and that really has impacted on this profession.

I trust that when you look at the proposals of the current Administration and the actions and proposals of the current Minister of Health, that the dignity and importance to be attributed to this critical profession would be maintained.

Mr. President, it is important to support this Bill when we look at international development. Barbados, like the rest of the Caribbean and, indeed the world, is challenged to ensure that we have adequate numbers of nurses and, in order to do that, it is critical that we pay attention to those areas I mentioned before like registration.

Sir, if we go back to recent events internationally, we heard of challenges in the Philippines, one of the countries from which many countries source nurses. There were situations where out of desperation perhaps to exit that country and participate in the movement of nurses, there were some infelicities in their examination process.

Therefore, any action to register and regulate nurses is critical because, as you can see, Barbados is not immune to the challenges of persons leaving the profession and us, therefore, having to seek to replace some of those with persons trained outside of the Region and so it is critical that we have in place a structure which allows the profession to regulate itself, to register, to evaluate persons coming into the profession and, certainly, to maintain standards of competence and capability.

Mr. President, in addition to the business of regulation, a critical function to be played by the nurses' association is the establishment of a council and there has been a renaming of that. Sir, the proposal in the legislation to ensure that there is full-time support in the form of provision for the administration of the Council and, rather than rely on individuals to volunteer of their time, it is important that professionals stay in tune with their profession.

The reliance on retired nurses is excellent but you would have a secretariat, which is full-time and that would allow the Council of Nurses to ensure that all of the activities, regulation, registration, ongoing training and development take place.

A critical component of that is appointment of a formal registrar and that brings the administration of the profession and the support mechanisms in line with what is normal because it is critical that, at all times, there are the necessary resources put behind the maintenance of all the professional requirements of nurses.

Mr. President, I must also say that I support the proposal to include in the functions and advisory function where support would be given, and advice given to the Minister of Health. I indicated earlier that nurses are a critical component of the health care delivery in this country. It is necessary that, like any other profession, any of the specialities within the medical profession, for example that nurses are able to ensure that they are fit and proper.

Mr. President, if I may speak to the issue of registration of nurses, it is critical that a proper structure be put in place to undertake the appropriate due diligence to ensure that persons seeking registration are not only fit educationally, but are also in sound health. Sir, I want to take some time to speak to this issue. It is critical in any profession. In any recruitment and selection process that persons seeking employment be put under rigorous evaluation. Sir, rigorous evaluation speaks not only to the matter of certifying that the individual has the necessary tech skills, that they attended the appropriate educational institution, but that we also spend some time to make sure they are also not only educationally sound, but physically and mentally sound.

I would want to signal the intention of this Government to ensure, as we seek to recruit, retain and develop nurses, especially those who come to this country from other places, that they are physically fit to deliver their services. I would say no more on that specific issue.

Mr. President, the issue of registration also speaks to the question of the age of the person, as he or she enters the nursing profession and I am pleased to say that these proposals will address what might be seen as an anomaly almost, where an individual, in the case of persons seeking to join the nursing profession in Barbados, could begin studies at the age of 16. However, previously, on completion of those studies they would not have qualified to begin the practice of nursing because of the age constraints that were necessary.

Therefore, Sir, I believe that any attempt to ensure that students seeking to qualify themselves would be done in a manner which allows them quickly to move into practice without having to sit out a year or two because, clearly, that would lead, perhaps, to the loss of those persons in the profession.

S/A4/11:30

Sequence 3

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SENATOR the Hon. M.P.O. McCLEAN: Sir, in relation to the question of registration and training, it is important in the context of the world demand for nurses, that attention be paid to the process of training. I also want to indicate that it is certainly the intention of the current Minister of Health to look at this issue.

Sir, we had a situation, certainly, in the 1970s and I am fortunate to be old enough to remember this, where there was some curtailing of training of nurses under a previous administration of the current Opposition. You may ask what has that got to do with a situation in the year 2008? Sir, a situation where a significant number of persons who would have been interested in the profession would have been forced to consider other options, we had the ripple effect flowing through the situation.

A number of persons who would have been interested in the profession either at the level of entry, the level of additional advanced qualifications, personal and professional development specialisation, et cetera, would have found themselves shut out from training opportunities.

Sir, as we look to plan in the area of human resource development, decisions in the short-term will have continuing effects, in the same way that the decisions did in

the 1970s under a previous Barbados Labour Party Administration to curtail training in the public sector, and, certainly, as it impacted on nurses, a decision in 2005, to callously, and I use the word "callously", have persons go on indefinite leave has had and continues to have an effect on the demand for nurses.

Sir, can you imagine at that time we had a situation where, at least, 20 per cent of the nurses at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital would have indicated that they were uncomfortable with signing on to a Board, and the only option they had to exercise was an option to go home on indefinite leave.

Sir, to me that was madness. It was madness on two counts. Sir, one, you are talking about losing skilled persons in the immediate term when that decision was taken. Sir, a number of skilled persons would have gone home from work at that time and sat down while, at the same time, you had a scramble to replace those persons with individuals who were located in other areas of our health care system. For example, my recollection at the time was a signal by a previous Minister of Health to look to the local polyclinics to replace nurses. That made absolutely no sense. In addition to that, you would have persons sitting at home who would have been replaced by persons from thousands of miles away.

Sir, in the context of regulation and registration, one would ask, why put yourself through the challenge of recruiting, verifying qualification suitability and so on, and the obvious time lags that would have occurred, why would we have done something so crazy?

Sir, I am happy to say, I believe that all efforts will be made to reincorporate all those persons who might have found themselves disadvantaged. Unfortunately, in the process several persons would have left the country, but I am sure we can seek to bring those persons back into the system, so to speak.

Sir, I believe that the proposal in its effort to regulate the profession, sees the necessity to move beyond the narrow category of nurses, to speak also to the auxiliary type positions, Nursing Auxiliaries, et cetera. It is recognised that persons within the profession can begin at levels below, and indeed, persons who perform the task of Nursing Auxiliaries are critical to the delivery of nursing care.

I think that with any professional body it is important to incorporate persons who would have an impact, and to create an opportunity where persons can see scope, not only in acquiring certain skills, but also through a process of development and training, which would fall under the Nursing Council, for example, that there is scope for them to move up in the profession to take full advantage of all that is required in that respect.

Sir, the Regulation of the profession speaks to the issue of professional fees, et cetera. Those things are set out clearly in the Bill. It is necessary that people, as they function or as a profession, see the need to become a critical part of that process. The payment of a fee is a small matter in relation to all the benefits they can anticipate receiving in that process.

Sir, I think it is critical that we recognise as we support this effort, we do so in a situation where all the members of the nursing fraternity can see through this legislation an enhancement of the various opportunities which will accrue to them, while building themselves individually within the broader framework of a profession.

I am of the firm belief that there is very little to oppose in terms of this legislation. Sir, as you would probably discover, as I stand to introduce these matters to this Honourable Chamber, I do not believe that I should spend an inordinate amount of time restating the obvious. I believe, clearly, that in supporting this piece of legislation and the changes that it proposes, we are, as a body, supporting the improvement of the circumstances under which a person can enter the profession of nursing, a person can be made to feel a member of an important institution and an important profession, and there is scope for them to function in a way which allows them to play their part in the delivery of health care in Barbados.

Sir, to reiterate, it is necessary in the context of all that has been developing globally in respect of nurses, that we put in place and support mechanisms which will allow us not only to ensure that locals and persons from the Region are adequately trained and prepared to deliver health care and nursing care to the public of this country, the Region and indeed the world, but that we do so in the context in which we are able, also, to apply the very standards that we apply to our locals to anybody seeking to participate in this profession.

I believe that in my opening comments I have set the tone to approve this piece of legislation, recognising that it will go a long way to enhance the profession, and ultimately translate into providing a body of persons capable of feeling good about themselves, as nurses, capable of making a significant contribution to health care delivery in Barbados, and ultimately to making this society a better one.

I thank you, Sir.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Senator Thompson.

SENATOR Miss H.E. THOMPSON: Mr. President, the Members of the Opposition are going to support this Bill. In fact, it is a piece of legislation which passed the Barbados Labour Party Cabinet in November 2007, so there is absolutely no reason why we would not support what originated with us.

Sir, I agree with the Honourable Senator McClean that nurses are extremely important to the health care delivery of service in Barbados, and of extreme importance as a professional body. That is, in fact, why we mentioned them in the Barbados Labour Party's Manifesto in January 2008.

11.40 a.m.

Sequence 4

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Senate A4, sequence 05, 11.40 a.m.

SENATOR Miss H. E. THOMPSON: I am disappointed that I see no mention of nurses at all in the context of their importance in the Democratic Labour Party Manifesto, but that is a fact, and a par for the course and we can go on. I note the speaker before me went back as far as the 1970s and if she wants to speak in those terms, I can remind her of some more recent omissions that happened between 1986 and 1994, and we can all go there.

Sir, we do want to support this Bill and to give support to the profession of nurses and nursing in Barbados. In fact, over the course of the last 14 years, there have been numbers of initiatives aimed at giving support to the nursing profession.

I want to speak to the issue in a broad context, as well as in the context of the legislation. We are witnessing the treatment of nurses and the way in which the nursing profession is approached, not just here in Barbados, but internationally.

This is an international phenomenon in the sense that at this time several countries are not training enough nurses for their own health care systems, and are deliberately recruiting nurses from developing countries. I am speaking specifically of developed countries like the United States of America and the United Kingdom. This is a phenomenon that started 15 to 20 years ago and has escalated in amazing proportions, because they have found it more economical to poach, rather than to do their own training.

Mr. President, many developing countries train nurses, specifically understanding that they are going to lose a percentage of their trained nurses to the U.K., the United States of America and to other developed countries, but the U.K. and the United States of America, in particular. It has caused so much difficulty in relation to the nursing systems.

In countries where there are socio-economic difficulties, nurses may feel that it is far more lucrative to leave and work in the United States of America or the United Kingdom because the whole socioeconomic conditions would be so much better. Then, there is a high degree of loss to those health care systems.

Throughout the Caribbean, in particular, we have been severely impacted by that phenomenon in relation to Guyana, Jamaica, Trinidad and other Caribbean countries. It has not been a significant source of drainage in Barbados, but it has been a significant source of hemorrhaging in the rest of the Caribbean.

It has reached such bad levels for Commonwealth Health Care Ministers, that it has become an agenda item to discuss this issue of how the Commonwealth is to manage nursing training, manage the movement of nurses within the system, and the deliberate poaching of nurses from developing countries which have limited resources for training by developed countries.

The problem that it presents in a very practical way, is that in those countries which are most severely impacted, at the end of a training period they are not in a position to fill their vacant posts or to determine what numbers they can retain in their own systems.

Sir, Barbados has been fortunate enough not to be severely impacted by it, but it is a condition which is affecting the rest of the Caribbean. I raise it in the context of my concerns that I have heard from the Other Place the Minister suggested that the nurses for Barbados will come first from the Caribbean.

In fact, there had been an agreement among Caribbean Ministers that we would not poach among ourselves, or that we would not seek to recruit - I am not going to use the word "poach" because it would be deemed pejorative - amongst ourselves, because we understood the challenges that sister-countries were facing, in the context of their training and lack of resources because of the strong pull of the trained nurses by the Metropolitan countries.

Mr. President, it is against that background and understanding, and the movements across the Caribbean that we need first to frame how we approach nursing training, and what we are going to do in respect of nursing recruitment. I only sound a caution that when we seek to

recruit nurses from the Caribbean, many of them are going to be very pleased to come, because the conditions here would be significantly better than in other Caribbean countries.

When you compare the hospitals and the general quality of life and conditions, people will be willing to come, but we should be reluctant or think carefully about the impact that our using Caribbean nurses will have on the health care systems of other Caribbean countries. I say that for what it is worth, being aware of the international challenge and the human resource impact and planning difficulties, which are, in fact, resulting from this issue.

Sir, I want to pause to deal with many issues in relation to when it was decided that the Hospital would go to a Board. I have heard some arguments in the Other Place why there was a decision to go to a Board. I was the Minister of Health at the time that the decision was made and I did the initial discussions and negotiations with the unions and the stakeholders. In fact, there was extensive discussion, not only with the unions, but with all of the representative agencies and the various stakeholders in the health care system.

Part of the difficulty we had at the time, and I know that Your Honour would be acutely familiar with the challenges, is that it became very difficult, as the Queen Elizabeth Hospital became a larger, more complex institution. It is the largest single institution in Barbados. Therefore, as it became more complex with all kinds of specialities and sub-specialities, it became more difficult to try to administer the Queen Elizabeth Hospital from the central Ministry, which was the organisation at the time.

Mr. President, if a doctor needed a piece of critical equipment or medication, there was no central authority within the Hospital itself, which allowed him or her to get it with any rapidity. For example:

1. The order went to the head of department. 2. Then, to the person in charge of the medical profession within the context of the Hospital. (I forget the name of the post). 3. Then, to a central purchasing department. (It was not called that but that was the function it carried out within the Hospital). 4. Then, the Registry of the Hospital. 5. Then, Registry of the Ministry. 6. Then, to the Administrative Officer dealing with it, who would have been responsible for the Department. 7. Then, to the Senior Administrative Officer. 8. Then, to the Deputy Permanent Secretary or to the Permanent Secretary from the Ministry of Health. 9. Then, to the Central Purchasing Department or the Ministry of Finance. (It depended on what the item was, whether there was money in the

Budget; whether you needed to go for a Supplementary and so on”.

Mr. President, it became impossible, given the nature of that bureaucracy and that approach, to manage or administer a hospital which is, by nature and of necessity, a rapid response institution.

Mr. President, therefore, it was felt that the Board should be put in place. In fact, there is a Queen Elizabeth Hospital Act which goes back to 1961, so that the contemplation of a Board was not in itself new. It was a method that had been thought of before.

Senate A4, sequence 05, 11:50:15

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SENATOR Miss H. E. THOMPSON: At that time, it was felt that if we could allow the Hospital to use virement, to have its own autonomous ordering system, for instance, if an item goes into the budget for, let us say, an autoclave and the autoclave is not available, or cannot be ready for six months, but you have need of another piece of equipment, which cost exactly the same amount of money, you cannot use the money that is allocated for the autoclave for anything else because it is identified by a specific Head.

Therefore, the reason for the establishment of the Board was to give the Queen Elizabeth Hospital a more autonomous, flexible operational environment to assist with the delivery of health care, and to have a rapid response system.

At the time the Board came on stream, somebody else was the Minister. The Board was constituted and various representative interests sat on the Board, including these nurses who I do not believe, as of recent amendments by this Administration, are allowed to sit on the Board anymore.

Mr. President, I would have thought that if the nurses were so important, then it would have been critical to have their voices heard in the process of the management of this institution rather than to silence them and remove them from the Board.

I wonder, therefore, what mechanisms, given the importance that the Honourable Senator McClean now attaches to nurses, this Administration is giving them to be heard for measures for their own development and their professional growth, because this legislation was not intended to address that since it was developed at a time when the nurses had a voice on the Board, especially in the context of silence on the matter within the Democratic Labour Party's Manifesto.

Mr. President, I did not interrupt Senator McClean knowing that I was to speak immediately after her, but when the Board came on stream, the first option given to the nurses was to go either with the Board, or into the General Nursing Service. I see Honourable Senators who would have been familiar with the negotiations and discussions process agreeing. That is the truth. I could have interrupted her on a point of order, but because I was speaking so soon after, I determined that I would not say anything. We have to be very careful about what we repeat and what we put out there. Let us try to be accurate. The first option given was to go with the Board or into the General Nursing Service.

Mr. President, there are not many people in the end who opted to go home altogether. Several people took the option of going into the General Nursing Service. The difficulty came when persons believed that they should first have been paid out in their entirety before being rehired by the Board.

Persons opted to go home expecting that they would have been fully paid out. It was not an act of malice or ill-will by the Government, or a lack of vision or a lack of concern for the welfare of nursing as a profession. They were given a clear option to supplement and augment the general health care system by exercising their right to go into the Service. Several of them felt that they needed to be paid out first and the only way they could be paid out was if they went home, so they went home waiting for this big pay out.

When the system was explained, several of them left home and then went into the General Nursing Service, but a few determined that they would continue to stay at home. We did not give them an option of the Board or home. They were given the option of working within the general nursing system.

Several of them exercised the option to go to the Board. Others determined that they were going into the general nursing system, the polyclinics and other health care institutions, the geriatric services and so on. Others decided to go home. I want to make the point that that was a minority.

Mr. President, I hope I have clarified what was a piece of misrepresentation of the policy approach that was used by the last Administration in respect of this matter.

Mr. President, in 1999, one of the very last things I did when I was Minister of Health was to develop a strategic nursing plan for the health care profession. A number of nurses were asked to come and contribute and to discuss. They were people selected out of the leadership. People volunteered to lead various processes and a strategic nursing plan was developed.

Much would have changed within the health care system since then, so I believe that any such plan would have to be revisited to determine what parts of it remain relevant, if any, given the passage of time, what parts of it need updating, or what new direction we are going to give to the nursing profession, because I did not hear any of that articulated just now.

Mr. President, there are a number of issues which I would want to raise. I have already raised the issues of training, poaching and human resource planning. There are other issues I would want to raise. I believe that the issue of community nursing needs to be revisited from the way it is presently practised. Community nurses are generally Senior Health Sisters who work in the polyclinic system. This is a promotion grade. It was felt that senior people needed to be put into the community.

I came after a while to the view that it is our younger nurses who need to go into the community. Many of them are bright and creative. They have a lot more energy than the women in their mid 1950s tend to have, I do not say this disparagingly. I found that the younger nurses were more keen on the community type interventions, and the senior nurses were more interested in a lot of administrative matters, and, matters relating to the direction of the profession, and the direction of institutions. They were not as keen to work at the level of the community in the way that you need to have a proactive, active and aggressive community intervention programme.

Community nursing is the first line of defence in stopping a lot of people from ending up in health care institutions, at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital or at the polyclinics, due to lack of proper care in their homes where families are caring for them, because you are able, at the community level, to see them and make the intervention at that level and, therefore, stop in relation to chronic diseases, a lot of problems before they spiral out of control, and assist with the regulation of the taking of medication and so on, and address a lot of the problems that you see at the community level.

The idea was to have the nurses working more closely with the Public Health Inspectors. I believe that rather than have the community care administered by the most senior people in the profession, that we really need to use some of the younger nurses to do the running and the community intervention that needs to take place.

There has been talk for some time about the introduction of specialist nurses and nurse practitioners into the health care system of Barbados. This is something that has not been pursued in any significant way, despite ongoing dialogue over many years. Therefore, I would want to encourage that we do need to give serious consideration to this.

There are a number of specialities which are given to nurses as opposed to doctors within the system, which are very effectively done by these highly trained and highly skilled nurses. Therefore, we should consider using them in relation to some of the specialist skills where they would provide a level of service which is higher than that normally given by nurses and, in some respects, analogous to what medical doctors would give because the levels of the specialities are so high.

Senate A4 Sequence 6

12:00 noon

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SENATOR Miss H. E. THOMPSON: Mr. President, because our own system has become very sophisticated in terms of the range of medical skills, interventions, and departments of specialties that we have introduced, I believe that we need to look more at using nurses into that service.

Mr. President, the role of the nurse as manager is another issue that has been discussed over time. Sir, I am not speaking in an adversarial or political way. I am simply looking at some of the issues that have been discussed over time, and saying, perhaps, now a new administration might want to consider these things.

Mr. President, our nurses have not been sufficiently empowered as managers in the health care system, and very often a lot of decisions that are made outside of Barbados, by both senior nurses and nurses, have to be made sometimes by the most junior doctors in Barbados, who have far less experience than those senior nurses, who have been working on wards for a long time.

Mr. President, I believe that I could share with this Honourable Chamber a story of which, perhaps, you might be aware, where Sir George Alleyne, a Director of PAHO, speaks of his own experience. Sir, I am sharing with this Honourable Chamber the recognition of the value of senior nursing practitioners and the role they could play, if allowed, in the management of both patients and of the system.

Sir George gave a story of being a junior doctor and seeing a sick woman being diagnosed by a junior doctor. That doctor wrote a prescription for that lady and sought to let her go home. Sir, very gently, the nurse said to the junior doctor: A Doctor, why don't you let her stay there for a few minutes more?@ The doctor could not figure out why, but decided that he would accede to the request of the senior nurse. He went off and did other things. The second time he tried to discharge that lady, the nurse asked him to allow her to lie for a few minutes more.

Sir, it went on like that for a few hours, until it turned out that the manifestation of what was actually wrong with the lady came to the fore. The lady, though initially was not showing all of the symptoms, was presented with a crisis and, of course, Sir George would have shared with us the experience of that crisis. Sir, that junior doctor did not have the experience to recognise it, but that nurse did, and not wanting to fight with her doctor, encouraged him gently to let the lady lie for a few minutes, knowing exactly what was going to happen.

Sir, that was the voice and approach of experience. Therefore, an experienced nurse can, in fact, guide many junior doctors, who would have seen certain conditions only in books or during their internship. Sir, often the nurses are able to be in a position to manage wards, to manage conditions and to manage aspects of health care administration.

Mr. President, I am sure that the administration, at some point, will re-look the profession and determine how these management roles could be played by persons in the profession who have been crying out for greater recognition.

Mr. President, for some time we have been concerned about the issue of the number of nurses in our health care system. We have a problem in Barbados, and Senator McClean went back to about 30 years ago and suggested that a lack of training or closing down the numbers at that time resulted in the problems later on. Mr. President, if that, in fact, were true, the problems were compounded by a decision taken between 1986 and 1994, that nursing aides should be removed from the Queen Elizabeth Hospital and from the system at that time. Sir, that placed even greater stress on the Queen Elizabeth Hospital and on the health care system.

Mr. President, I want to strongly support a system of health aides, nursing aides, or whatever they would be called. Sir, let me explain. For reasons I do not know - and I think I might have already drawn this to the attention of this Senate - the failure rate for nurses doing the nurses' examination tends to be as high as 60 per cent. Therefore, that presents us with a problem because, when planning at the beginning of the financial year that you may have a certain number of entrants that could be deployed across the geriatric, polyclinic or Queen Elizabeth Hospital systems, you are not getting the numbers.

Mr. President, some investigation would have to be done as to why that is happening. It must look at the problems at the level of training. What is the issue that causes them to stumble in the examination? What are the common trends; if it is that they are working part of the time and do not have the time to study; if it is that the technical aspects or the challenge is remembering technical

terms, because the examination is oriented in that way; if the difficulty is that there are actual nursing skills that they would fail in that department. Sir, I do not know where the problem lies. All I am saying is that for some time we have been recording a failing rate as high as 60 per cent in the training of nurses. Sir, if we are to move forward and have acceptable numbers, that statistic has to change. It has to improve significantly.

Mr. President, I wish to say that the failed rate of 60 per cent has changed marginally, but not significantly. When I was there, I tried to do a number of interventions to ascertain where the difficulties were and what could have been done to address those difficulties. We had some improvement, though not significant enough. We still have a major challenge we need to address. Therefore, in planning for the health care system and for nurses, that is something which would need to be considered and reviewed.

Mr. President, that explains why we then opted to recruit outside of the Region, given our commitment to regional Governments not to poach nurses from their system, because they, themselves, were under stress. That is why the recruitment was outside of the Caribbean and, in some instances, outside the Commonwealth.

Sir, there was a reason for it, whether or not you want to agree with it, whether or not you want to adopt a different approach. It was grounded in a logic that is unassailable. Whether or not you want to do something else would be another issue.

Mr. President, given the challenge that we were having with nurses, I introduced into the system a professional called a health aide. The health aide was intended to carry some of the functions now being carried by nurses. Sir, for example, if a patient needed an examination, because that patient complained about being in pain and that first-level assessment needed to be done so that the specialist or consultant could be called, it had to be done by a qualified nurse. Sir, if the ward is understaffed, and that nurse is busy running around, carrying a bed pan to patient AA@, giving patient AC@ a tablet, taking the temperature from patient AD@, the most critical interventions are delayed or missed because the ward would be understaffed.

12.10 p.m.

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SENATOR Miss H.E. THOMPSON: It is not understaffed because there are people out there who could be working and you do not have them working. It is understaffed because, in your system, you have a challenge with your numbers and forgetting the numbers trained to

work in the Hospital. Hence, health aides were introduced to take some of the stress off the qualified nurses to perform some of the non-critical functions being carried out by fully trained nurses which, in fact, could be carried out by health aides.

Therefore, they were trained to do a number of interventions and a lot of support services and to give support skills into the profession rather than having the senior nurses used for services, especially in the context where there is a severe shortage of numbers, which were not life threatening and which were not critical at the time.

Sir, I would want to suggest that if we continue to have difficulty with our numbers, rather than recruiting even from overseas, that we really should look at producing a whole slew of health aides to perform a range of services across the system, and let the nurses then be trained for the specialist interventions and for the critical care interventions, but you would have your nursing aides in the system performing those functions.

Mr. President, that is a suggestion I am making. Again, nobody has to take it on but it seems to me, that in the context where you have difficulty of numbers, where you are having a high failure rate, where you have a lot of young people leaving school certificated, that you may want to consider some of these.

Mr. President, my experience also was, in relation to the challenge with numbers that, for whatever reason, and people might want to make several deductions, have arguments about it and have discussions about it, nursing is not the attractive profession that it was 30 years or 40 years ago. That is the reality. When our social structure changed and certain jobs became available, it was a big thing for a young black woman to get a job in the bank, or to be called a sister, or a nurse, or even to go into certain levels of the teaching profession, or for a man in the community to become a policeman.

Sir, a policeman used to be a person who was shown a tremendous amount of respect but, as our society has changed, a lot of these professions are not regarded in the same way or do not have the same degree of appeal. In fact, if you go into schools now and ask a lot of young people what they want to do, you will hear very few young women or young men say that they want to be a nurse. A lot of them are now interested in forensic science, since you have a number of television programmes on forensic science and people have interest in things to do with technology and culture but the profession of nursing is not attracting the large numbers it did 30 years ago.

It does not have the same appeal as a profession. However, I believe that if we go to some of the specialist practitioners that are available in nursing; if we use the

technology and pay people for the services they are providing and for the skills they have, then you may attract larger numbers, but I do not think, even with mass advertising, even if we get the numbers up that we will again have the same number of persons wanting to come into the nursing profession that we had 30 years or so ago.

Mr. President, as I have indicated, others may have views about why this is so, but society changes and different professions have appeal at different times, and so on. I do not believe, for instance, that there are the number of people, if they do Law now, who are interested in practising at the Bar as private practitioners. People are interested in going on and using other skills, getting double Masters in various other things, and using the Law with them, but are not interested in practising at the Bar in the same way that a lawyer had great appeal, even 15 years or 20 years ago, certainly when I was admitted 20 years ago.

Mr. President, if we are going to supplement the number of nurses that we have, I think one of the challenges with which we are faced, apart from the one I mentioned earlier of the number of failures that we see in the system, there is the difficulty of space. Physical space at the Barbados Community College is limited. What we have to do now is to find some creative ways of being able to train larger numbers.

Mr. President, I would want to suggest that since Barbados has one of the highest technology usage in the world that we should consider Internet training, which is now becoming the fastest growing component of education worldwide. We should consider using the technology to train those numbers who want to come into nursing but cannot get access to the Barbados Community College because of lack of numbers

The practical can be done within the health care institution. That would not be a difficulty but that portion of the academic training can be done by offering online classes. You can offer them in a classroom setting in the evenings, or you can offer them on weekends.

In fact, health care delivery is now using technology so much that some hospitals are developing and earning significant revenues from offering health care online, doing diagnoses and so on, all online and, therefore, we should consider using the technology to boost the training and increase the numbers who want to come into the profession and who cannot now gain access to the Barbados Community College because the more people you train, the more people you are likely to get passing at the end of the course.

If you know that a 60 per cent fail rate at Barbados Community College but you open the training to larger numbers of individuals at the level of a technological

delivery format, then you are training more people, some of whom are likely to pass and you can enhance the numbers that you have in your system.

Mr. President, finally, there is one last point I would wish to make. I have tried to respond to the political comments made, but I have also tried to look at some of the issues in the context of the health care system, and in the context of what is happening globally. I would hope that very soon we can see some policy framework for the development of the nursing profession in Barbados and how, in fact, we are going to allow them a career development path and a career growth path with the context of what they do now.

This raises for me two issues. One is that there has been a debate in Barbados and a certain approach at the level of the Ministry of the Civil Service in relation to how skilled people and people with technical skills are regarded. We have found that the person who is a chief technical officer with high specialist skills, whether in economics, accounting, aviation, marine biology, often to get a promotion, to get a salary increase, that individual has to move into the administrative stream when, in fact, he or she really wants to continue in the technical stream because we have not valued technocrats in the same way we have valued administrations, certainly not by reflection in pay packets.

S/A4/12:20

Sequence 8

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SENATOR Miss H.E. THOMPSON: Therefore, if we are to develop a specialist stream and management stream within the nursing system, which I strongly support, then we cannot say that these peoples are just nurses, so you pay them at the level of a nurse. You have to pay them for these very strong management skills which they are going to be bringing to the system, and to the health care delivery in Barbados.

I want to advocate not only that we develop a specialist stream, but the appropriate type of remuneration is developed. Sir, a nurse with 10 or 20 years' experience and then specialist training in one of these very technical areas may well be worth far more than a junior doctor, when in fact the more senior nurse's salary is only half that of the junior doctor.

Sir, I am suggesting, therefore, that we have to go back to the Ministry of the Civil Service and develop a mode of treating technical specialists that allow them to be properly remunerated for their skill, technical knowledge

and their ability without their having to go into the administration stream.

Sir, there are issues that I could raise about the whole management of the nursing profession and the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, but I do not propose to do that today. I believe that we will have the opportunity for other debates to speak in more detail on those issues.

Sir, I will close with a final point. There are organisations in Barbados offering training for nurses. Retired nurses have very often offered sessional nursing across the nursing system. That is not to be discouraged. It is to be encouraged, because they bring a wealth of knowledge and experience with them, and really help to give guidance to the junior nurses, as well as augment the shortage of numbers which you have.

Sir, there are also a number of people offering training in various aspects of nursing and various kinds of nursing courses in the private sector. At the moment those persons are not regulated. No standard has been developed to apply to these training programmes for persons who graduate. Some of them do have skills and can, in fact, go on to the Government training and enter the system, because of the variation of standards by these private institutions, that has the potential to affect the quality of health care given, the level of skill, level of knowledge, the kind of pass mark these various organisations use, and so on, are all critical issues. There has been some agitation over time that persons who train in these institutions should be recognised fully as nurses.

Sir, I am not averse to training in the private section. I am calling today for the establishment of a standards regime that would allow us to know that anyone who qualifies as a nursing aide in Barbados is trained to a particular standard to be considered, or a full nurse, you are trained to another standard, but to reach the level of a senior sister, you must not only show a certain amount of expertise and skill for a number of years, but you also have a level of training which goes with that position.

Sir, I am asking for standardisation across the system that will allow us to have confidence in all of the persons trained, whether they are trained in the public sector or the private sector.

Sir, I close by saying again that this Bill was brought by a former Honourable Member from the Other Place. It was supported by the Cabinet of the Barbados Labour Party and we will not oppose it at this time. It passed by us. It has received our approval and I will continue to support it now.

Sir, I am deeply concerned about the initial message that nurses were only given an option of the Board or go home. Nurses were, in fact, given an option of working

with the Board or go into the General Nursing Service, and several accepted that option of the General Nursing Service. Sir, only a minority determined that they would go home and stay home. There were, in fact, long discussions with the union and the stakeholders as to the options.

Sir, in fact, it would have been inane to give them only the options of the Board or home when, in fact, you did need to have nurses across your system. I strongly support the Bill. The Barbados Labour Party dealt with the issue of nurses in our Manifesto, and will continue to give strong support to nurses and to the development of the profession. We can speak at length about the measures that were put in place to improve the condition of nurses over time, including physical facilities, increases in salaries, improvement in allowances, issues in relation to uniforms and so on.

All of that was done, including the development of the Strategic Plan for the nursing profession, asking nurses to contribute to the process and to give direction and guidance. I believe that there was some kind of stipend given to the Nurses' Association as well, which was increased.

Sir, the former Administration took initiatives which advanced the cause of nurses. I would be happy to support this Administration in advancing those initiatives things further. Sir, you will find that in some matters there will be a divide, and in others you have to see policy and Government as a continuum, and each Administration takes the profession, or the issue to a certain level, then it is up to an incoming administration to do new and other things. I look forward to hearing what the new policy will be, since we did not hear any today.

I am much obliged to you, Sir.

Mr. PRESIDENT: You are supposed to get up if you want to speak.

Asides.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Let us understand something. The Rules of the House are very clear. A person who wishes to speak must stand in his or her place and at that time only starts to speak when the Presiding Officer identifies and says the name of that Senator. Those are the Rules. I will not have anyone telling me how to run this Senate. Constantly, I am being told what to do.

Asides.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Senator Griffith.

SENATOR D.K.A. GRIFFITH: Thank you, Mr. President, for your indulgence. Sir, I will very briefly like

to address the Bill before us today and, hopefully, bring some clarity to the issues that are before us.

Sir, the preceding speaker raised a number of points which I would like to touch before I actually get into the substance of my presentation. They go to the core of what we are trying to do today. This is the second week that we have attempted to adjust systems of management to implement a framework for the Ministry of Health and the responsibilities it has for its development to go forward. Therefore, I do agree that there should be no opposition to this Bill, which looks to improve the quality of regulation of nursing in Barbados. This is about as far as my agreement goes with the Opposition.

12.30 p.m.

Sequence 9

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Senate A4, sequence 10, 12.30 p.m.

SENATOR D.K.A. GRIFFITH: We have heard that the Government had all these plans before about nursing, under a previous administration, yet we still recognise that there has been a significant problem. Therefore, logic dictates that steps must be taken pro-actively to address the issues that exist.

We are hearing that we should not, and I clearly remember the word, "poach" nurses from other Caribbean islands because it would hurt developing countries, and they are our CARICOM neighbours.

Sir, the whole point of the CARICOM framework was to allow movement of skilled workers. We, for the last 14 years have had cheerleaders jumping up and down telling us that we should respect the framework of CARICOM. Yet, we are being told that through backdoor methods and backdoor means, we should ignore that framework.

SENATOR Miss H. E. THOMPSON: Mr. President, on a point of order. During the course of my comments, I did not attack CSME or speak to back-door means. I framed my comments in the context of a regional agreement at the time between Ministers of Health that, in relation to nurses, we would not take each other's staff, because of the difficulties we were having, Sir, it is not an anti- CSME speech, nor does the Honourable Senator Griffith have to agree with me.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Point well taken. Senator Griffith, please continue.

SENATOR D.K.A. GRIFFITH: Thank you, Sir. In deliberating again, we must look at ensuring that all methods are explored, and we cannot say that we are going to ignore certain methods which might benefit the people of Barbados, without taking into consideration all aspects of the framework.

Therefore, any agreements that were reached that do not benefit the people of Barbados, should not be taken into consideration. I would think that as the representatives of the people of Barbados, all Honourable Senators would agree. Therefore, we must look because this is the problem that we need to achieve or try to get passed.

Mr. President, we cannot allow ourselves to sit back and say that we have some agreement and the best way for us to go forward is to ignore policymaking, because saying that we are not going to take nurses from other countries is not a logical policy. CARICOM has frameworks in place, where we could have sat down and determined that we are going to build capacity in the Region, taking into account that nurses are now going to work.

We were told developing countries are going to poach, once again, a certain percentage of our nurses every year, so then: Why not? Then, if all of this poaching is going on: Are we not planning better for it? Are we not introducing more policies to enhance it?

Clearly, last week I spoke to the fact that during her Administration and currently, there is up to a 60 per cent failure rate in courses for nursing in this country. It speaks to a problem that, I think, has very serious consequences going forward.

Sir, having interacted with the University of the West Indies for a certain period of time, it is a logic which dictates that any course that turns out a majority of its students as failures, has to have a problem, because a failure rate is saying that you are not good enough. Sir, the framework needs to be in place for Ministers who are competent in their roles to assess why that failure is happening and to posit solutions to change it.

Asides.

SENATOR D.K.A. GRIFFITH: Sir, for too long, we have fallen back on acting like it is a bit too much for us to do. We need to clarify what we are doing here. We are representing the people of Barbados, and this is why we need to address the legislation, Mr. President, to ensure that the Minister has a framework that he can work with, with competent nursing professionals who can then develop the situation.

I think we should look specifically to the section where it is indicated now that a merger of the education

committee and a new committee looking at professional development is going to continue under this Bill. This is what the Bill contemplates and professional development is important.

If we look at doctors, we can see that professional development is integral to maintaining your status within a community. If you are a surgeon, pediatrician, whatever, continuous development is critical. Therefore, we need to put structures in place that allow this professional development to continue going on.

Sir, having said this, we need to look back at the training aspect. Training is integral. Noting that there are severe shortages, despite what might have been said, because I hear we do not have shortages in Barbados, yet, we still need to recruit nurses from overseas.

Asides.

SENATOR D.K.A. GRIFFITH: Mr. President, I heard from the Other Side that there are severe shortages. Sir, we can pretend that there are no severe shortages in Barbados. We can go on and we can carry on without any problems because we can get nurses. Yet, still, anecdotally, coming out of the hospital, we can hear issues of language barrier problems. We can hear issues about not being able to adequately relate to the nurses that have been brought in from other territories at the level that is necessary for efficient functioning.

Mr. President, at the end of the day, what we are seeking to do is to make sure that we uphold a strong health care system, not that we slide along as long as we can with what we can. We need to be looking forward. The problem with the previous Administration was that they were more reactive, than they were pro-action.

Asides.

SENATOR D.K.A. GRIFFITH: Therefore, we can hear all about the development of policies for nursing going forward, but no implementation. The implementation has always been the problem. We need to look for solutions that we can implement now, and stop the reduction of nurses in this country.

Sir, it is my personal belief that the people who go into the nursing profession, a profession that is a very difficult one - make no bones about it - and a profession that is staffed mainly by women currently, this is an issue I will not tackle today, even though I believe there are very competent male prospective nurses out there that should be targeted in the future. I will make my suggestion to the current Minister, whom I am sure will be very interested in hearing proposals to have male nurses come in.

SENATOR Miss H. E. THOMPSON: Mr. President, on a point of order. There is no barrier to male nurses coming into the system. In fact, I am sure you are aware that from the time you were the Minister, and even before you were the Minister of Health, there were male nurses coming into the system. Sir, men do not apply in large numbers, but there are male nurses in the system, particularly at the Psychiatric Hospital. Sir, you could suggest it still to the current Minister.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Your point is taken.

I wish to ask the Senate, please, not to include me in their Debates, since I am unable to respond. In the circumstances, leave me out of the Debate. Thanks.

Senator Griffith, please continue.

SENATOR D.K.A. GRIFFITH: Mr. President, I think that it would not take a university degree to understand that application does not drive recruitment, but recruitment should drive application. Sir, because there are no significant applications for male nurses currently, does not mean that we should not seek to recruit them.

Mr. President, in dealing with this issue, we need to look and understand issues specifically with niche marketing.

Asides.

Mr. PRESIDENT: It is a reasonable assumption.

Senator Griffith, please continue.

SENATOR D.K.A. GRIFFITH: Mr. President, niche marketing is an important concept, targeting groups that we have not yet been able to encourage. We need to be getting into schools and doing the marketing to encourage people to go into the nursing profession, despite the challenges it now faces.

Senate A4, sequence 10, 12:40:07

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SENATOR D. K. A. GRIFFITH: If we are going to build a competent cadre of nurses in this country, we need to start thinking outside the box, and continuously build on the foundation we have. As such, it goes far beyond just making the same efforts in the same manner. We have to look at what are the problems. We have to have a cadre of nursing professionals who are tasked with doing this.

One of the major areas this Bill speaks to is forming that body in a competent manner to ensure that they have the scope to look at these things, to look at development, to

look at accreditation and to make sure that we are accepting creditable nurses from wheresoever it is we are recruiting them.

Mr. President, when the Senator spoke to the issue of health aides, it reached to the core of a problem that we are currently having in this system, that is, the mobility for nurses. It goes back to the ability of many nurses not just to pass the exams once they are in the programme but to actually get into the programmes. The ability of the nursing professionals or the health professionals in this country to access training to further their social development, to go up in the job level and to get access to higher level jobs is limited.

Mr. President, while the programme at the Barbados Community College has been expanded, we can chronicle the fact that we were having difficulties meeting criteria before the programme was expanded. It was not expanded before the last significant effort to recruit nurses from Barbados.

As such, it is probably likely that we need to expand it even further to ensure that we are creating enough nurses, as the Honourable Senator has said, so that we can forestall them being taken away by the United States of America, the United Kingdom or whoever else is going to need them.

As such, we need to look at the ability of our nationals to access the programme and the numbers that are able to access that programme. In so doing, we can then start to broaden the process where we get more nurses coming out at the end of the process to go into the system.

Again, we must also look at the quality of persons that we are going to be pulling in. With respect to the failure rate, we need to encourage more rounded persons into the programme to lower the number of people we are turning out without qualifying for the programme or qualifying for nursing.

As such, it is necessary for us to go, once again, into the schools and other areas to make sure that we capture the population that we are most interested in pulling into nursing. We see many other forms of direct recruitment going on. We need to understand that marketing is key to getting young people into these programmes.

Mr. President, I am very pleased that the Act speaks to lowering the proposed age of entry to 16. The age limit that is presently in existence prevented many people who would have been quite capable and competent of going into the programme from doing so after leaving school. What we should seek to ensure is that between that age and the age of entry that is presently in existence, that they do not get pulled into something else.

Mr. President, we have a culture in Barbados where parents say to children: "Don't be idle. When you finish school at 16, you either go into some type of programme, whether it is at the Barbados Community College, or somewhere else, or go and get a job".

Having that disparity between the age of completion of secondary school or whatever institution you are at, and the ability to go into the programmes was a significant detractor from the ability of many young people who would have been interested in going into nursing, not because it is a sexy profession, but because it is one of those professions that show a clear path for personal development. Therefore, having this situation of the age removed, is going to make a significant contribution to the development of the programmes that we can market.

Mr. President, as I indicated at the beginning of my speech, I wish to be succinct. I hope I have covered the points that are relevant from my perspective to the nature of this Bill, because I see it as one that is instrumental going forward. It is representative of the change that we need to achieve.

We have to implement a better policy for management. We have to understand that management entails forward planning. It is something that hitherto has not been as strong as it should have been. Therefore, to my mind, this legislation speaks to the interest of the Minister and his Ministry of ensuring that they are capable of developing a pool of competent nurses in Barbados.

I thank you, Mr. President, for your attention.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Senator Crichlow.

SENATOR the Very Rev. H. E. CRICHLLOW: Mr. President, according to the Rules of Debate, on page 18 of the Standing Orders, you are right when you said that a Senator desiring to speak shall rise in his place, and if called upon, shall address the Chair. No Senator shall speak unless called by the President or a Chairman.

Mr. PRESIDENT: I am grateful to you, Senator, for allowing all other Honourable Senators to hear the words of the Rules.

SENATOR the Very Rev. H. E. CRICHLLOW: I thought, Mr. President, I had to do so because we on This Side, the Independent Senators, are not accustomed to that really.

Mr. PRESIDENT: You must be very careful, Senator Dean Crichlow as you speak about one side or the other, because there are some Honourable Senators who sit on your side who have not always been in that capacity,

and they might become a little discombobulated as you speak about one side or the other. You may continue.

SENATOR the Very Rev. H. E. CRICHLLOW: Thank you, Mr. President, I forgot that Senator Sir Roy Trotman was at one time.

Senate A4 Sequence 11

12.50 p.m.

Wednesday, May 21, 2008

SENATOR Sir ROY TROTMAN: On a point of order. Mr. President, I am pleased that Senator Crichlow has noticed my presence, but I have not yet spoken in this Debate. I have said nothing and, therefore, I cannot be accused of having said anything.

Mr. PRESIDENT: I would not have perceived it as an accusation.

Senator Crichlow.

SENATOR the Very Rev. H. E. CRICHLLOW: Mr. President, I noticed when the former Senator spoke and an Independent Senator cheered, that Honourable Senator remarked that at least others have noticed what she was saying was correct.

Mr. President, I rise to support this Bill. I do not think that Senator Thompson has read the Bill in totality. I say that because Senator Thompson could not have read it fully or she has forgotten to read the Schedule which says:

AThe Nursing Council of Barbados shall comprise 15 persons, constituted as follows:

(a) the Chief Nursing Officer, ex officio; (b) the Registrar, ex officio; (c) six (6) persons appointed by the Minister, one of whom must be a representative of private nursing services and one a member of the general public; (d) one Senior Technical Officer in the Ministry of Education, who is responsible for matters relating to nursing

(e) six (6) representatives of practising nursing professionals appointed by the Minister, four of whom must be nominated by the Barbados Nurses Association and two (2) by the Nurses, Assistants, Aides Association of Barbados.

Mr. President, it cannot be said that the nurses have no one to speak for them on this new Board. It is so glaring.

SENATOR Miss H. E. THOMPSON: On a point of order. Mr. President, Senator Crichlow must have misheard me. I did not indicate that nurses have no one to speak for them on this Board. What I indicated was that the last amendment made to the previous legislation of the Queen Elizabeth Hospital took nurses off that Board and since this Democratic Labour Party has changed the Act, nurses are no longer represented on the Queen Elizabeth Hospital Board and have no voice there.

Mr. President, I would wish to assure Senator Crichlow that I have read this legislation when it came before us as a Government and I have since read it.

SENATOR the Very Rev. H. E. CRICHLLOW: Mr. President, I thank the Honourable Senator for her explanation. As we were discussing the Nurses Bill, I thought she was speaking about the Nursing Council, and I apologise.

Mr. President, I am glad to see in the Bill there is reference to the Revised Treaty of Chaguaramas, which established the Caribbean Community, CARICOM and the Caribbean Single Market and Economy. I think that as we go along, we should hear of more Bills doing this. This is how the Caribbean Community would be knitted because from time to time, we will hear noises that would cause us to be anxious about the future of the Caribbean Community, when it is so obvious that we need to act as one unit in the Caribbean and not as separate entities. Sir, we are too small for this, therefore, this Bill is being seen in the Caribbean context.

I noticed too that student nurses must pass the regional examination in order to be registered as nurses and to be awarded the practising certificate. It was explained to me that this is similar to what happens in the United Kingdom, where the nurse has to pass the domestic examination, but he or she has to do a stiffer examination which is recognised by the State, before that person would be able to practise anywhere in the country.

Sir, I wanted to get a copy of the syllabus from the Barbados Community College, but I did not get the chance to go there. Sir, this is important because it strengthens the regional aspect of the Bill. I noticed in the Interpretation to the Bill, we have "graduate nurse", "nursing assistant", "nursing auxiliary", "nursing professional", but I do not see anything on registered nurses, although "registered nurse" is mentioned in the Bill a few times.

Mr. President, I think the naming of this group "graduate nurse" may be misleading in the future. Sir, nurses are now graduating with Associate Degrees, and I am sure they will continue to improve this status by allowing them to do full nursing degrees, as is done in the

United States of America, Canada and the United Kingdom.

Mr. President, a graduate nurse is not a nurse with a Bachelors Degree. A graduate nurse is one who has a practising certificate which he or she gets on completion of a three-year study. I noticed that the graduate nurse has to be supervised by a registered nurse or a nurse who has been registered. I do not know if this would cause confusion to those who read it.

SENATOR Miss. P.I. INNISS: On a point of order. Mr. President, I want to speak to this point. I think the Regulations are quite clear as to the definition of a graduate nurse, which is a person who has presently completed his or her examination in the three-year period, and immediately after that under supervision by a registered nurse. Sir, in essence, they would have completed their regional examination which, therefore, qualifies that person as a registered nurse. I think it is quite clear that the legislation spells out the graduate nurse in terms which have not been clearly stated before. S:No. A4(12)1.00 p.m.

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Mr. PRESIDENT: Point of order made. I just take this opportunity to draw to the attention of the Senate that in the Second Reading of a Bill, it is not allowed under the Rules for us to go into details about the specifics in the Bill. What should be addressed is the general policy of the Bill.

I have not interrupted Honourable Senators because I do not wish to be picky in my approach to these matters, but the Rules are very clear, and if we go into a discussion now about the argument of what Section 10 says or what Section 3 says, we will be violating the Rules deliberately, and I cannot allow that.

I draw to your attention for what it is worth that the graduate nurse is defined in Section 10(2). For what it is worth, you may find that "graduate nurse" has a specific meaning in this particular Bill and I do not want us to have to spend time going back and forth on it. I hope that Honourable Senators would appreciate my difficulty in this matter.

Senator Crichlow, you have the Floor.

SENATOR the Very Rev. H.E. CRICHLLOW: Mr. President, I did not have problems with the graduate nurse. I was saying that a registered nurse is not given - and that there are graduate nurses failing the regional exam and so are never registered. Sir, I know that in the Committee stage, in my experience, there is not much time for explanation of this kind.

Mr. PRESIDENT: I will draw to the attention of Senators, if I must, that it is unfortunate that your experience did not extend to specifics in the Committee stage, but in the Committee stage where such specifics ought to be discussed, it must be discussed, and will be discussed in the future.

SENATOR the Very Rev. H.E. CRICHLAW: Thank you, Mr. President. You know that in another organisation it is the Committee stage that you do have a lot of to-ing and fro-ing but, as I said, in my five years in the Senate, I have not found it to be so. I am sure that under your watch, as you have said, you will see that this is done.

SENATOR Sir ROY TROTMAN: Mr. President, on a point of order. I think inadvertently, Senator Crichlow is misleading the Senate. I think it would be unfair to the character of the former Senate, and the Presiding Officers, if the nation and this Honourable Chamber got the distinct impression that persons were not allowed fully to exercise their right as Senators to speak, and to speak fully during the Committee stage of any debate. Sir, many of us have, in fact, done so and if we did not speak, it was because we did not choose to speak, and not because any Presiding Officer denied us that right to speak.

SENATOR the Very Rev. H.E. CRICHLAW: Mr. President, I did not say that we were denied. I just simply said that it was the custom that we tried to be as brief as possible in the Committee stage.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Actually, your words were more to the point that it was not your experience and I took that then to have the broadest meaning.

SENATOR the Very Reverend H.E. CRICHLAW: Thank you, Mr. President. I do want to close by saying that I am in full support of the Bill and I hope that the Registrar, who is not the same person as the Registrar in the old Act - the Registrar in the old Act is the Registrar of the Supreme Court. This is a new registrar who is like a CEO, and I hope that things will improve and that the new Council, I am sure, will work hard to see that the many responsibilities they have under the Bill are carried out.

Mr. President, thank you very much.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Senator Chandler, you have the Floor.

SENATOR DR. F.L. CHANDLER: Mr. President, this is a very short intervention. I just wanted to say that it would appear as if there is a slight overlap in the function of the Nursing Council and the Barbados Accreditation Council, which is the National Accreditations Body, where it says that the Council with the approval of the Minister, can recognise any hospital, school or institution as a place

of training. I just hope that the two bodies will work closely so that there is no conflict.

I thank you, Mr. President.

SUSPENSION

SENATOR the Hon. Miss M.P.O. McCLEAN: Mr. President, I beg to move that this Sitting be suspended until 2.30 p.m. today.

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

S4/13:06

Sequence 13

Wednesday, May 21, 2008

RESUMPTION

Mr. PRESIDENT: This Sitting is now resumed.

Senator Symmonds.

SENATOR K.D. SYMMONDS: Mr. President, I would like at the outset to recognise a few entities, which I think obviously call out for recognition during the course of this deliberation. First of all, I think it is appropriate that we should recognise the Nursing Council, the Barbados Community College tutors because of the very valuable contribution they make towards the creation of a country, which is able to deliver an excellent quality of nursing care.

I also like to recognise the overseas nurses who have been providing quality care abroad to Barbadians and those overseas. I also want to take the opportunity to say a gesture of thanks from this Chamber, to those who stayed with the Board and worked hard even when others left, and basically to all those who have served in the nursing profession on behalf of the people of Barbados.

Mr. President, this Bill finds its genesis in an effort to, as Senator Thompson said, augment the Regulations with respect to nursing in this country. It is a Bill to replace the Nurses and Midwives (Registration) Act, which was promulgated in November 1932, obviously of considerable vintage to be the legislative architecture, which drives and governs the profession.

Sir, quite frankly, it has only seen two amendments since 1932, to the best of my knowledge, which would be an amendment in the 1960s and one in 1973. Sir, by any reasonable and rational assessment, this Chamber has to accept, I think, as a point of departure in this debate that the legislative framework which governs the nursing

profession in Barbados is one which is, I think, of considerable vintage, an appropriate way of putting it. Sir, it certainly is older than some Honourable Members of this Chamber. That says a lot about the legislation.

Sir, what makes that a relevant point of departure is, in my submission, that it is necessary for a profession which is seeking to redirect itself to meet the challenges of a new era, to be able to demonstrate the flexibility that is necessary. Sir, one of the issues which face the nursing profession, and certainly not only today, but when the Barbados Labour Party was in Government and we were looking at this matter, was the issue of the need to modernise the nursing profession in Barbados. By that, what do I mean?

Sir, specifically, there are a number of, I suspect you would have to describe them as being new or modern specialties within the disciplines. For example, the issue of radiology is something where you have nurses specialising in radiology, which did not necessarily take place 20,30 or 40 years before, at least not in this neck of the woods, similarly, with ophthalmology, dental surgery, et cetera.

There is a need for us to not only recruit, I think that is the word used by Senator Griffith, but largely we have to make sure that framework which governs the profession, is sufficiently flexible to recognise and identify early on the emerging needs of the profession, and therefore to make the necessary recommendations to the Minister, and through whatever corridors necessary to ensure that the profession is in a serious and sensible way, able to respond to those emergent needs.

Sir, the other consideration was, the legislation obviously predated the cross-border provision of services as a norm in this Region. Let me be very clear. We have known for a long time that nurses left our shores and went to provide services abroad, primarily the United Kingdom and the United States of America. That has been true for many years. Within the Region, services in nursing, between Barbados and Trinidad, and between Barbados and Jamaica, et cetera, in all the manifestations that the nursing service can be provided, was not a norm.

Sir, we live in an entirely different era than the 1930s and 1960s, when this legislation was crafted. Quite frankly, let me walk the Chamber through what is on my mind. The United Nations recognises four modes of supply of services. That which they call Mode I is the cross-border provision of services. Essentially, it is using technology, without having to leave my shores, to go to yours and use the modern technology, and provide the service.

It is true today that there are doctors who, with nurses at their side, are able to go to Puerto Rico and direct a surgery in another part of the Caribbean. That is a

development we want to encourage. It is up-to-date and in keeping with the best use of the available modern technology. Again, it has to be governed by a legislative framework which is very sensitive to these emerging needs, and is able to respond critically and quickly in order to build out additional capacity in this region, and most important, in this Region to meet those needs.

Another area where we have to be very cognizant of the development, and I want to speak to this at some length, is that which the United Nations describe as the Mode III provision of services, that is the setting up of a commercial presence abroad, so that a nurse establishes a business, not just working in the general hospital, but sets up her own business, whatever that business may be.

Sir, there are, I can assure you, nurses who practise their craft in the communities of Barbados, by going from house to house looking after patients, removing the business of health care from being a doctor-driven and a doctor-oriented profession into a new approach. It may be something as simple as looking after persons who have bad wounds, wounds that need to be cleaned, dressed, et cetera. It may be something as simple as looking after persons with diabetes. Sir, the reality is, in other parts of the world as well, there is an emerging community-based nursing concept.

Sir, the nurse who does that may see it fit not only to have a commercial presence here in Barbados, but to transplant that commercial presence to Trinidad, or to some other part of this Region. Again, in order to facilitate that development, the legislation has to be flexible enough in order to encompass and to recognise at an early stage, and in a responsive way, these developments and similar types of developments and to ensure that we continue to build capacity.

When the legislation was crafted, these were the things that were certainly on the mind of the Cabinet of the day. Sir, that which we have known nurses to do, and that which the United Nations describes as Mode IV of the provision of services, that is, the temporary movement of natural persons. Sir, I can go from here to New York, or England, and provide my service for a period of time and then come back home.

Mr. President, there was another issue which was on the mind of the Cabinet when the legislation that we are now contemplated was being crafted. The General Nursing Council, as it is called under the old Act, is really constrained by an absence of a full-time secretariat facility. I am not sure whether the Leader of Government Business placed any emphasis on this point, but for those in the profession, it was a critical point of departure.

14.20 p.m.

Sequence 14

Wednesday, May 21, 2008

Senate A4, sequence 15, 2.20 p.m.

SENATOR K. D. SYMMONDS: I believe there are as many as 1 600 nurses and nursing aids in Barbados, and the issue really for the absence of a secretariat was that tremendous reliance had to be placed on part-time administrative officers coming from the Ministry of Health, in order to ensure that matters relating to the general education, the management structure for nurses, such as coordinating of activities of the organisation, et cetera, had to be dealt with on a volunteer basis.

It was felt that was not the best way to go. I am mindful of your warning prior to lunch. I do not want to get into the specifics, but that is why Section 6 of the Act and other Sections are crafted so as to ensure that there is a Registrar provided for the Nurses' Association, who will act in a management way, giving it some sort of management structure and cohesion. There would be a better ability, on the part of the organization, to coordinate essential areas of their activity, and most importantly, their continuing education activities.

Mr. President, I am particularly excited, but that is what happens in Law. You become excited by legislation. Section 25.(1) and Section 25.(3) of the draft Bill is particularly, in my judgment, worthy of commendation and note.

Sir, if you would permit me, without again going into the specifics, I will speak to it in general terms. Section 25.(1) relates to the matter of discipline. This is nothing new, but we have to understand that as it said, a nursing professional who is convicted of an offence outside Barbados, which if committed in Barbados would be punishment on indictment.

If the individual is convicted in Barbados and it is an indictable offence, or if you are suspected on reasonable grounds to have committed professional misconduct, you are subject to disciplinary proceedings. That reads in pari materia virtually identical terms to all other professional codes related to discipline.

The lawyers have it, the engineers have it, the doctors have it, the accountants have it. It is a standard approach. It has been there with us from time immemorial. I am very mindful of the language of Senator Dean Harold Crichlow, when he noted the introduction of language in the legislation speaking to the Caribbean Community.

What is interesting, however, is that at Section 25.(3) we have now moved for the first time that I know of in the

Law of Barbados with respect to professions, and professional conduct, to this stage. If the Council takes any action pursuant to Section 1, which will be the disciplinary proceedings, the Council has to do the following and I quote:

A25.(3) Where the Council takes any action pursuant to subsection (1), the Council shall notify the appropriate regulatory authority of each state within the Caribbean Community.@

The nursing profession has, by this piece of legislation, overtaken the doctors, the lawyers, and the architects. For example, nowhere could it be found in the Bar Association of this Region, that there is a mandatory provision if an attorney-at-Law is subjected to disciplinary proceedings. Are you notified? Are you as a Counsel, a body of their peers? That body is not mandated by law to notify the folks in Trinidad, Guyana or Dominica.

This becomes entirely critical when we think about the fact that we are building a Caribbean single marketplace, where the provision of goods and, in this case, services, are to be sold across borders and offered across the borders. It is a best practice for those of us who see that the people who benefit from nursing care are, in a real sense, consumers.

The consumer now has a right, for the first time in the Law of Barbados, to be told that this particular practitioner has been subjected to disciplinary proceedings for whatever reason, whether that consumer is in Trinidad, Suriname or the Bahamas. It is a remarkable step. Sometimes we let these things pass and we let them go unnoticed. I make the point to this Chamber very seriously that it is not to be found. It is not to be replicated as yet and, perhaps, that is the shame.

Mr. President, for all that we have said and talked about, we have professional bodies in this country and in this Region, who have not yet taken the necessary step of ensuring that there is parity. In this instance, there is a parity on the basis of notification that if something has taken place in Barbados that affects the standing of a person in the profession of nursing, there must be notification to others who are likely to consume his or her service across the Region.

I go further, Sir, because it is necessary to recognise that this legislation is also about empowerment. In a real sense, the focus I have heard a number of members who have preceded me speak to the question of continuing education I think I am correct in saying that this issue also attracted some attention in the Other Place.

Sir, the empowerment issue is not just simply to say that people have to be subjected to a process of continuing

education. As I said to you, the profession is one in which there are numbers of core competencies emerging. The nurse who specialises in Radiology or Dental Surgery is adding to the core of competencies of the nursing profession.

What this legislation is seeking to do at section 4.(b) is that it mandates that the Council has to advise the Minister with respect to the training and education of nurses. Therefore, at all stages, the nursing profession is now being asked to take stock of where they are, where they are going or, ideally, where they would like to see themselves go as a professional body.

Quite frankly, Sir, the only logical interpretation that I think the ordinary man can put on it is that this is an opportunity for the nursing profession to assess that which the marketplace - if that is what you want to call it - in the Caribbean has to offer; those skills, those competencies in the profession which are lacking. Then, to make recommendation to the Minister responsible, this is an area where there is a demand. Therefore, we should move to ensure that when we are training, that we train people to meet capacity to meet this type of demand.

I think, Sir, that it is an important exercise because, again, it is unprecedented, in the way in which professional groups are treating to themselves. Let me pause and say that there is no requirement on the legal profession to do continuous education, let alone ensure that as a pre condition to continued licensing, you have demonstrated that core competencies have been improved upon.

I think, Sir, that is true as well of most of the other professions, if not all, and for it now to be brought by the nurses and put as a mandatory part of the legislation, is a very commendable step, in my judgment.

I do not want to become political in a speech of this nature because of the fact that, quite frankly, this is about the empowerment, not only of nurses, but as I said to you, I see myself and all others who are likely at some stage to have to require the service of a nurse, in whatever capacity, as an issue for the consuming public. Sir, he or she who has at some stage to lie on a bed, or sit at a chair for patient care purposes of a nurse, are consumers of the service.

Sir, it would be remiss of me not to extend a word of congratulations to the former Health Minister, Dr. Jerome Walcott, who, I think, hit the nail on the head, with this particular piece of legislation. It is perhaps a crying shame that he did not have the opportunity to shepherd it through the Lower House himself. Sir, having said that, there are other issues that arise which, I think, we need to understand.

Senate A4, sequence 15, 14:30:14

Wednesday, May 21, 2008

SENATOR K. D. SYMMONDS: It would be the responsibility of any person who has his or her hands on the reins of the Ministry of Health to think to the future in terms of how they can now use this legislation, an empowering tool as I contend it to be, toward the best interest of the people of this country.

Mr. President, I want to take a moment to reflect on where we are, first of all, in the Caribbean. As I said, this legislation is a path-breaker insofar as the provision of nursing services in the Caribbean is concerned.

Article 46 of the Revised Treaty of Chaguaramas, which all Honourable Senators doubtless are aware, is the legislative framework that governs the CARICOM Single Market and Economy endeavour, which gave to artistes, musicians, sportsmen, entertainers and university graduates the power to move and provide their services once they were employed so to do.

If you fell outside of that grouping, as the nurses did at that point, you could not move from Point A to Point B in the Caribbean Community, for example, from Barbados to Suriname, et cetera, to seek a wage-earning relationship. Therefore, there was a level of discrimination, many would argue, against that nursing community. Happily, we have now moved to a stage where the Heads of Government have expanded the five categories and, today, nursing is now included.

Mr. President, there is a larger issue to which I have spoken tangentially before that I wish to speak to at some length now, that is, how we see the nursing community in Barbados satisfying opportunities across this Region and here in Barbados.

Mr. President, I have never accepted, and I do not think that I will ever be able to accept the language of poaching nurses. I think it is born, quite frankly, out of having served as a Minister in the Cabinet with direct responsibility for the Caribbean Community. I understand what the Health Ministers wanted to do when they had their agreement, but I am going to tell the Chamber and the country why I have difficulty with the language.

Article 32 of the Revised Treaty of Chaguaramas, which makes this possible, creates that which is called "Rights of Establishment". They are immediately and directly comparable to that which the United Nations calls Establishing a Commercial Presence Elsewhere. If I have a nursing home in Fitts Village, St. James, under the Revised Treaty of Chaguaramas, I am entitled, as of right to open a branch of my nursing home in Castries, St. Lucia, or in Port-of-Spain or Chaguaramas, Trinidad and Tobago.

The reality is that under Article 32 of the Revised Treaty of Chaguaramas, the provision of the service of nursing is seen as a non-wage earning service if you are moving to set up a commercial enterprise. Nobody would be paying you any salary, so it is defined in the language of the Treaty as non-wage earning. You are basically a self-employed person providing a service.

We have in Barbados to begin to understand the vista of opportunity that has been created. Sir, even if nobody wants to employ you, you can employ yourself once you have identified that there is market share available in somebody else's country, and you do it as of right. The same way nobody can stop a born and bred Barbadian from setting up his shingle and practising Law in Bridgetown once he is qualified so to do - he does not have to ask anybody to employ him, he can set up his practice - so too is it with every single other occupation that is capable of bearing self-employment.

When we speak at length about the future opportunities for young people, that is perhaps the point of departure because it has to be driven home for all generations to come. Gone are the days when someone can say to you that you need a work permit to work in the Caribbean. You would need a work permit if you are going to beg for a job. I do not need any work permit if I am coming in your country and saying as a CARICOM citizen that I am setting up under the Rights of Establishment as a fisherman or as a mason. All effectively I need to do is to demonstrate that I have some capacity in the area and that I am self-employed where I come from. Therefore, an opportunity exists for the nursing community that was not there before.

Mr. President, it becomes relevant for the purposes of this legislation, because as I said, any Minister of Health has to be concerned about the policy direction of the Ministry. Quite frankly, what are we going to do about nurses? Honourable Senators on all Sides agree that poaching is taking place in the North-South. I am going to be very frank because I checked the statistics up to this morning.

The United Nations is agreeing that the United States of America is predicting that by the year 2020 there will be one million persons shortfall in demand for nurses. In other words, on current projections, there would be a market demand of one million persons in the United States of America.

Mr. President, this is not the first time a challenge of this nature has faced the developing world. That is why I said that I do not wish to become partisan in this Debate. It is a debate about national direction. In my judgment, we can learn a lot from India. There is a very interesting book called "Moving People to Deliver Services", a joint

publication of the World Bank and the University of London.

The "Moving People to Deliver Services" concept on these matters is that they used India as an example where India targeted 250 000 persons per year to fill information technology vacancies in Europe. They said that they were preparing themselves, and they set aside about five to 10 years to prepare themselves to develop their people to move them to fill the projected demand for 250 000 information technology specialists in Europe every year. It was not by accident.

It was a deliberate design to build their human capacity and to build the capacity of their country to sell the services in a predetermined destination abroad so that they could have the revenue bearing potential of their people reach its maximum capacity.

Sir, the issue really faces us in the Caribbean whether or not we are potentially facing the difficulty of tripping over our own heels. I asked this Chamber this question in all seriousness. That is why I do not think that it serves our purposes to become political because we do not get very far in the debate when we do that.

Sir, I will quote from the Economic and Financial Policies of the Government of Barbados presented by the Right Honourable Owen Arthur, Minister of Finance, on January 16, 2006. At page 64, under the rubric ANursing Training@ it says:

"The demand for our nurses has increased both through growth in local demand in the public and private health care sectors as well as through aggressive recruitment of Barbadian nurses by the United States, Canada and the United Kingdom. In 2003, the Government tripled the intake of nurses trained at the Barbados Community College from 30 to 90. It is now proposed to further expand the intake of nurses for training to 120. Additional funding of \$1.23 million will be provided to meet the cost of additional staff, classrooms, teaching materials".

It is clear therefore that the previous Government had a policy position on the issue of building capacity for training nurses. I reflect on the percentage degree of expansion. You are moving from 30 to 90 and you are carrying it up to 120. Maybe there are those who would pause and say crying shame that we were only training 30 nurses in Barbados at one stage, but I want to go further than that.

What is the Region doing? The argument has been made that St. Vincent and the Grenadines has trained 200 more nurses than they could accommodate, hence I do not know why we would rest so heavily today on the issue of

poaching, because St. Vincent needs to find a place for the service to be moved to, and we will accept it.

Senate A4 Sequence 16

2.40 p.m.

Wednesday, May 21, 2008

SENATOR K. D. SYMMONDS: Mr. President, having said that, Antigua has created a School of Nursing and has annexed it to a university in the United States of America. Sir, you would see their advertisement is in the most interesting terms. They said the plus for studying in Antigua is that you have a Caribbean-type environment.

They claim the financial advantage is that you are spending less money because of the fact that you are spending the currency of the United States of America in a country operating on Eastern Caribbean currency. They say the beauty is that you are being trained in a profession where there is rapid absorptive rates back at home in the United States of America, and so why not then study in Antigua.

Mr. President, my mind then takes me to the next step because I do not believe it is only about Barbados, St. Vincent and Antigua. I suspect that on closer scrutiny, this is something that has not escaped any of the Member States of CARICOM. We are all seeing it as a developmental tool so then do we not reach out collectively to make this work in the best possible way that it could? Mr. President, how could that be done?

Last year, I believe it was, at the Heads of Government meeting held here, the former Prime Minister championed that which has come to be called the Needham's Point (Barbados) Declaration. Sir, it is a declaration which spoke to the issue of functional cooperation. We say there are a number of things in this Region which we all attempt to do, that we all do collectively at an inefficient level because of the fact that none of us has enough money to do it at the best possible way or at the best possible pace.

Mr. President, therefore, should the training of nurses in the Caribbean be to provide a service for - Sir, we do not have to go as far as Europe, because we already know that the projected rate of absorption in the United States of America, 12 years from now on current trends, would be one million people engaged in the nursing profession. Sir, this Region alone is not going to be able to satisfy that, but I suspect that we could do ourselves more than proud, if we pool our efforts with a view to making the most out of exploring the opportunity to exploit that marketplace and at the same time making sure that we are

training at a sufficient rate that we could continue to meet the continuing demands here at home.

Mr. President, I, therefore, feel there is an abundance of opportunity for us to approach this venture of collectively training nurses. It does not mean we have to change this legislation because it is good legislation, but I think we have to exhibit leadership in CARICOM. I think this is one of the areas where our foreign policy projection into this Region must be made, very clearly pronounced and articulated.

Mr. President, I have a private concern, being one of those persons who is Counsel for the Senior Citizens' Home in Barbados. Sir, in the Other Place, an unfortunate commentary on Both Sides of the House was made to the effect that there is a concern about the rate of fees being charged. Sir, you would know how it is. Even in Parliament there is a tendency for us to pull things out of the sky, without the benefit of close analysis. Sir, some Honourable Members of the House, when making their contributions, said that a fee of over \$900 is too much money.

Mr. President, I am not going to reflect negatively on the Other Place, but I will say this much. We have to stop and understand the Law. The Law of Barbados is that Government has set a rate of \$65 per day for persons who were mobile and \$75 per day for persons who are immobile. Sir, when one does the mathematics, it is impossible, therefore, for one to be in a nursing home for more than 30 days and you are paying \$700.

Sir, Government sets the rate, so let us not, as part of the Governmental apparatus, be berating the people for doing that which Government has set a rate for them to do. I think it makes better sense for us to be seeing how we in governmental apparatus could ensure, as my colleague Senator Thompson has said, that there are good and viable standards built into that which people are doing.

Mr. President, people open their nursing homes and provide a service. Therefore, let us make sure that there is a standard acceptable both to the service provider and to he or she who has to benefit from the provision of the service, that being those persons in the Senior Citizens' Homes.

Mr. President, there is a view that members of the Barbados Elderly For Care Association, for example, should form part of the inspection teams that go out, so that you do not just have a dietician and an environmental officer, who are paid by Government, in circumstances where these officers would simply visit these Nursing Homes only to say they are doing rather well, and in circumstances where the inspection rules vary, day by day, with the size of the inspector's shoe.

Sir, lack of precision and lack of certainty in Law is a bad thing, therefore, we need to ensure that the operator of a nursing home could operate with an understanding of certainty and precision, and perhaps the best way to do that would be to have members of the Elderly For Care Association forming part of those inspection teams, so that there is a closely monitored situation in certain practices which evolve in the maintenance of these places.

Mr. President, those would be my respectful submissions to you and I thank you for your indulgence.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Senator Walters.

SENATOR the Hon. A. B. WALTERS: Mr. President, I rise to join this Debate on the Nurses Bill, 2008, and to support this initiative to bring the nursing profession into the 21st Century. Mr. President, nurses have traditionally delivered quality care service to all Barbadians, whether in hospitals, private nursing care facilities, outpatients clinics or in the communities through Public Health nursing, polyclinics and emergency clinics.

Sir, my first exposure with the nursing profession occurred when my mother entered the midwifery programme at the Maternity Hospital at Verona House, in 1956, and later my sister entered a nursing programme in 1968. Although they are retired from public employment, they continue to offer nursing services within the family.

Nursing, as you know, is seen as a noble profession carried on predominately by females, and in the 1950's and 1960s, large numbers of young persons would have journeyed from Barbados to the United Kingdom, to pursue careers in nursing at all levels but mainly as nursing assistants and graduating as state-enrolled nurses. Many of them are still state-enrolled nurses. Sir, some of them would have graduated as state-registered nurses and state-certified midwives and registered medical nurses.

Mr. President, some of these persons have returned home. However, the vast majority has remained in the United Kingdom and continues to make valuable contribution to the national health service of the United Kingdom.

Mr. President, the Nurses Bill, 2008, seeks to repeal and replace the Nurses and Midwives (Registration) Act,

Cap. 372, and to make new provision for the registration, regulation and discipline of the nursing profession and for related purposes.

2.50 p.m.

Wednesday, May 21, 2008

SENATOR the Hon. A.B. WALTERS: The Bill establishes a council known as the Nursing Council of Barbados, as opposed to the General Nursing Council which it previously was, and gives the Minister, by Order, the ability to amend the Schedule from time to time. It is expected that as part of the nation's human resource management strategy, that all sectors would be modernised.

The Nursing Council of Barbados will have a management structure which is headed by a registrar, who has the role of coordinating the work in relation to enhancing the nursing, education, training and the registration of nurses. This approach to the management of the nursing profession can be seen as an effort to modernise, develop and enhance management structures in the health sector. As was stated previously, this would have gone back towards 1932 under the Nurses and Midwives Registration Act, which established the General Nursing Council.

The Nursing Council of Barbados is required to submit a report to the Minister and advise the Minister on matters related to the provision of nursing care for the sick and injured. What is that nursing care? As one of the members stated, it is a level of specialisation which is developed in the nursing profession, the provision of pediatrics services; the provision of intensive care services; the provision of nursing care for chronic diseases, including diabetes, hypertension, cardiac disease, stress and stroke, renal failure and the provision of geriatric care, the provision of midwifery services, which is moved from delivery at home to delivery at hospital and hospital care and the delivery of aftercare service through the public health services at the polyclinic and the establishment of suitable training and recruitment programmes for the maintenance of nursing care and midwifery services.

Sir, training is now conducted at the Barbados Community College and other health care institutions, some of them private health care institutions. Sir, training is available for nursing auxiliaries, assistants and nurses up to graduate level and post graduates in areas of mental health, midwifery and other disciplines. However, training now has to meet the new international standards which are being set and Barbados has been experiencing shortages of trained nurses, certainly over a 30-year period. Sir, in the last 20 years one of our difficulties has been brought about by a no training of study leave policy which was adopted in the late 1970s to curtail training in various disciplines, including nursing across the Public Service.

Mr. President, on the down side to nursing education is the fact that there are low pass rates of about 30 per cent in nursing exams for registered nurses. As an improvement in the human resource management strategy, the new Council has the task of investigating complaints, and to discipline persons in the nursing profession. There is now a

disciplinary code. There is the setting of standards and guidelines for the governance of the nursing profession and these standards must be international standards in order to open opportunities for trained nurses who are not able to be gainfully employed in Barbados that they can seek work within the Region and internationally.

Mr. President, the Schedule in the Bill states that the Nursing Council of Barbados shall comprise of 15 persons. The Minister has the opportunity to appoint 6 persons to the Council, and there is the facility for the Trade Union Movement to nominate 4 persons from the Barbados Nurses Association. Sir, this legislation shall be seen as a piece of social engineering as part of the human resource management strategy in modernising the health services in Barbados.

Mr. President, there are a number of questions you have to ponder on. The question of qualification gained through examination, the question of registration, the question of dealing adequately with grievances of the nurses and the question of dealing adequately with disciplinary questions as at Section 25, inclusive of an appeal procedure.

Senator Symmonds did, in fact, mention Section 25(3). The interesting thing about Section 25(3) is that it now allows for nursing professionals to be subject to disciplinary proceedings but also to ensure that the disciplinary action is transparent, that there is the ability to censure that person if they are convicted of an offence that there is the ability to suspend that person's registration, or enrollment, or direct the Registrar to remove that person's name from the register or role.

Mr. President, the one difficulty that I foresee in some of the disciplinary procedures really comes about in the distinction between the graduate nurse and the registered nurse. On a simple reading of the enrollment of a graduate nurse and dealing with the question of a registered nurse, it would appear that we are putting the graduate nurse at some disadvantage by saying to that person that they may be looking at four-and-a-half years.

S/A4/15:00

Sequence 18

Wednesday, May 21, 2008

SENATOR the Hon. A.B. WALTERS: That may be a misinterpretation, or it could be read in that manner.

Sir, I also want to make the point that as a new Human Resource Management Strategy, this Bill certainly attempts to put some teeth in the hands of the Council and

in the hands of the Registrar who has to manage the process of the nurses and the nursing profession.

Sir, in the same way we would have difficulties in the 1960's, one of the areas that we probably have to guard against is the migration into Barbados of nurses out of the Region, the migration of a large number of nurses when they are qualified, into the Northern Hemisphere. That has taken place, certainly in the 1980s and the 1990s. It is an area that we have to watch out for. Certainly, in relation to when the profession reaches the international standards either by the issuing of BQs or CVQs, the persons are allowed to work directly in those environments.

Sir, with those short remarks, I wish to support the Bill.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Senator Inniss.

SENATOR Miss P.I. INNISS: Mr. President, I would like to make a relatively short contribution to this debate as it relates to the Bill, and I would like to support the Bill, in essence to repeal the Nurses and Midwives (Registration) Act. I think it has come at a time when it is most necessary, and caters in essence, as has been said by other speakers on Both Sides, to more appropriate registration regulation training of nurses in Barbados. Sir, I am giving wholehearted support to the Minister who has finally realised there can be changes in this country, relating to the dilemma and the problems facing us in Barbados. These problems have continued for years.

Sir, I listened to Senator Symmonds and Senator Thompson speaking in many different words, but, in essence, words of congratulation and words supporting the Bill. I believe it was Senator Symmonds applauding the former Minister. Sir, it was unfortunate that he did not have the opportunity to spearhead it through the Other Place.

My question here, and I do not wish to be political either. The point is, why has it taken 14 years to spearhead such a Bill, when nurses have been leaving the profession? Where nurses have been complaining of a number of issues, working long hours alone at night, nurses being pregnant and working hours, and a number of problems relating to the past structure of such an Act?

The two Honourable Senators were questioning where the Democratic Labour Party's Manifesto spoke of such issues regarding nurses. Sir, they also said that their Manifesto dealt with such things as salaries, allowances and registration of nurses, but it is this Party, in four months' plus, which has seen it fit to bring such an Act to Parliament.

Sir, in 1999 they promised the establishment of a full-time Registrar, but it is this Party in four plus months

which is now seeking to do such. So Manifestoes aside, I support this Bill on the principle of action, on the principle of attempting to make change, and on reviewing some of the problems and woes that have faced nurses in this society.

Sir, Senator Thompson also spoke of a great problem, but even in her tenure as Minister, she identified the problem related to specialty nurses, the fact that we may have nurses within our system who would like to specialise. As the Minister then, she spoke of problems not being recognised in their area of career, yet there was still no passing of an Act, and no structures to introduce policies and programmes to assist nurses.

In essence, it is the absolute, I could easily say decadence, relating to the nursing profession in this society which has caused the majority of the exodus, which has caused the concerns that nurses presently speak of.

Sir, we have a situation where I sat and listened to the whole dilemma of the exodus of nurses in Barbados and the need to endorse our CARICOM unity. I am in support of the Caribbean Single Market and Economy. I am in total support of this Bill because it looks at a more basic need of nurses at home as it relates to the problem of speciality and nurses inability to advance.

Sir, the Nurses Act 2008 will be introducing such measures as Nursing Auxiliary, Graduate Nurse and Nursing Assistants. Under the old regime, there were the Nursing Registrar, Midwives Registrar, and only a role for Nursing Assistants. Under the new Act, we have a Registrar for nurses, which will encompass nurses and midwives, and a role for Graduate Nurses, Nursing Assistants and Nursing Auxiliary.

Sir, this is very important, because it means that this Government understands the need to augment, facilitate and support the nursing profession, therefore ensuring a very clear legislative structure, as it relates to Nursing Auxiliary, Nursing Assistants and Graduate Nurses. Sir, it is hoped to afford nurses the opportunity to develop themselves. This has not been done before.

Sir, the presence of a Registrar, as promised in the 1999 Manifesto of the Barbados Labour Party, with the passing of this Bill will finally be put in place. A full-time Registrar would propel the nursing fraternity. I am particularly pleased with words used in the Act where it speaks to nursing professionals as opposed to segregating one of the sort. Even the tone of the Act moves away from the feminine concept of nursing, but embraces a number of other things. This is futuristic.

Sir, we have seen a good idea, and where some others have not been able to put it into fruition in 14 years,

not being political, are pushing what is good for the nurses. This is why I am in total support of the Bill, and I think a number of Senators are also. I just want to highlight a few points. It is very important to get the facts straight. Where we all support the Bill, the context of our support and the reason for our support must be clearly borne out.

Sir, I sat here and heard, again, of the exodus of nurses. One of the plights and problems that has been facing the nursing profession for years, is the inability to develop. After the three years in which you have completed your training, continuing after receiving your accreditations, there is no upward mobility. You are not able to specialise.

15.10 p.m.

Sequence 19

Wednesday, May 21, 2008

Senate A4, sequence 20, 3.10 p.m.

SENATOR Miss P.I. INNIS: Mr. President, one area of the Bill speaks about the practising certificate, where previously it was one year, with this new Bill, it will be two years of continued education. Sir, this has been spoken by other Senators. This is an important aspect and this is an area in which nurses have been of great concern.

I am only hoping that under this new Government and a Minister whom, by all intents and purpose, even with the introduction of this Bill, seems to be most determined to make good on promises. The Minister and the Ministry will continue to look at the continued education problems of nurses. It is not legislatively said, but it is for sure that a lot of young nurses enter the profession and then seem to feel retarded into progressing.

Sir, as we speak about carrying nursing into the 21st Century and into the developing profession, this is, in essence, of great importance. I believe this has been the underlying concept in extending the practising certificate and ensuring that the nurses have continuing education. Therefore, it is totally supported.

Mr. President, I heard Senator Thompson speaking of the fact that nurses are not attracted to the programme and they do not have the same appeal. Why should they? Why should a nurse who cannot seem to progress in a profession, who is not being paid in accordance with what that nurse is working for, who has a number of problems as they relate to regulation, be encouraged? Why do you think that any human being wanting to improve themselves would continue in a nursing profession?

Mr. President, these answers, I believe, come with the introduction of such a Bill; and then with future thinking as it relates to helping to develop the nursing profession, and continuing to pushing it to a point where nurses feel that they have a say, and they can master a career; and develop a career within Barbados.

Then, we continue on to the question of the big dilemma related to nurses, the fact that so few persons are graduating from the Barbados Community College, or the Nursing system. Mr. President, I heard in here this morning, that we have some 20 per cent, 30 per cent graduating. It has been in the Newspapers that maybe one of the big problems is the need for more tutors, and the need to address the issue of poor graduates at that level.

It cannot be as Senator Thompson spoke of this morning, that the answer maybe is to train more. It is not a question of training more. Surely, it is not a question of looking at the fact that we trained 30 in 2004, when she spoke of the developments and the initiatives of the former Government. Then, it increased by 300 per cent to 90, but the failure rate was still extremely high. Sir, when we speak of such an increase and we speak of policy position, the problem is that our nurses are not graduating.

Mr. Speaker, this Bill looks at the Council, and the whole issue of dealing with the problems of tutoring. I am glad to see that the age of entry has been reduced, making it more attractive, and that nurses are afforded the opportunity to get post graduate studies. All of these are real issues which have affected the profession for years, and which now, under this new Bill, hopefully, will be addressed.

Mr. President, there are two more areas I would like to speak on before I take my seat. One is related to the specialty of nurses and the other is the need for further development. Indeed, this has been a concern for an extended period of time. We have, for instance, nurses who would like to go into geriatric studies and a number of other areas, but they are not afforded the opportunity to do such, and that has to be addressed.

Mr. President, this morning, I heard speeches regarding the exodus of nurses from the nursing profession, as occurred for many years. There was great consideration and great discourse related to the dilemma which faced nurses in the whole movement of the Queen Elizabeth Hospital Administration from the Ministry of Health and signing on to a Board.

Mr. President, I do not wish to address this issue to any large extent, only to say that this scenario has been a source of great contention. I imagine, Mr. President, it will be for many years.

The statement was made this morning where the Honourable Senator Thompson spoke of the fact that in signing on to the Board, nurses were given the opportunity to go into general practice. Mr. President, you have to remember that during the time that we had the Queen Elizabeth Hospital going on to a board, we had nurses specialised in the areas of Ophthalmology, ICU, Radiology, Pediatrics, which are now being promoted with those in the Opposition and they were told that they can therefore be filtered into Polyclinics and the Geriatric Hospital, in essence, reducing their expertise. Sir, this is what caused the severe problem.

Mr. President, many nurses had to go that route and for them it was a matter of probably being victimised. Mr. President, you would remember that it was the Queen Elizabeth Hospital which was signed on to a board. The Polyclinics and the Geriatric Hospitals are not signed on to a board, but they perceived that the Queen Elizabeth Hospital nurses were being victimised in some form. Sir, as I said, that was the whole area of contention.

Mr. President, we heard Senator Thompson speaking to the fact that nurses had the option. As a specialty nurse in ICU, your option is to go and work in the Geriatric Hospital. As a specialty nurse at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital who, in a number of cases, ought not to work in geriatrics, because of its nature and want to work at the QEHL, the option that Board gave to them was to leave their profession and go into the Geriatric Hospital or to the Polyclinics. Sir, even today, and even with the departure of the Barbados Labour Party, the nurses are faced with that problem.

Therefore, to say that they had an option is illogical. To say that the Barbados Labour Party has been looking at the issues facing nurses and attempting to correct some of the problems, to my mind, is false. Mr. President, in the number of years, none of the issues that I have spoken to, have been spoken to so far for the entire day. None of the issues that are now being addressed by this Bill, have been addressed by the Barbados Labour Party.

Therefore, that they support our efforts, or support the efforts of a new Government to try and make a change, to tell nurses that we understand your need for training; we understand your need for regulation and we will bring these in place, for they attempting to say that we are, in essence, doing the right thing, we say, thank you. Sir, they cannot be applauded for taking so long to do something which is most important to revitalise the nursing profession in this country.

Mr. President, with those few remarks I would like to endorse this Nurses Bill and I would like to say I hope that a lot of the problems that are facing our nurses, will slowly be eroded, and we will get the opportunity to have a

number of nurses in Barbados, male and female, who can deliver excellent care to Barbadians.

Thank you, Mr. President.

Asides.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Senator Sandiford-Garner:

SENATOR Mrs. V. I. SANDIFORD-GARNER: Mr. President, as I rise to support this Bill, I think it is important that I express my great pleasure at being able to speak on this Bill. Sir, I view nursing as a calling, more so than a profession, just as teaching is a calling. My pleasure is embedded in the fact that I am the product of a nurse. My mother is a retired nurse. I have two aunts who are nurses, and six cousins who are nurses.

Senate A4, sequence 20, 15:20:16

Wednesday, May 21, 2008

SENATOR Mrs. V. I. SANDIFORD-GARNER: My mother was one of the hundreds of Barbadians who would have gone to Britain in the 1950's and trained to be a registered nurse. As I keep saying, I am a child of the Diaspora because I was born during that period and I grew up in a household of nurses. Every nurse who came from Barbados who was related to us stayed at us during their training.

I have remained close to the profession as an adult because six members of my family are currently nurses, so you must understand my sense of privilege of being in this place at this time to speak to this legislation. Mr. President, I am immensely proud to be part of a Government that is seeking to enhance the welfare and the circumstances of the men and women in this profession.

Sir, I listened to the Opposition Senator who was also a former Minister of Health - whether or not the tenure was remarkable I shall not say - boasting of the previous Government's solicitous approach to this profession. She said the nurses were given options when the new Board was introduced.

Sir, I wonder if she is aware that under the caring former Administration, nurses in Barbados were, in effect, victims of a clumsy transition during the establishment of that Board. I wonder if the former Minister is aware that 40 nurses had to seek counselling through their union during that transition. I wonder if she is aware that some nursing assistants who were eligible for full nursing training at the time, who would probably be working at other health care institutions like the Geriatric Hospital, had their training delayed.

These are the very young people she spoke so highly of this morning who were ready and willing to further their careers in the profession. Mr. President, they could not move a step further because the Geriatric Hospital and other such institutions had to absorb the other trained nurses who would have filled the vacant posts available. I do not know if she is aware that in order to train, you need a vacant post.

Sir, this disconnection from the everyday lives of people is a continuing thread through the presentations of some of these Senators and some of the Members of the Opposition in the Other Place. Mr. President, that is probably why they are in the Opposition. You have to know what is happening with the individuals whom you seek to represent.

Sir, four years ago, under the former Administration, many nurses felt that the system had failed them and that the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, under the proposed Board, was not where they wanted it to be and they left. That is a reality. Some left to go to the Polyclinics. Yes, we would admit they were given options. Some left to go overseas.

A number of them went to Bermuda, and some chose to stay home and water their plants and grow kitchen gardens. They opted to stay home before they would sign on with the Board. It was not only the terms and conditions that they were offered, but the manner in which they were treated is still offensive to the nurses to this day.

Sir, this new Minister of Health has demonstrated, in a tangible way, his recognition of the vital role that these men and women play. He has prioritised this legislation. That is why it has been introduced four months into the tenure of this current Government.

The previous Administration would wish to beat its chest up and hoist up its fat pants and boast that it was their legislation, but they had 14 years to be in touch and understand and implement it, and they did nothing. I see this move of November 2007 as a last ditch attempt before Elections to appeal to the constituency of nurses within the Electorate. That is what it was. They should not try to fool us by saying how much they cared about them. Caring about them and doing things for them are two different things. There is a serious gap between the two.

Sir, this Bill replaces a 35 year-old Law that is younger than I. We have now made provision for registration and regulation. There would be a change of name from the Barbados Nursing Council to the Nursing Council of Barbados. There would be several subcommittees, as mentioned earlier, which I would not list now. I had planned to, but in an effort to carry this matter through, I would short-circuit some of what I had prepared.

These subcommittees would monitor ethics, finance and the nurses' code of conduct and, in essence, give the nurses' governing body some type of proper management structure. Mr. President, I am pleased to mention that the subvention for the Nursing Council will be increased under this Administration.

Sir, the most outstanding provision, to my mind, is the provision that states that the age of entry into the profession would now be 16 instead of 18. Sir, this Clause would assist in recruiting greater numbers for the profession. At age 16, you are qualified to enter training for hospitality services, plumbing, accounting, and electrical engineering. Sir, nursing has probably lost a number of young people who would not have been able to choose their career path at age 16 because by age 18 they are well into their second choice.

This Bill ensures also that our nursing body meets global professional standards. The importance of training and retraining of nurses cannot be over-emphasised. The Clauses which speak to training, retraining and re-registration which are vitally important. We would be putting our nurses on par with international standards.

Sir, by prioritising this legislation, this Government is demonstrating its commitment to the profession in Barbados. It is showing in a meaningful way that we recognise the value of our nurses. Within the past week, the Prime Minister reiterated his commitment to providing nurses in Barbados with five years' service with duty-free cars as well as interest free loans to first-time homeowners.

He reiterated that the promises made to that sector of the Civil Service will be kept, despite the state of the economy, because this Government's focus is on keeping trained Barbadians at home. We need them to contribute to this society. We recognise that in making that short-term sacrifice, this country would have long-term benefits.

This Bill marks a milestone in the nursing profession, and I am pleased to support it. I am obliged to you, Sir.

SENATOR the Hon. Miss M. P. O. McCLEAN: Mr. President, it is again a pleasure to speak after my colleagues on This Side, particularly the last Speaker. The necessity for this Nurses Bill is obvious and evident. The rationale, the benefit it introduces and the necessity to repeal the existing Nurses and Midwives Registration Act, Cap. 372 are obvious. Again, from the contributions of my colleagues on all Sides, support for this Bill was necessary.

Mr. President, I suppose I could sit at this point and move to the next stage, but I cannot do that before I comment on the comments of my honourable colleague

who spoke immediately after I did who is not at the moment in the Chamber.

Senate A4 Sequence 21

3.30 p.m.

Wednesday, May 21, 2008

SENATOR the Hon. Miss M.P.O. McCLEAN: Mr. President, I found it quite interesting that my colleague on That Side would have taken time to list a number of recommendations which she would have failed to implement during her tenure as Minister of Health, and which were not implemented under the past Minister of Health. I want to say thanks to the Honourable Senator, but that the Minister of Health and the Cabinet of this new Government have identified the shortcomings of what we have inherited and are acting to address them.

Mr. President, you would have heard the contributions of previous speakers, and these shortcomings have clearly been factored into the projections of this Government. Mr. President, I could have only wondered aloud why it was that the Honourable Senator did not implement these things, and having been relieved of that portfolio, why she was not allowed to contribute as a Member of the former Cabinet, but I can waste no more time on that.

Mr. President, I want to say that in supporting this Bill and seeing it being implemented at some point in time, that it facilitates the ongoing professional development of our nurses. Sir, I am happy to say that in his contribution, the Honourable Opposition Senator made repeated statements about poaching. I noticed the Honourable Opposition Senator said he would not be partisan because, in that sense, he would have been taking his own colleague to task, because it would have been her comments when she talked about poaching.

SENATOR K. D. SYMMONDS: On a point of order. Mr. President, for the Honourable Senator to suggest that I was taking my colleague to task is to mislead this Honourable Chamber. At no stage did I attempt to take my colleague or anyone else during my speech to task. I simply said I would use a different word.

SENATOR Mrs. V.I. SANDIFORD-GARNER: Mr. President, on a point of elucidation. I sat here and heard the Honourable Senator, the former Minister of Health, speaking to poaching. I also heard the Honourable Opposition Senator contradicting...

SENATOR K. D. SYMMONDS: Mr. President, on a point of order. It would appear to me there is a complete misappreciation of the Standing Orders of the Senate of

Barbados. As I understand it, Honourable Members cannot rise on a point of elucidation, to elucidate aspects of someone else's speech. Sir, this is what Senator Sandiford-Garner is now purporting to do.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Honourable Senator, I believe you were slightly premature. The Chair understood her to be going on to explain.

SENATOR Mrs. V.I. SANDIFORD-GARNER: Mr. President, I do not know why it is so uncomfortable for these persons to stay in their seats. The point of elucidation is based on the fact that I heard Senator Symmonds saying that St. Vincent had trained 200 more nurses than they needed.

SENATOR K. D. SYMMONDS: On a point of order. Mr. President, the Honourable Senator is now purporting to elucidate my speech, which the Honourable Senator cannot do, neither intellectually I submit, nor in accordance with the Law that governs this Honourable Chamber. Mr. President, please rule. The Honourable Senator can elucidate her speech, but not mine.

Mr. PRESIDENT: I draw to your attention that until she has elucidated, I would not know what it is she is elucidating.

SENATOR Mrs. V. I. SANDIFORD-GARNER: Mr. President, I would only wish to reiterate the position taken earlier, which would have been the position taken by the Opposition Senator, who would have seemed to have concurred with the statements made by the Government's Senator.

I thank you.

SENATOR the Hon. Miss M. P. O. McCLEAN: Mr. President, in wrapping up, I want to emphasise a point made by another Honourable Senator. That point did not speak to poaching but to a regional approach to the solution of the nursing shortage, which is a worldwide phenomenon. As my colleague on This Side has suggested, the current Minister of Health, in identifying St. Vincent as a source of nurses, has recognised two things.

The Honourable Senator has recognised that the approach to training of a >surplus= of persons would support a regional approach to addressing the shortage. It also does something for St. Vincent, it reduces the likelihood of those persons exiting the Region.

I believe that as we go forward, our policies on proper recognition of professionals, in this instance nurses, would be demonstrated. We have demonstrated a commitment to find both traditional and non-traditional ways to keep them at home because we have realised that

salary is not the only option available. We recognise, as my honourable colleague on This Side has said, that we have to do these things, that it is not always what you do but how you do it. Sir, we certainly will facilitate the dignifying of this critical profession.

Mr. President, a suggestion was made by the Other Side that the profession is not as attractive as it used to be, and the question asked was why? Sir, certainly there is a lot of competition, but after several years of being undervalued, unappreciated, misused, and in some sense abused in terms of failure to provide the requisite support environment such as physical, material and otherwise, people felt they no longer wanted to be part of this profession.

Mr. President, like all Honourable Members in this Honourable Chamber, I trust that our support for the nursing profession and its efforts to regulate itself to facilitate the management of health care in Barbados would be recognized, and that it would be followed through, I assure you, by the appropriate implementation.

I trust that it would be followed through by a set of policies and programmes, to ensure that those in the profession and those aspiring to the profession would be proud as nurses working and trained in Barbados.

Sir, for those who recognise the beauty of this country and what it has to offer, we will implement the necessary programmes and policies in a manner which would ensure that we attract and recruit persons befitting the profession in Barbados.

Mr. President, I support this piece of legislation and beg to move that this Bill be read a second time.

The question was put to the Senate and agreed to.

On the motion of SENATOR the Hon. Miss M.P.O. McCLEAN, the Senate resolved itself into Committee on the Bill. Madam DEPUTY PRESIDENT in the Chair.

3.40 p.m.

Wednesday, May 21, 2008

COMMITTEE

Madam DEPUTY PRESIDENT: The Senate is now in Committee.

Clauses 1 -- 6, inclusive, were called and passed.

Clauses 7 - 12 were called.

SENATOR K.D. SYMMONDS: Madam Deputy President, my concern is about Clause 7 and Clause 8, but more specifically Clause 8.

Sir Clause 8 says: “the Registrar may temporarily register a person who desires to work in Barbados for a period not exceeding three months” and it continues.

Sir, if, for argument sake, you wanted to be registered here but you were going to be here for four months, just to give an example, is it the intention of the Government that persons would then be permanently registered? In other words, does this creation of a temporary register speak specifically, as it does, on the face reading, a three-month period, or can you be temporarily registered for a longer period of time?

SENATOR the Hon. MISS M.P.O. McCLEAN: I believe that having had a temporary registration for three months and the person needs an additional extension, they would apply again for a second three-month stint. As I said, this would allow for a stint.

SENATOR K.D. SYMMONDS: I think the point Senator Crichlow is making from his seat is the point I want to come to. It seems to me that this differs from the old Act by reducing by half the period of time, but it does not specifically say that which the Leader of Government Business is now saying that you can renew for an extended period. I did not want us to assume that it was automatically inferred because, as I have said, the Law needs to be certain and I was just querying whether we had deliberately sought to shorten the period, or whether this was an error.

SENATOR the Very Rev. H.E. CRICHLLOW: Madam Chair, could we leave this particular question until more light is shed on it? If we continue the Bill, one of the Clerks could check on the interpretation.

SENATOR the Hon. Miss M.P.O. McCLEAN: Madam Chair, the suggestion from the Honourable Senator is that we move on, but I wanted to go back to the actual text. It says:

“The Registrar may temporarily register a person who desires to work in Barbados for a period not exceeding three months where that person applies to the Council for temporary registration”.

I believe a three-month period of time for a temporary situation is adequate and the condition under which it happens is spelt out. If at the end of that three-month period the person seeks to have a second three-month period, then they are seeking on a second occasion to be employed for a three-month period. I certainly think that should take care of that particular response.

SENATOR K.D. SYMMONDS: Madam Deputy President, I am trying to assist here. Section 38 empowers the Minister to make Regulations generally for carrying out the purposes of this Act. I would want to submit that it should be drawn to the Minister’s attention that there is some concern as to the interpretation at Clause 8 of this Bill because otherwise we would be just taking it for granted that you can re-apply. It does not specifically say so. I know of other pieces of legislation which specifically create that power to re-apply after a prescribed period of time. If, therefore, the matter could be resolved by way of the regulation, I would be quite content to leave it at this stage.

SENATOR the Hon. Miss M.P.O. McCLEAN: Madam Chair, I believe that it can be addressed. It says: A the Registrar may temporarily register a person who desires to work,@ and I believe in the Regulation that can apply.

The question that Clauses 7 to Clauses 12 stand part was put to the Senate and agreed to.

Clauses 13 -- 30, inclusive, were called and passed.

S/A4/15:43

Sequence 23

Wednesday, May 21, 2008

Clauses 31 -41, inclusive, were called.

SENATOR the Very Rev. H.E. CRICHLLOW: Sir, in Clause 32:

“..for the purpose of procuring or attempting to procuring the registration or enrolment of that person, or any other person under this Act, makes or produces or causes to be made, or produced any fraudulent representation or declaration either verbally, in writing, or otherwise, is guilty of an offence and is liable on summary conviction, to a fine of \$5 000, or to imprisonment of 3 months or to both”.

Sir, the original Act stated that it would be \$500 or imprisonment for 3 months. I wonder whether the \$5 000 was not too heavy a fine.

SENATOR the Hon. Miss M.P.O. McCLEAN: If I may respond, I believe that if we think in terms of the age of the existing legislation, inflation and those things taken into consideration, and perhaps the critical nature of minimising fraudulent activity, certainly what we are seeking to do is to have an effective deterrent. Sir, that is differential.

SENATOR the Very Rev. H. CRICLOW: Thank you.

Clauses 31 - 41, inclusive, were called and passed.

The Schedule became the Schedule to the Bill.

On the motion of SENATOR the Hon. Miss M.P.O. McCLEAN, Madam DEPUTY PRESIDENT reported to His Honour the PRESIDENT, the passing of the Bill in Committee and Mr. PRESIDENT resumed the Chair and reported accordingly.

On the separate motions of SENATOR the Hon. Miss M.P.O. McCLEAN, the Bill was read a third time and passed and cited as the Nurses Act, 2008.

ORDER NO. 2 – 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 INC. OF PARCELS OF LAND, THE PROPERTY OF THE CROWN, SITUATE AT HARRISONS IN THE PARISH OF SAINT LUCY IN THIS ISLAND FOR THE PURPOSE OF TOURISM DEVELOPMENT

Mr. PRESIDENT: Senator McClean.

SENATOR the Hon. Miss M.P.O. McCLEAN: Mr. President, I rise to support the Resolution for the vesting of approximately 33.51 hectares or 82.8 acres of Crown lands at Harrisons Point, St. Lucy, in the Barbados Tourism Investment Inc. Sir, this Resolution seeks to facilitate the ongoing activity to afford this country additional options in terms of tourism development.

16.00 p.m.

Sequence 24

Wednesday, May 21, 2008

Senate A4, sequence 24, 4.00 p.m.

SENATOR the Hon. Miss M. P.O. McCLEAN: It is one of those Resolutions which would have been brought forward, given the need for continuity of Government, of course. In terms of this particular location and this particular piece of real estate, it gives this Government the opportunity to undertake some much needed development in a corner of this country, which has been neglected for some time. It also fits into this Government=s plans to bring about a level of equitable development across the 11 parishes of this country.

It is notable that for the last decade plus, two areas of Barbados have been neglected, the parishes of St. John and the parish of St. Lucy, as the Honourable Member for St. Lucy would say the only female parish in Barbados. The proposal of investing this land is to explore options for the further development of the tourism sector, within the context of the development, as I said before, of St. Lucy.

Sir, part of the plans for St. Lucy is the expansion of job opportunities for the numbers of persons living in that parish; for the diversification of commercial activity in that area, and a comprehensive mix of support. I want to stress not only in tourism development but concomitantly a mix of agriculture and a mix of living and working opportunities for the people of St. Lucy and Barbados because, location of commercial activity in St. Lucy does not restrict activity to the people there.

I anticipate that the Honourable Senators on the Other Side would rise to state that the property was something that they sought to develop. I want to quickly say that this Government reserves the right to revisit any previous plans. It recognises the importance of tourism development. It is this Government=s intention to put its stamp on whatever development which may take place there.

This Government also recognises, and you would have heard the Honourable Minister of Tourism in the Other Place speak to this, and several other persons that, in the last decade, plus the last 12 years, if I recall comments of a key tourism sector player, we have realised a diminishing of hotel rooms in Barbados. We heard talk and we saw a lot of activity in the construction of condominiums.

It is recognised by now, that while condominiums are important and it is an attractive investment for those who are engaged in condominium construction and purchase, it does not necessarily solve or address the issue of bed night accommodation, rooms, et cetera.

Sir, if we look across Barbados and we look at the various persons who would have invested in condominiums, a lot of those persons are not investing in them to gain any kind of rental income. In other words, if I am sufficiently wealthy and I buy a condominium for my relaxation, I do not necessarily see that it is something that I should put in a rental pool.

Sir, the point I am making is that, to date, when we look at the trend in the industry, while it has been attractive for investors and purchasers, the verdict is still out on the long-term benefit of that strategy, if we over-emphasize that strategy. It is an important element of our upmarket tourism offering, but at the same time, it does not speak, as

I said, to an equivalent replacement of the rooms that would have been lost in tradition accommodation.

I believe that in speaking to the vesting of this, it is necessary to say something about the track record of the Barbados Tourism Investment Inc. (BTII). I am happy to say, and I would probably use the term like an oasis in a desert. It was one of the few entities which did not report exorbitant cost over-runs. It was one of the few entities, and those capital works project that were undertaken by BTII, to my recollection, that typically came in within Budget. I reiterate the term that was like an oasis in a desert of cost over-runs.

Therefore, I envisage that under the prudent guidance of the current Board and Minister, and with the guidance of Cabinet, of course, identifying the appropriate policies, I believe that we will see the utilisation of that land in a way that realises significant benefits to Barbados.

I want to hasten to say also that from a policy perspective, one of the critical components of any development at that site and tourism developments generally facilitated by Government, there will be a component, where the average Barbadian, like myself and I daresay like you, Sir, can have the opportunity to invest.

We have seen in Barbados significant investment in tourism activities, and for the most part, the average Barbadian.

Asides.

SENATOR the Hon. Miss M. P.O. McCLEAN: I consider myself very much an average Barbadian. Certainly, if I have \$500 to invest that is money to invest, and as a credit unionist which is at heart and soul, and my fellow Senator on This Side would tell you that we have built a powerful movement in this country on small sums of money, and so, I believe that one of the things that will distinguish and separate our tourism strategy from what went before is something which was undertaken by a previous Democratic Labour Party Administration.

Sir, when I stand to talk about tourism development which can be envisaged as part of this vesting, I can speak to what, perhaps, has been one of the most successful joint ventures that has taken place. Sir, I speak about the Bridgetown Cruise Terminal which was started under a Democratic Labour Party Administration.

I must say that as a Board Member of that company from its inception, once public shareholders got on board, until my resignation to join this Government, that company stood out as a beacon; in the fact that it was for one of the first times, where Government partnering with the private

sector said that we will partner with you, but as part of that process, you have to bring on board Barbadians.

Sir, for those persons who had the foresight to invest when there was a public offering, have not regretted. Every year the company was able, through very prudent management, to pay those shareholders a return. It is therefore a model which has to be followed.

Sir, as a critical sector in our economy, tourism for many Barbadians from the perspective of investment and the returns which accrue to that investment, have been something at which the average Barbadian looked on, and it was felt that they could not participate.

Foreign investment is critical, given the share level and magnitude of the investment, but it is possible. In fact it is very possible, and should be critical that if we want to seriously engage the population in the business of tourism development, we need to do so in form and in substance. One of the critical examples of substance would be ownership, whether in minority form or majority form. Therefore, I believe that in looking at this question of vesting the property at Harrisons Point, we are doing something which allows the people of St. Lucy to get very much involved.

Senate A4, sequence 24, 4:10

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SENATOR the Hon. Miss M. P. O. McCLEAN: In essence, it allows us to extend the urban corridor. This is part of the strategy of this Government. It allows us to utilise a portion of land, which has been under-utilised for some time. We were forced by circumstances, which I would not go into now, to have utilised the former Naval Base as a temporary prison. It is not known to many Barbadians that there is a beautiful beach in that vicinity, which this Government would ensure does not become inaccessible to the average Barbadian. It also offers scope for us to move into many related areas of activity.

One of the areas we talked about that we have not focussed on in any significant way is community tourism. We have not focussed in any significant way on heritage tourism. I am sure that other people would share their ideas on that.

Mr. President, I anticipate, based on the "mouthings" of the Opposition in the Other Place, that there would be reference to agriculture. Sir, this Government and this Cabinet stand firm in its commitment to keep prime agriculture land in agriculture. It also stands firm on seeking to ensure that in the process of encouraging agriculture... We are more than a service economy and

even as a service economy, as the world situation now has been playing out, we need to eat.

Mr. President, I am sure I might have made this point in another place and maybe here as well in another forum that Barbados, as a small country, 166 square miles, would not be on any priority list if there has to be any rationing of resources by countries outside of Barbados. Certainly, in the issue of food security, that has to be something that is going to run parallel with any tourism development.

In respect of that, therefore, as this Government revisits whatever plans might have been identified under the previous Administration, we recognise that there is scope for health tourism and for the realisation of synergies. I want to link very closely two synergies, agriculture and tourism. We have heard over the years about efforts to realise benefits for those people in agriculture within the tourism sector. I believe that a renewed effort is necessary and there is a commitment on this Government's part to realise that.

When I think of hotels, and we have heard about up-market hotels, horticulture comes to mind. At the Bullen's Agriculture Station, which is Government-owned, I have seen beautiful flowers, which can do more than decorate the homes of spouses of certain people and so on, I would say no more about that. In going forward, we would want to ensure that is used as a station, which can facilitate the development of expertise and skills in horticulture using greenhouses, hot houses, hydroponics, et cetera.

Mr. President, I know that there is a lucrative market. I have dealt with young business people who have seen opportunities in plant rentals to hotels. Mr. President, I would not use this opportunity to maybe share some of what might be confidential information, but the daily cost of some rentals, like a set of orchids, to a hotel can prove to be very lucrative. Sir, the point I am making is that as I speak to this Bill, we have to speak to the vesting of land in a way that would realise the creative blending of opportunities, business, social and otherwise, for the people of Barbados, more specifically, the people in the environs of Harrison's Point.

As I said earlier this morning, I will certainly, as I grow older in terms of my tenure in this Chamber, not necessarily stand to speak for the allocated amount of time because I have been allocated that time. I have had over 20 years of standing and speaking for three hours at a time as a former lecturer. I believe that if I make the points I want to make, I should sit and listen, as I certainly would have an opportunity to respond as I wrap up.

Sir, the key point I am making is that the Resolution to vest this land is one in which this Government would

have the opportunity to utilise land resources to bring to St. Lucy a level of commercial activity and development which is not only tourism related.

Mr. President, in the process of engaging in tourism activity, there are myriad opportunities for complementary business activity. It provides an opportunity for us to explore the provision of housing. I recall somebody suggesting in another place that this piece of land could accommodate 800 houses. My question would have been why were they not put there at the time? It seems as if overnight that person who made that point just discovered, having been removed some time from that kind of activity, that was possible.

I believe that there is scope for the location of houses. If people have to work in that area, people may be attracted to move to the parish. There are several other areas in which this Government has explored and would continue to explore housing opportunities.

Sir, I believe that I can sit assured that I have convinced this Honourable Chamber of the importance and the benefit of vesting this land as it provides the focal point for the exploration of new opportunities in tourism. Sir, supporting those opportunities are a range of other opportunities, which would also speak in turn to opportunities for enhancing the socioeconomic and general well-being of the people in the immediate parish and the people of Barbados.

I thank you.

I beg to move that this Resolution do now pass.

SENATOR K. D. SYMMONDS: Mr. President, I listened carefully to the soliloquy of the Honourable Leader of Government Business, and I want to begin by requesting that we be fair. Let me say up front, Mr. President, that there is no issue taken with the substance of the vesting, but all those things tangential and collateral thereto which, quite frankly, had little or no direct material benefit - that is not to impugn on the ruling or the lack of ruling of the Chair on the matter, but, in my judgment - to the substance of the vesting. One of those which desperately cries out for a response is the matter of condominiums.

If the Honourable Leader of Government Business does not understand that which was the policy, then the Honourable Leader of Government Business could say so and one would be happy to edify. To make a bland statement across the Table that there was little benefit to be gained from the condominiums or words to that effect...

SENATOR the Hon. Miss M. P. O. McCLEAN: On a point of order. I did not say any such thing.

SENATOR K. D. SYMMONDS: Before the Honourable Leader of Government Business sprang to her feet, she could have allowed me to finish what I was saying.

Mr. PRESIDENT: I wish when someone else gets up or springs to their feet that the person who is speaking would recognise the Rules and “de-spring”.

SENATOR K. D. SYMMONDS: Were that in the English Language, I would be happy so to do.

Mr. PRESIDENT: I would try to say it in English the next time.

SENATOR K. D. SYMMONDS: I am obliged. We come to a point where that which is said about the condominiums does not hold any water. Mr. President, let us first of all understand that in the absence of evidence by way of figures, which would help us to understand what the Honourable Leader of Government Business is alluding to when she speaks about a decrease in the accessibility to hotel rooms as a result of the condominiums policy, I do not buy the argument, because I sat as part of a Cabinet for five years where meticulous effort was placed to ensure that bed availability in this country expanded rather than decreased.

Senate A4 Sequence 26

4.20 p.m.

Wednesday, May 21, 2008

SENATOR K. D. SYMMONDS: Mr. President, the fact of the matter is that is that if you drive along the South Coast, and I will begin along the South Coast before I go West because, perhaps, there has been a little much too absorption of the folklore under the fig tree at night during January and late December, so to the point that you believe that folklore has become a reality.

Mr. President, if you would pass Accra Beach Hotel today, you would see that the entire property is now taken up by the hotel. Sir, a year or two ago, that was not the case, now there has been an expansion of at least 50 to 70 rooms. If you would go a little further along the South Coast, going to St. Lawrence Gap, there is Casuarina Hotel, which was taken out of business for a period of about six months and has substantially been expanded.

Sir, further up the coast, there is Bougainvillea Hotel, where 100-plus rooms have been added. There is a similar situation at the former Asta Beach Hotel. When you go as far easterly as the Crane, the Crane was completely revamped. Sir, to see the Crane Beach today is to see a Crane Beach which offers at least four times, if not more,

the bed capacity than it did five or six years ago. What then is it that the Leader of Government Business speaks of?

Mr. President, the Hilton Hotel was knocked down and rebuilt and additional capacity has been added to it under the last Government. What is it that the Leader of Government Business speaks of? Sir, I will speak of the much touted GEMS of Barbados. The South Coast of Barbados, when seen in juxtaposition to the rest, was like the tale of two cities.

There was little or nothing prior to the marshalling of those hotel properties called GEMS of Barbados on the South Coast. There was little or nothing of a flagship to attract people to long-term stay on the South Coast of Barbados. Sir, next to the Amaryllis Beach Resort, there is the Savannah Hotel where there is substantial investment.

Mr. President, I can speak to the Amaryllis Beach Resort at length because it was prior to my going to Cabinet that I was the Attorney, and I know that \$24 million was spent in the revamping of that hotel, not in condominiums, but in rooms.

Mr. President, there is another concept, and this is, perhaps, what the Leader of Government Business does not grapple with well. The marketplace makes demands for a number of different types of accommodation. There are some people who wish to come here and have the condominium-type accommodation. There are others who bring their families, who wish to have maid service in the morning, prepared breakfast and dinner. Sir, that is why we have an all-inclusive brand, that is why we have a traditional Modified American Plan, and a condominium-type plan.

Mr. President, there are many properties on the West Coast which are, in fact, condominium hotels. Sir, for a period of time during the year, let us say three months, those properties cease to offer the traditional hotel service and instead offer a condominium-type service. This would be the same property, but which would be offering two different types of service.

There are some properties in Barbados which, even as they operate as a hotel for one percentage of square footage of their bed space or room space available, at the same time, are operating condominium facilities side by side on the same property and on a day-by-day basis. Therefore, let us not rush to judgment, without clearly understanding the figures or the concept.

Mr. President, I have started on the South Coast and I am going to go to the West Coast. The tale on the West Coast reads the same way. Sir, the Four Seasons property is not a minor investment. It is not about condominiums. It is about beds. Sir, whether or not Honourable Senators wish

to accept it, the transformation that took place at Sandy Lane to expand its capacity took place under the Barbados Labour Party.

Asides.

SENATOR P.W.B. GILKES: On a point of order. Mr. President, I would like to point out to Senator Symmonds that the reservations at Sandy Lane yielded less useable rooms than before the renovation.

Asides.

SENATOR K. D. SYMMONDS: Mr. President, the issue is larger than that. It is an issue which touches and concerns an appreciation of the fact that meticulously the last Government sought to build out opportunities for our local brand. I heard that which passed in the Other Place.

Mr. President, I have said it before and will say it again, I will never comment unfavourably on the Other Place, but this talk about attracting so-called brand names was never an issue for Barbados under the Barbados Labour Party Government. There was not a decline in tourism receipts, but what happened was that we did it without the multi-nationals coming here to exploit persons. This is why our tourism sector has never hemorrhaged the way Jamaica's has on the eventful September 2001, when their planes were pulled out of the sky. Bahamas and Jamaica also suffered the way they did. Sir, we did not suffer because of the fact that we were not caught up in the multi-national thing.

We had a number of hotels, some of which could be described as boutique, many of them local brands, and I give you an example. Sir, the Prime Minister just met in Hong Kong with the owners of Elegant Hotels, and you are not going to hear in here how favourably the Prime Minister saw the business of Elegant Hotels, while he was in Hong Kong. I do not expect to hear that from the Leader of Government Business, but it is a fact.

Mr. President, equally, when you talk about that which is being done for the average Barbadian, I think the Leader of Government Business has to emancipate herself from the mental slavery of folklore. When you go along the West Coast of Barbados, it is hard to pass a gap where there is not an apartment or house. In fact, at one stage, I had a constituency house which, prior to that, was a bed-and-breakfast operation where tourists would come. It was owned and operated by a Barbadian taxi-man. That taxi-man had that bed-and-breakfast facility advertised in the national pool for rooms available.

Sir, around the time of the much abused and criticised Cricket World Cup, 2007, hundreds and hundreds of Barbadians benefitted from opportunities to have their

homes transformed into facilities where they too could get into the rental pool for accommodation in this country.

Mr. President, why are we not hearing that? Why is it that the Leader of Government Business would have that to be treated as a failure and not as a success story when she speaks at length about tourism development involving the average Barbadian?

Mr. President, while I am on that note, while the Leader of Government Business wishes to be political, unnecessarily so, when the Honourable Senator rises in rebuttal, what perhaps we would want to hear is what is Government's position with respect to the North American woman who is walking around trumpeting the fact that she has access to a Mr. Hartley Henry, and that the United States-based car rental companies can now have the opportunity, or have been promised the opportunity to operate in Barbados. Sir, it was the Barbados Labour Party who made sure that Drive-a-matic and Johnson's Stables....

4.30 p.m.

Wednesday, May 21, 2008

SENATOR the Hon. Miss M.P.O. McCLEAN: Mr. President, on a point of order. I may be a novice in here and, therefore, I will be guided by you. I know that persons will certainly seek to take advantage of the newness of many Members of this Chamber, but I understood that you do not call names of persons. I will not repeat the gentleman's name but I certainly would want your guidance on that practice.

SENATOR K.D. SYMMONDS: I notice that the Leader of Government Business has not spoken to the substance of the allegation.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Order, order, please.

SENATOR the Hon. Miss M.P.O. McCLEAN: Mr. President, I rise on a point of order again. I would have relegated the comments of the Honourable Senator to speculation. I certainly do not know of what he is speaking, I relegate it to speculation and I would have left it there, so I cannot speak to the substance of which I know not, and I, certainly, do not plan to get in here and speculate about things, but I believe why that may be his style, I do not consider it appropriate, and I will not get involved in that but I would certainly want to abide by the kind of rules and traditions of this Chamber.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Your point is made. Honourable Member, you have the Floor.

SENATOR K.D. SYMMONDS: The Leader of Government Business may feel uncomfortable or

discomforted by the new political advisor to the Prime Minister's name being called and if that is a problem, I am quite happy to ask that the records be read out so that I can retract the name Hartley Henry from the record.

Sir, I am saying that the substance of that which I speak about, I am certain. Sir, and you know perhaps what the Honourable Leader of Government Business should do. When the Democratic Labour Party has towards the end of this month or early in June, its retreat to discuss the way forward after the failure of the first 100 days, perhaps, then...

Mr. PRESIDENT: Honourable Member, please try to make a distinction between your "Asides" and the address to the Chair.

SENATOR K.D. SYMMONDS: Sir, I will do my best. Sir, what should happen is that you take aside a little time and speak with the gentleman in question and ask him what is his relationship to the North American lady who is calling his name so openly. While you are at it, it would be a good thing to suggest to the Right Honourable Prime Minister that when he is at Farley Hill to drink water so that he would not talk out the plans of Government so openly with people who he thinks are his friends, he should drink water at Farley Hill, at the Reggae because that is where the story began.

Mr. PRESIDENT: I do not wish to interrupt the Honourable Senator but I draw to your attention the relevant Rule which says that you must not speak in insulting language of any member of any one of the two Chambers.

SENATOR K.D. SYMMONDS: Insulting language, Sir?

Mr. PRESIDENT: I know insulting language when I hear it. Please do not interpret it for me, especially from your seat.

SENATOR K.D. SYMMONDS: Mr. President, if I have insulted you or anyone, I am apologising. It was not my intention to insult anyone.

Mr. PRESIDENT: I am merely drawing to the attention of the Honourable Senator the Rule which says that you or any other Senator may not speak insultingly of any member of either House of Parliament. That is all I am doing, nothing more.

SENATOR K.D. SYMMONDS: Sir, I am grateful for you drawing that to my attention and I make no reference as to why you do so.

Sir, I want to find out by way of the rebuttal of the Leader of Government Business, who makes such heavy weather about that- I wrote it down - this thing that she calls including the average Barbadian in tourism development because, Sir, unless we have clarity on the issue, it is not just a naked allegation thrown out there. I cautioned only last week that when I speak from This Place, trust me when I tell you I know what I talk about, and when provoked sufficiently so to do, we can produce the information as well. Sir, the fact of the matter is that we want to understand what is the future for Johnson's Stables. We want to understand what is the future for Drive-a-matic. What is the future for the Barbadian car rental businesses, many of whom are small family owned operations, Mr. President, facing already difficult time with an energy policy that is ill-conceived and mis-implemented.

Sir, I say that in the certain knowledge that is correct. I have concern for those people because they now have to face the full onslaught of the equivalent of AVIS or a Hertz Car Rental. Is this what is meant when the Prime Minister glibly says in this country that he will remove the middle man. Is that what is meant? Or is it that the Prime Minister....

SENATOR the Hon. Miss M.P.O. McCLEAN: Mr. President, on a point of clarification. I would want to say that comments of the Honourable Prime Minister and his use of the term "middle man" was in a discussion about the distribution of food in this country.

I also would want to say that, certainly, the Honourable Senator from the Opposition is waxing warm about a whole set of things which he does not know of. Perhaps, he might have been drinking water too but I really feel that the speculation has gone on and on, that he is speculating about things, and if he has the proof I would, certainly, want him to provide the proof of which he speaks.

SENATOR K.D. SYMMONDS: In due course, in due course. Mr. President, I am grateful for the clarity because I know the Leader of Government Business sufficiently well to know when she is rattled, and I take back that which she said in her rattled stage to that which she said clear to being rattled.

MR. PRESIDENT: I beg your pardon. I want to draw to the Senator's attention Rule 34. "It shall be out of order to use offensive and insulting language about Members of either House". To say a person is rattled to this President is insulting in the circumstance.

SENATOR K.D. SYMMONDS: I am grateful to this President and I will not use that word. Mr. President, let me

say disturbed. I trust that is more parliamentary and palatable to this President.

Mr. President, I want to say that the disturbance which the Leader of Government Business seems to labour under now suggests to me, in her words just now, that when the Prime Minister speaks of bypassing the middle man, that he is speaking of food.

Sir, prior to this statement when we were talking about including the average Barbadian, the Leader of Government Business took pains to talk about synergies in the tourism industry and I want to say that again the Barbados Labour Party will meet with the Government beard to beard on these matters...

Asides.

SENATOR K.D. SYMMONDS: Not you, I know you do not have any beard. That is figurative. Sir, clearly the Leader of Government Business is disturbed. Sir, the fact of the matter is that the Barbados Labour Party had a very clear policy. There was synergy between the agricultural industry and the tourism sector. It was from the agricultural industry that most, if not everyone of those hotels that had some Government interest and involvement, was able to draw a significant percentage of those commodities, which they placed as fair before the persons in the hotel.

Mr. President, when we talk about bypassing in those glib ways the middle man - again it is the middle man that suffers because the farmer who was providing the Hilton Hotel under the Barbados Labour Party, and the farmer who was providing to the Savannah Hotel under the Barbados Labour Party, is it that he now is to be bypassed because Mr. Bob Kennedy, from "Cost You Less, visited Barbados last week to meet with the Prime Minister?

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Asides.

SENATOR K.D. SYMMONDS: Do not ask how I know. It is a fact. Sir, the "Cost You Less" Chief Executive Officer is coming here to meet with the Prime Minister to bypass a small farmer in St. James, and one in Christ Church.

SENATOR the Hon. Miss M.P.O. McCLEAN: On a point of order. Let me just assure the Honourable Senator of the Opposition that I am not rattled or disturbed. My

only disturbed condition is amazement at the attempts you are making.

Asides.

SENATOR the Hon. Miss M.P.O. McCLEAN: That is fine, Sir. I am really amused and amazed that you would seek to mislead not only the Members of this Chamber, but the thousands of Barbadians listening to you via the media, with your suggestion about attempts of this Government to deprive local farmers from supplying hotels and so on. That is utter nonsense. It is ridiculous, to say the least, and I think it is also a very dangerous road to go, because you are saying things to the people of this country which are patently untrue.

You are misleading this Chamber. You are misleading this country. It may suit your political purpose, but it does not do anything to assure the people of Barbados that when we sit in this Place, we are doing so with a level of seriousness that is befitting of this Chamber.

SENATOR K.D. SYMMONDS: I will continue with your permission, because the Leader of Government Business can try to mask and camouflage as much as she cares to, and if she pleads innocence and naivete, so be it. The Leader of Government Business went on national radio and professed that she knew nothing about the Democratic Labour Party politics until some time in November 2007.

SENATOR the Hon. Miss M.P.O. McCLEAN: On a point of order. I really would stand on every occasion when I hear comments like that. So that I can set the record straight, I went on the Voice of Barbados with the Honourable Senator, and I was speaking in very specific terms. I do not know how he can say - maybe he was very busy receiving text messages, as we spoke, but I never said that I knew nothing of the Democratic Labour Party politics.

Sir, as a woman over 50 years old, who was able to read for more than 45 years of that time, and who read the Newspapers of this country from then until now, I would have been stupid to say that. It just illustrates the kind of grandstanding rather than the serious matter of debating issues of importance to the people of this country that I am here to do. I think it is unfortunate, but I will rise on every occasion to challenge that kind of comment.

SENATOR K.D. SYMMONDS: Sir, I will not be moved from the platform and the argument. You said that the Leader of Government Business took a position then that she recently joined the Democratic Labour Party. However you wish to colour that now, in the presence of colleagues, some of whom are alleged to have chastised you in the aftermath of the programme, that is a different

matter, but I am not going to run from that which was said. You may be repentant about saying it.

Sir, people will ask how you moved from joining in November 2007 to Leader of Government Business in January 2008. That may be what you have said in a difficult situation, but you can get up and explain that too. Do not shake your head. You said that you are going to get up.

Mr. PRESIDENT: I draw to the Honourable Member's attention, you continue to speak about "you". You, yourself have drawn to my attention and reminded me that all Honourable Senators must address the Chair. I am only appealing to you at this point.

SENATOR K.D. SYMMONDS: I am grateful to you, Sir.

Sir, I continue from where I left off. The people of Barbados have been told on more than one occasion, in the context of discussions on food and in the context of general discussions on the economy, about removing and bypassing the middle man. The people of Barbados have not been told who is the middle man.

Mr. President, it amazes me that by asking a question about a woman who has professed access to the highest level of Government and has an interest in car rentals from the United States, that can so cause alarm. It amazes me that calling the name Bob Kennedy, who everybody who cares to know, will know, is the CEO of Cost You Less, operating out of places like Guam and the Philippines, that does not operate out of mainland United States of America because of other issues, but we will get to these things in due course. Why is that supposed to cause so much discomfort and disquiet, and interrupt that which would have been a normal speech?

All I did was to ask questions of the Leader of Government Business, who would appear not to want me to ask these questions, and I wonder why. Sir, I am more fortified than ever before that there must be something more in the mortar than just the pestle.

Asides.

SENATOR K.D. SYMMONDS: Sir, business at the Hilton in the context of synergies - the Hilton Hotel would have been built and the electrical work at the Hilton was done by a Barbadian company. The furnishes in the rooms were done by Barbadian companies. Sir, when we speak in the context of synergies in tourism, I am not just speaking lightly and glibly. I am saying that I speak from the background of being part of a Party that was adamant that we had to create opportunities for Barbadians.

It is a wrong thing to put it abroad that there was in existence that synergy under the last Government. If you wish to say there was no synergy, then answer the questions about what is the middle man, who is the middle man, and where is he to be found, this middle man that is to be bypassed, and help us to understand who is bypassing him? What is he being bypassed for?

Sir, I asked the question about the farmer who provides his product to the GEMS of Barbados and did so under the Barbados Labour Party. I speak about the electrical contractor who provides his services at the Hilton Hotel, and I gave tangible recognisable immediately discernable explanations and examples, and all I hear from the Leader of Government Business is, that I am asking questions which are misleading the public. How can a question mislead the public? It is not a statement. It is an interrogatory. It cannot, by its very nature, mislead. Tell us about Mr. Kennedy from "Cost-You-Less". That is what you must do.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Just as a matter of interest for the President. How would that help us with the vesting of land? It seems to me that I am having difficulty following what is going on. There has been a lot of discussion about a mister, what is his name, I cannot even make it out, from somewhere. Is he someone who is vesting in the land at Harrisons? This Bill is about vesting and disposal and I expect a debate that is going to discuss land.

SENATOR K.D. SYMMONDS: Sir, I will come there. I am glad that you ask that question, because if you ask that question, then I can say to you, as I said at the very beginning on the issue of the vesting of the land, there is no dispute to be taken with me, but there are a lot of tangential issues which were raised by the Leader of Government Business, and the Leader of Government Business was not stopped from raising those issues.

Sir, it therefore follows, as night follows day, that if she opened the door to speak about them, then I have the right to respond to them. Sir, I have not spoken to any issue that the Leader of Government Business has not addressed as well. All that I have done is to be able to ask questions that have caused the Leader of Government Business and to otherwise quiet Members.

Sir, do you understand what has happened in this Chamber? All of them are rattled.

Asides.

Mr. PRESIDENT: In the interest of orderly conduct in this Honourable Chamber, I draw to the Honourable Senator's attention that his time has expired, but in view of the interruptions, I am going to give the Senator two more minutes.

The Honourable Senator has two more minutes.

SENATOR K.D. SYMMONDS: Mr. President, I am very grateful to you for allowing me to wrap up.

Sir, in wrapping up I want to say that the issue, as raised by the Leader of Government Business, I go back there again, on the question of tourism development involving the average Barbadian is a critical issue.

4.50 p.m.

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Senate A4, sequence 30, 6.50 p.m.

SENATOR K. D. SYMMONDS: I salute her for raising it, but I say to her that the Barbados Labour Party will never shrink from embracing the issue because we led the initiative of involving the average Barbadian in tourism development. I think that the Leader of Government Business has a duty to This Place not only to make those statements but also to speak to questions which are gaining currency around Barbados. People want to know what is the future of their little family business. People want to know who is the middle man. I am in the business of providing services to the big tourism sector that is making all the money in this country, which feeds hundreds of thousands of Barbadians. Therefore, if I am in the business of trying to sell my service to the tourism industry, then tell me who is the middle man that is to be bypassed. When people throw out names of potential persons who are bypassing the tourism industry, or who are being set up by this Government to bypass the tourism industry, do not just say you should not ask. Explain.

Mr. President, I want to remind the Leader of Government Business, there are powers larger than hers in this Government. While the Leader of Government Business may wish to pooh-pooh any of the allegations made today, woe betide the credibility of the Leader of Government Business, if ever any of those submissions are proven to be completely accurate. Mr. President, I submit that they will be accurate, in the fullness of time.

I thank you, Sir.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Senator Millington,

SENATOR Rev. P.A.V. MILLINGTON: I support the Bill to vest the lands but I want to make a few brief comments on the words spoken by Senator Symmonds.

Asides.

SENATOR Rev. P.A.V. MILLINGTON: It seems like every time he gets up to speak, he has to turn it into a political show, or he pretends as if he is in the Law Court for which he is trained. This is the Senate. I have not yet heard any substance to address what we are here to discuss, which is the vesting of the lands.

Sir, if the Prime Minister is looking to lower the cost of food in this country, and it is something that I also mentioned to him, I think that competition is good. Whether there is any fact to specific names or entities that are coming to Barbados, we also have the history of the telecommunications. We know what happened when there was a monopoly in Barbados. Overseas calls were \$2.58 a minute. At the introduction of a competitor, namely, Digicel, which is well known, the prices came down drastically.

I believe that with the policies of this new Government, we will have a reduction on prices. Obviously, we cannot deal with things which are global and beyond our control. We cannot fight the elements. We cannot fight oil prices. There are lots of things that we cannot fight. I believe that the policies of this Government are very clear. Therefore, we will do what we have to do.

I must say that the Prime Minister has a lot more back bone than the previous Administration because he is willing to take on big business, if it will mean that he will help a smaller person in the country to drop their prices. We will hear more about that, but I cannot speak to the specifics.

Sir, I will now speak on the Bill.

Asides.

SENATOR Rev. P.A.V. MILLINGTON: Barbados is in need of hotel rooms. I am very familiar with the area of Harrisons Point. I have walked it several times with the former owner, Mr. Ward. This land is not good arable land. It is about six to eight inches in soil and, therefore, almost on the verge of being called rab land. It has tremendous potential for the tourism product.

There are natural inlets and furors in that area. It is one of the few remaining areas of the West Coast available. I must comment on the fact that I find there are few remaining places where you can actually see the beach going along the West Coast. I believe that one day we will all have to pay \$1.00 to have a view of the sea.

I believe that this really increased during the last administration.

We talk about building, but very little provision has been made, from what I can see, for the average person.

People are putting stones alongside the road so that you cannot park, a little scotch to get a sea bath. Sir, let us stick to the Resolution.

The Resolution has tremendous potential for the tourism product. It is an old U.S. Naval Base and I believe it is a good thing that the Government is doing, as the Leader of Government Business has said.

We are not going to waste time in this Honourable Senate, but we are going to move on with the business of the people. With the help of God, we are going to have this Bill passed, so that we can start with the people's business. We are not about time wasting. Therefore, I am going to make my presentation very brief.

Sir, it has tremendous scope. I have talked to British developers who were interested in putting down an airport in the St. Lucy area. There was talk of putting down a sporting academy in the St. Lucy area in that immediate area, a football stadium, where players in the winter in England could come to Barbados to train. Sir, that area is going to be the hottest area of real estate. If you talk to most real estate developers, they will tell you that area has tremendous potential. That is the next big boom in real estate.

Therefore, the Government is doing a very wise thing in vesting that land in the Barbados Tourism Investment Corporation. I want to support this Bill wholeheartedly. I want to encourage the Honourable Senators on the Other Side, try not to use their time for political scoring of points, but to make valuable, and meaningful contributions as they relate to any Resolutions.

Mr. President, I support this Bill.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Senator Chandler.

SENATOR Dr. F.L. CHANDLER: I would like to make a few comments on the Resolution to vest the rocky lands at Harrison Point in the BTII for a tourism project. I would also like to take this opportunity to congratulate the BTII for the good work that it has done in the past, especially with the redevelopment, or the upgrading of Bridgetown and St. Lawrence Gap.

As I understand it, there are two parcels of land, 32 acres, which were used for agricultural training in the National Youth Service, and another 59 acres which were originally the Naval Base and the Youth Service and then the Prison. While I certainly strongly uphold and will always uphold the protection of agricultural land, this area in the First Schedule would appear to be somewhat rocky and would certainly suffer from the harsh salt-laden winds which will come off the coast. Also, as we all know, it is a

very low rainfall area and this would exacerbate the situation.

In the last few years, about 16 hotels have closed. At the same time, according to the Euro Monitor International, the numbers of long-stay visitors in Barbados are projected to increase by 5 per cent or 6 per cent by the year 2010. Therefore, I am sure that the additional rooms I am sure will be welcomed by those in the tourism industry.

Of course, you have to bear in mind, the change in the global situation which could change that picture, but nobody can really predict what will happen.

I am glad to see that the BTA is looking at additional markets. I think they are looking at Russia and other non traditional markets which should help with the situation, rather than sticking with the traditional sources.

We all know that the South Coast and the West Coast have become extremely congested, the West Coast, in particular, which I would consider now to be a concrete jungle. Although I do not think that the North Coast and certainly, not the East Coast should ever be allowed to follow this pattern, I think that appropriate tourism in St. Lucy would bring some economic life to that parish.

We also have to diversify the product that we offer to visitors, if we want to continue to attract them. I am sure that some visitors would prefer the tranquil atmosphere and the rugged beauty of St. Lucy, rather than the claustrophobic atmosphere that now characterises the West Coast, in particular.

Senate A4, sequence 30, 5:00

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SENATOR Dr. F. L. CHANDLER: Agri-tourism, as the Honourable Leader of Government Business mentioned, community tourism and heritage tourism are becoming popular with visitors. I trust that the community would be involved in whatever project goes on at the Harrisons Point site.

There are a number of small farms in the area which are irrigated. I drove down there recently to look at them. They could be included in an agri-tourism project and also in agricultural linkage projects, because there is a distinction between agri-tourism and agricultural tourism linkages.

I know of a really successful agri-tourism project in Dominica which includes visitors actually going on farms and taking part in some of the operations like harvesting and so on. It is a very healthy operation. Perhaps, the planned tourism project could also include a joint-venture

in a greenhouse with some of the farmers nearby. If a hotel is being planned, which I assume that it still would be on the books, then this joint-venture could supply the hotel with produce while providing employment for some of the farmers around.

I hope too that the site's ecological characteristics would be conserved and that the architecture would be in keeping with the surroundings. I hope that the plan to refurbish the Harrisons Point Lighthouse would come about and that, maybe, attractive gift shops where local people could offer their craft would be included in this plan in the area of the lighthouse.

Lighthouses are part of our heritage. As I have said many times before in this Chamber, they are treasured by other people in other parts of the world, but we have allowed ours to become rather run-down. I think that all the lighthouses, not only Harrisons Point, should be better cared for. I think it has been said that the South Point Lighthouse is one of the few metal lighthouses left in the world and so we should care for these and we should develop the area.

I think the South Point Lighthouse has a public works depot around it and I do not think that is the best use of the area around it. I think it should be developed for tourism.

From the point of view of the development of a beach facility, I see from an aerial photograph that there is already a groyne. I think that there are plans, if the plans are still relevant, to have other groynes. There was even talk of having an island built. I know that in Dubai and other parts of the world, they do build islands. I think it must be fairly expensive. I hope we can afford it.

I have been told that hydrographic studies were done to inform the coastal engineers when they are going about producing the beach. I trust that this work would be done efficiently using that information and that when we trouble one part of the coast that we would not see any bad effects on another part.

In going forward with this development, I wonder whether any consideration was given to the reasons why the North Point Surf Resort, which was fairly close to this, although it was many years ago and may be conditions were different, has failed. This development is in the same sort of remote area and we should try to make sure that the same reasons that caused the North Point Surf Resort to fail would not cause any new development there to fail as well.

I thank you.

SENATOR the Very Rev. H. E. CRICHLLOW: Mr. President, I rise to support the Resolution pertaining to the

Harrisons Point Development. First, I would like to commend the Government for providing us with the diagrams. We have been asking for this for a long time. They really helped us to understand what we are discussing.

Mr. President, what has taken place in this Chamber within the last hour or so is very disturbing. People cannot really think properly in this kind of atmosphere. I look forward to the Honourable Leader of Government Business in this Chamber presenting the Bills, or the Resolutions in all of their aspects or as many as he or she knows of the matter being discussed.

To some extent, maybe we have been trained badly because in the last Session, the Honourable Leader of Government Business spent a lot of time researching matters and so on. I am sure that the present Leader does that too, but I do not think that the Honourable Leader of Government Business should present the matter and surround it with a lot of controversial stuff.

They are the Government. They have a big majority in the Chamber. The people have given them the mandate to govern this country for five years and they must behave like a Government not like an Opposition. I think when all of these controversial points are made, we are just stoking the fires of the Opposition who have to, with just two Members in this Chamber, use every opportunity to get their points across.

There are 12 or 11 members of the Government, and if, for example, the Honourable Leader of Government Business spends 15 minutes explaining the Bill, or the Resolution and the person speaking for the Opposition uses his or her one hour every time, you could see how unproductive that would be for the Government. I really feel that the Honourable Leader of Government Business should present the matter in as positive a way as possible.

In our adversarial type of democracy, the Opposition is bound to oppose. Therefore, I do not think that the Government should be attacking the Opposition as such.

Senate A4 Sequence 31

5.10 p.m.

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SENATOR the Very Rev. H. E. CRICHLLOW: Mr. President, I believe that a change has to take place in our thinking. Sir, a Government cannot behave like an Opposition. In other words, the Leader of Government Business in this Honourable Chamber must present matters in a positive way and let us know what the matter is all

about. We then would think about it, and it is for the Opposition to oppose.

SENATOR the Hon. Miss M. P. O. McCLEAN: On a point of order. I hesitated to rise to interrupt the Honourable Senator, but I certainly believe that while I have the opportunity, I need a clarification. Could the Honourable Senator indicate how I surrounded my introductory comments with controversial stuff and how I failed to present it in a positive manner?

Sir, for my edification I need to understand, because I think I am missing something. Therefore, if I can reflect on what I thought I said, because if those comments are, in fact, true, I might have probably said something totally different from what I had intended. Sir, it would help me, certainly in my wrap up, to have some expansion on those comments.

Asides.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Honourable Senators, can we have order, please?

SENATOR the Very Rev. H. E. CRICHLAW: Mr. President, I did not say that the Leader of Government Business did not present it in a positive way, I am simply saying that the positive aspect of it should be dominant and that when it is attacked by the Opposition, in her closing speech she would get a chance to respond.

There are also other Honourable Senators who would take the two Opposition Senators to task. In the end, the Leader of Government Business would have the opportunity to answer that, but do let us have the positive aspects of the Bill, or the Resolution, so that we can think on them.

Mr. President, I am glad that the area in St. Lucy is being developed. As Senator Dr. Chandler said, the North Point Surf Resort was a very popular once. It is a number of years now that it has fallen into decay, but I am hoping this venture would be a beacon in St. Lucy. It is very good land for building. It has a lovely view, and it is a very pleasant drive from other parts of the island to St. Lucy. Sir, I do wish this project every success.

Mr. President, I support the Resolution. I am much obliged to you.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Senator Marville.

SENATOR R. O. MARVILLE: Mr. President, I rise without histrionics or impropriety to support this Resolution. It would, in fact, be most remiss of me if I did not, since St. Lucy was where I was born and it was the land of all my forefathers.

Mr. President, the area in question has been left, except for a brief span where it held prisoners, in general abeyance, with nothing happening on it. It has always been an area with perhaps the one beautiful beach in the North of Barbados. Of course, that did not mean that I did not swim in Little Bay or River Bay because that is what you had to do if you were from St. Lucy, and those were the available places.

Mr. President, I am all in favour of this particular development. Sir, I am not going to let tangentials like the notion that because the other resorts failed that this one may do so, for the simply reason that there are other resorts where a culture had no beach, and this one has an excellent beach.

Mr. President, I am also pleased that the Leader of Government Business has indicated that whatever had been agreed before was subject to review, because some of what I saw before did not at all please me, the indications of what might have come out of the project.

Mr. President, I heard in the Other Place talk about agriculture but the only two persons I can see around, who I can trust on agriculture, have agreed with me that there are about six inches of soil in the area involved and therefore that talk was idle. However, I do understand and appreciate the notion elaborated by Senator Chandler, of both agricultural link to tourism and agricultural development with respect to tourism.

I think this is going to be very important because we have, time and time again, failed to do this. If you go to any hotel in Barbados, after dinner you would hear a waiter offering a brandy or a cognac, but I have never heard a waiter offering an old Cockspur Rum or Mount Gay Rum.

Asides.

SENATOR R. O. MARVILLE: Mr. President, I wish this project well and I think that with the intention of making it a project that has synergies that flow into the population in terms of community development, community tourism, et cetera, it should do well.

Mr. President, I thank you.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Senator Boyce.

SENATOR the Hon. D. W. BOYCE: Mr. President, I rise to support this Resolution to vest this land in the Barbados Tourism Investment Inc. This vesting has been some time in coming to Parliament and I am glad it has now reached the stage where it is soon to be concluded.

Over the last several years, Barbados has recognised the need to increase the number of hotel rooms in the

country. We have lost many hotel rooms and we need, at this time, to re-establish more rooms of the quality that we have found are able to attract a good value tourism, one that gives real value-added to the economy.

Mr. President, this vesting puts the Barbados Tourism Investment Inc. in a position where it could intensify its efforts to develop joint venture projects in tourism, so as to increase the growth in the economy in investments, et cetera. Over the last few years, much of our tourism development has begun to move north to the West Coast. It has moved north and now just a few miles from Harrisons Point, there are a number of developments taking place which would help to bring a certain critical mass to the tourism establishments in that particular area. Sir, the chances of developing a successful project or series of projects in that area would have increased considerably over the last several years.

Mr. President, the vesting in the Barbados Tourism Investment Inc. also will create the opportunity for the country to go after attracting additional leading brands, to help to further develop our tourism. It would also put the Barbados Tourism Investment Inc. in a continued position to offer opportunities for local investment to a number of persons. It would provide the Barbados Tourism Investment Inc., the opportunity with its joint venture partnership, to redevelop the Harrisons Point Lighthouse and the areas around there, to make sure that we do not lose any of that heritage value.

5.20 p.m.

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SENATOR A.B. WALTERS: The plans, however, for the development of that parcel of land cannot be frozen. While there has been some initial development, that initial development is subject continually to review so that we can optimise the benefit we get out of the project. Therefore, one cannot adopt a static approach to the development. One has to treat it in a dynamic way to make sure that we continually improve what we get out of the project, and that process has to continue as with any other project.

Mr. President, the rest of the lands at Harrison Point for tourism also moves the development of our tourism product and real estate product further north into other parts of the country, which are now in need of additional impetus for their development. This vesting will give the Barbados Tourism Investment Inc. the opportunity to work with the other investors around that area, the farmers and the residents to bring additional employment into that area of the country. It will, of course, also open up opportunity, as Senator Chandler has indicated for more agricultural development as the agricultural farms in that area make

links to the inputs of the hotels in the area at Harrisons Point.

Mr. President, every effort will be taken by the Barbados Tourism Investment Incorporated and the joint venture partners, whoever, they eventually are, I am sure there will be several of them, to make sure that all the ecological considerations are taken into account and all the social and environmental factors such as access to the beach and beach facilities are improved to make sure that tourism does not just benefit the large corporate interests, but also redounds to the benefit of the smaller interests, and the general public in the area.

Mr. President, I expect that in the fullness of time, the Barbados Tourism Investment Inc. will have a portfolio of such projects which will yield a good return and will, in time, be able to offer through some subsidiary company investments to the ordinary Barbadians in such projects by way of taking shares in some special purpose investment company, which owns successful properties.

This, of course, would be a little time in coming because these projects have to be developed. They have to get to the stage where the returns are good and positive, and where the risk to small shareholders are not too high. This, I think is what will come eventually. The Barbados Tourism Investment Inc. as you know, is being amalgamated with the Needhams Development Inc., and, therefore, would have in its portfolio, a range of properties that it can use to help to drive the development of tourism in the country back to a stage where we want to get that tourism.

Mr. President, I, therefore, wish, unreservedly, to support this Resolution. I thank you.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Senator Thompson.

SENATOR Miss H.E. THOMPSON: I would wish to support the Resolution before the Chamber, not only because it originated with the former Administration, as the Leader of Government Business pointed out but because it makes good sense. Sir, much as I am adversarial in my approach to political matters and I concede it readily, you will find that where things make good sense for the development of the country that I will, in fact, support because I think that is my responsibility, and that is my view of the way it should be approached. Clearly, there is going to be a political divide. There is going to be a policy divide on issues but where I think that something genuinely makes good sense... Sir, persons who are new to Cabinet will soon come to realise that, if they have not already, that you do not have 100 per cent agreement, with the things for which you must carry responsibility, so I will not have 100 per cent agreement and where there is a divergence, I will

say what it is but once I do agree, Sir, I am supporting this because it makes sense.

Mr. President, the Naval Facility, and I must disagree with Senator Marville, was not in abeyance. It was being used for the Youth Service because it was already a military type installation built in. A lot of expansion and upgrading took place for the Youth Service to be located there. I am very familiar with the beach because I spent some time on it when my husband and I were courting. In those days, he would take me on Saturdays for drives all over the country and we would spend hours on beaches exploring caves, climbing hillsides and it was really quite wonderful.

Asides.

SENATOR Miss H.E. THOMPSON: I must confess that it does bring back very pleasant memories for me of some Saturday afternoons spent at that location. As a matter of fact, I remember at that time the Defence Force was carrying out some activities there and you could see the military personnel and so on.

Mr. President, I notice that several Members spoke to the issue of the agricultural usage, and I am just cautioning Senator Millington that while it is true that this is not particularly quite good land, and could not be classified as agricultural, in fact, that part of St. Lucy really cannot be. There are people who, in other parts of St. Lucy, struggle with farming and you have to admire their heroic effort because the soil in certain parts of St. Lucy is not the best. There is a lot of sea salt spray, sea salt blast, sandblasting and so on, and it is not at all conducive to farming and agricultural activities, but it is a common thing for people in Barbados who want to have land declared Arab land@ clear off all the top soil so that when Town & Country Planning goes - I say that having been a Town & Country Planning Minister myself - often you see it has been denuded of top soil to be presented as rab land when, in fact, it was prime agricultural land only weeks before the tracavator, bulldozers and heavy equipment got there, so we must be careful how we classify rab land. Sir, that is just by way of anecdotal commentary out of the experiences I have had when I was Physical Development Minister.

Mr. President, St. Lucy is one of the areas that has been earmarked for development. If you read the Physical Development Plan that passed this Parliament in November and December, 2007, you will see that various parts of St. Lucy were identified for upgrading, for development, redevelopment and different kinds of development. This project that the present Administration has approved and is continuing with was one of the projects that was identified.

Sir, another project which was identified, which I believe is to be continued, is a substantial town centre to be developed at Nesfield in St. Lucy, and in that case, when we talk about partnerships from which Barbadians can derive benefit, the Government was partnering with the Small Business Association and a number of other persons, who owned land at that location, to development housing, shops, community service areas, mall type businesses, centres for commercial activity in the sense of hairdressers, nail technologists, barbers and so on and quite a lot of work had taken place in relation to that development proposal. I know that it had gone before Town & Country Planning. There were houses designed for the area, so that too is advanced.

S/A4/6:30

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SENATOR Miss H.E. THOMPSON: I believe I heard an Honourable Member from the Other Place, indicating that project was still on the cards.

Sir, Members of Parliament will complain. You will learn that there are Members of Parliament, no matter what you do in their constituency who will say that nothing has been done, not enough has been done, more and more needs to be done, and such is the nature of the elected Parliamentarians. You see your constituency, you hear the demands and the cries of the people who voted for you, the things they want, the aspirations for their communities, and you want to deliver, so you are always pressuring colleagues to deliver more.

In fact, you would find that in an administration where you win 20 or 20 plus seats, the competition for the resources to do community-based activities, can really be very keen in the sense that some persons may have made commitments in their constituencies, can start to feel very alienated in terms of the timely delivery of their proposals.

Sir, I am saying this out of some experience around this Place. Sir, I have been in Parliament for 14 years now, and have seen things happen over time, on both Sides.

Sir, St. Lucy has been earmarked for development. There were specific proposals and development, well advanced, to the point that this could now be brought. The Government is quite right to review it, to see if it aligns with its own policy direction and policy vision for the country, and having done that, you are bringing it forward and that is commendable.

There are a number of other developments that have been spoken of in relation to, perhaps, extensions of this, as

well as proposals for St. Lucy generally. One was the request of the Honourable Member from the Other Place to have an airport. He has been advocating this for at least 10 years, from my memory. I believe that at some point it may be possible that it has to be considered.

I do not know if the country can have two international airports, but certainly the pressure at Grantley Adams International Airport for parking space for international aircraft, the big jetliners, and private aircraft, because that is one of the areas of business at the airport that has grown tremendously over the course of the last 14 years, the fact that there are now lots of private aircraft whether used for cargo, the jet setting crowd, local, regional or international businessmen, there is a significant business for small private aircraft.

You may want, if you are going to have a second airport, to look at using that facility for a second airport for the private aircraft and smaller aircraft. That will relieve the pressure at the Grantley Adams International Airport and liberate some of the space for international business and international flights. That is only a suggestion which you might want to look at.

Of course, I know that the cost benefit analyses would have to be done to determine whether any such proposals of a second airport, and for what particular uses would make sense, what revenue yields there would be and what return you would get on your investment, and over what periods.

I am suggesting that an airport for private aircraft and small aircraft might, in fact, be the way to go, and that would also cause tremendous generation of commercial activity and jobs for people not only in St. Lucy, but in the North generally. St. Lucy itself may not be able to provide all of the labour if, in fact, you are going to have a significant expansion of the parish that includes the town centre at Nesfield, the work at the Naval facility and then any other expansion proposals.

On that note, I would also wish to sound a concern that there has been talk about having a new berthing facility, a new cruise terminal in St. Lucy. I believe that a very careful environmental impact assessment would have to be done to determine whether such a suggestion is viable.

In fact, the Arawak Cement Plant will tell you that the waters in that area are so bad, in fact Senator Marville may know very well that these are not waters that are calm or conducive to having small or even large craft sit on them with any comfort, so much so, that for at least a week during the year, particularly during the hurricane season when the seas get very choppy, the Arawak Cement Plant Pier is inaccessible to ships calling at that port, totally

inaccessible because of the sea conditions. Before any attempt is made to have a terminal or any kind of cruise facility there, that has to be one of the considerations that is examined.

In fact, it was one of the determinations that was made when we had to consider the issue of a natural gas barge or a natural gas pipeline, because that is the location they were proposing to use. You can imagine trying to bring in natural gas barges at a time the seas were not conducive to it and you could not land them, and the barges had to come in every 48 hours or so! It really was a problem, and I am just urging.

Sir, sometimes investors can get very excited about a project which may be very good conceptually, but which can fail for small technical or environmental reasons. I would want to say that is something which we would need to look at.

Sir, my colleague, the Honourable Senator Symmonds, has already looked at some of the new investment that has taken place over the course of the last few years. I would also wish to remind Honourable Members that not only has there been investment in condominiums and hotel rooms, as the Honourable Senator Symmonds said, but there has been, in particular, incentives put in place for the tourism sector, for the greening of the tourism sector, the expansion and investment, and the write-off of capital invested, I think \$150 million.

I do not have the figure at the top of my head and I do not want to commit and say it was specifically \$150 million but, certainly, I think that in the last two Budgets, tremendous concessions were given to act as incentives for the tourism sector, and to give impetus to construction. Sir, both large and small hotels pursued those incentives and benefitted tremendously from the expansion programme.

Sir, looking at another perspective of the land for agricultural use, my colleague has reminded me that the Tourism Investment Act was passed in Parliament. That served to provide incentives for the tourism sector, and small and large hotels benefitted.

I think in looking at the shift to condominiums, sometimes we see changes taking place, and we lament that change, and hearken to what was there before. The nature of business is that it is a dynamic and fluid process. It changes. Investment capital moves quickly. Investors seek to go where opportunities are created, and as the market changes, they respond to those changes. Some of them drive the changes in the market. Hence, the opening of the condominium market represents a change in the culture and the business, and what you have to do. What we were attempting to do is to evolve different kinds of

accommodation. You had small hotels, larger hotels, private rooms and bed and breakfast.

In fact, we evolved at the Environmental Special Projects Unit, now the Natural Heritage Division, a whole programme including bed and breakfast in the heart of St. Thomas, called the "Heart of Barbados". That programme involved part of the upgrading of Harrison's Cave, opportunities for persons from the area to have the first call on the shops and businesses generated by Harrison's Cave, and it included a redevelopment of the whole of Allen View under the Urban Housing Programme to be funded by IDB, together with components for micro business, which would have allowed the establishment of a number of shops and kiosks, all along Allen View, as visitors were going into the Cave.

5.40 p.m.

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SENATOR Miss H. E. THOMPSON: Therefore, the community did not just see people passing through their district. They were able to benefit and capture business at the point of entry and exit before they even got to the commercial entity, which was the Cave. Sir, that is the way the plan evolved.

In relation to heritage tourism, the Honourable Senator Boyce can confirm that there were discussions in relation to the redevelopment of Farley Hill. Arlington House was developed with a beautiful interactive museum. I would encourage Senators who have not been down there to experience it that one day when they are in Speightstown to go into the museum. The work that was done there is extremely impressive. You will see how the whole of Speightstown is recreated with a highly interactive museum.

In addition, there were Tyrol Cot and the George Washington House. There was specific marketing around these particular facilities. The Empire site was also to be upgraded. These speak to the kinds of heritage activities and links which the Administration was seeking to create.

Sir, our tourism product is not new. We have sought to diversify it. We must not only diversify it with new hotel plants but with new attractions, so that repeat visitors and people who come here, of varying ages and socio-economic groups, can enjoy.

I am not challenging the Administration to tell us today because I know they are new, but I want to hear, how

they will seek, not only to diversify their hotel product by adding new rooms and new plant, but to give consideration to continuing the bed and breakfast models and the home accommodation.

Bermuda says that it only wants people who are upmarket. There are other destinations that say the same. If you go to Mystique, you know that you are going to spend money. Barbados has always developed a tourism product which caters to the full gamut of the tourists, from the back packer to the jet setter. Therefore, we must have a range of rooms and accommodation-types and attraction-types to suit the persons who are coming.

I am glad that Senator Millington made the comment about competition because it was this Administration that introduced the Telecoms competition and broke the monopoly, which was encouraged by the last Administration. Equally, the introduced competition into the energy sector; and broke the monopoly which Exxon/Mobil had. I trust that we do not see another monopoly, even if it is a local one, at this time.

Competition has to drive the market, particularly in these times of high energy prices. We will benefit, not only from having local and regional companies. We have to encourage the local companies, even if they are our supporters, but especially when they are our supporters, sometimes you have to let them know that there has to be competition, and they cannot get all of the business.

Finally, Sir, I think it was Senator Chandler who spoke to the issue of a concrete jungle, and the look of the West Coast. I reflected last year, I think it was that, perhaps, if we had to start all over again, we could do as they did in some places of Brazil and not have any beachfront development at all on the beachfront, and have only development on the land side, so that all of the vistas to the sea remain open.

Mr. President, we cannot do that now. Perhaps, over time, we can, as hotels become vacant, because when they seek to change hands, we might want to buy them. The point is that you cannot start over. There was a time when it was believed that the tourism product was Barbados= economic Saviour, and that coming out of the agricultural mono crop, tourism was the new major foreign exchange earner.

There came the time when we determined that the financial services sector was the way for small economies to go, because we did not have the base to have economies of scale for manufacturing and large scale agriculture. Indeed, Barbados does not have the land base that would give you large scale agriculture in the way that would compete with Vietnam, Guyana, Belize, or even in the Region, Jamaica and other islands.

Sir, now, we have determined that energy and oil are, perhaps, one of the revenue sources and foreign exchange sources, these are all laudable. I think we need to recognise that the marketplace changes. The dynamics change as well.

What is making money in the world or generating interest? Nobody could have anticipated before the thrust toward bio-fuels that corn would ever fetch the kind of money it was fetching or that the people of Asia would start to eat more rice than they were exporting and rice prices would go up. Therefore, you are dealing with highly fluid situations which have to be monitored constantly.

Here, we will have to determine what the shifts there are going to be within the tourism product, how we are going to manage those shifts, and what are the various interest groups which will be affected as the changes take place.

Therefore, in my view, before we criticise the condominium model, I think we have to accept that that is part of the market change taking place. Then, you look to see what are the other measures you can put in place that will generate revenue, foreign exchange and the kinds of diversification that will keep your product viable in a market that is highly fluid.

The issue of the allocation of lands is always going to be a highly controversial one on which there are myriads of views. The Physical Development Plan was passed in this Parliament either in November or December, where the last Administration committed 45 000 acres to remain in agriculture, with 21 000 of those to remain in sugar.

The present Administration spoke in its Manifesto of 30 000 acres which are less than already is committed by law. In a country like Barbados where you have a small landmass, there is always going to be the question of what is your best economic use of land. How do you use land? How much noise is generated in a particular location, vis-à-vis, residential communities, vis-à-vis, agricultural communities? Then there is the impact on the hotel plant, or the fact that nightclubs are located within close proximity of churches. Sir, I believe that is part of the challenge as you seek now to develop St. Lucy, with which you are going to be faced.

Mr. President, there is a Physical Development Plan already passed in recent times. You will have to determine how you marry these competing interests, how you satisfy the competing interests, and what is the nature of planning that needs to be done. You have to satisfy the various interest groups which will be affected, beneficially, or in their perception, adversely, by the changes that are taking place.

It will be interesting to see how that development continues, and what decisions are taken, in respect of competing uses for the land space at St. Lucy. I am glad that the Administration is continuing with the plan to develop St. Lucy. I am sure that the Member of Parliament will still continue to call for more to be done, because that is the nature of elective Parliamentarians.

I cannot agree with those who speak to there being terrible neglect and so on in St. Lucy over the course of the last decade. Sir, look at the number of roads that had been done, the number of development proposals that had been started. The work is very far advanced. In fact, it would have to be very far advanced that within four or five months of your coming to the Government, you could review the St. Lucy Plan for Harrison's Point and bring it to Parliament. Therefore, there is work that was considerably far advanced and I am sure that all Barbadians are going to benefit from it, not just St. Lucy. Sir, these are national jobs, not just for the people living in St. Lucy.

Senate A4, sequence 35, 6.50 p.m.

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SENATOR Miss H. E. THOMPSON: I look forward to seeing other changes that would come about in the area and how the planning issues are going to be addressed.

I am obliged to you, Sir.

SENATOR the Hon. Miss M. P. O. McCLEAN: Mr. President, I rise to wrap up this discussion, but I feel that it is incumbent upon me to respond to some comments made by my colleague, Senator the Very Reverend Harold Crichlow. I was particularly confused, I suppose I could say. I could not understand the comments and I therefore feel it necessary to go back to the objective. Sir, I was asked to move the passing of a Resolution to approve in accordance - I am reading from the Order Paper - with Section 5 of the Crown Lands (Vesting and Disposal) Act, Cap. 225, the vesting in the Barbados Tourism Investment Inc. of parcels of land, the property of the Crown, situate at Harrison's in the parish of St. Lucy.

Mr. President, what I sought to do in my discussion was to present the rationale for the vesting and to go on to present an approach to its development. I also identified the anticipated benefits, thus I spoke of opportunities for investment by small people in Barbados. Of course, I spoke on the rights of this Government to reserve the right to revisit any plans for that piece of property.

I, therefore, cannot understand reference to negativity on my part and the need to speak to this. To vest it of course, I needed to tell you why, and I think I did that. I needed to tell you our vision for that within the wider

context of our policies and plans for this country and to do so against the background of an understanding and a sharing of that understanding of the shortcomings of what we inherited.

While I am an avid listener and learner, and a respectful one, I respectfully beg to differ with the notion that somehow I was short in terms of my task.

SENATOR the Very Rev. H. E. CRICHLLOW: On a point of elucidation. My point was that whenever the Honourable Leader of Government Business left that premise, she went on to say: "My colleagues in the Opposition will say". Some of them might not have said anything at all, but she said that they are going to say so and so and they responded to that.

SENATOR the Hon. Miss M. P. O. McCLEAN: Thank you very much for sharing your thoughts, Sir.

Mr. President, I want to also set the record straight on some matters. The first is in response to the notion that there was no loss in hotel rooms. My recollection is that a senior official in the Barbados Tourism Association very recently identified the loss of 1 000 hotel rooms in the last 12 years. Perhaps, that could be understood if I may go through quickly the number of hotels that were closed in the last decade or so. I will do so not necessarily in order of closure.

There were Tropicana Beach Hotel, Kings' Beach, the Regent, Glitter Bay, Paradise, which is being finally rebuilt, Apple Experience, Oasis, St. Lawrence Apartments, Sam Lord's Castle, Club Rockley, Inn on the Beach, Coconut Creek, Little Paradise, Sunshine Beach Hotel, Fairholmes Apartment and Ginger Bay Hotel. I could go on.

SENATOR K. D. SYMMONDS: On a point of order. It is not for me to interpret the information which the Honourable Leader of Government Business is seeking to put out, but it would seem not to make sense to say that a room is lost if, at the same time, you are going to be saying that the room is being refurbished and put back in. To that extent, even if we go no further, the Honourable Leader of Government Business is, through her self-contradiction, misleading the Senate.

SENATOR the Hon. Miss M. P. O. McCLEAN: If I could assist my kind colleague. If you sum the total of all of the rooms lost in the 28 properties, including the ones to come back on, and you look at what was introduced in the same time period, there was a net loss. The time is late and I therefore would not go beyond that. I just wanted to set the record straight because we heard half of the equation.

Mr. President, I get very concerned, I suppose, when we are reprimanded by our elders, but I would also want to say that if I sought to be negative, I would have digressed to speak about Members of Parliament who would seek to falsify information, valuations on vehicles and all kinds of things, but I would not go there not now or ever having said that today. That is not my approach.

In my effort to support the Bill, I set out for you the rationale for the vesting and the critical differences that would accrue to a policy, or a set of policies to be articulated and implemented by this Administration.

The land in question, as we would have heard from previous speakers, is not prime agriculture land. It is not considered to be arable. It has not been utilised, to use the term that the last Speaker used, about seeking its maximum economic value. That is only one factor in an equation, because for us to fully realise the maximum economic value in the long-term, we also have to look at the social impacts and other kinds of peripheral benefits so that at the end of the day when we net the benefits we would realise an ultimate benefit, which is probably greater than some of the short-term benefits.

On that note, Sir, again I would reiterate that I will speak in sufficient amounts of time to justify the issue. We would have heard from several persons and, at this point in time, I certainly do not believe that I should seek to repeat what would have been said before or what I said. At this point, I would want to endorse and support the Resolution to vest this land, and I now beg to move that this Resolution do now pass.

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

OBITUARY SPEECHES

SENATOR Miss H. E. THOMPSON: Mr. President, during the course of the last month or so, a former member of this Honourable Senate went to the great beyond. I speak of former Senator Hutson Linton who is well-known to those of us who maybe a little older or who may have been around the political parties for a while longer than some of the younger faces in the Chamber.

Mr. President, Senator Linton acquired the sobriquet of lilliputian. He was a diminutive man. He was not just short, he was very small in stature. I believe he was about my height. I am only five foot and he was considerably shorter than I am. The sobriquet of lilliputian was put on him by the late Right Excellent Errol Barrow, a National Hero of this country, when he had the tenacity and courage to contest the Election in St. John, well knowing that the result would not have been a favourable one, but thinking that it would provide him, if nothing else, with good

entertainment, the opportunity to make a lot of new friends and to have to speak on the platform.

Senate A4 Sequence 36

6.00 p.m.

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SENATORr Miss H. E. THOMPSON: Mr. President, once the Right Excellent Errol Walton Barrow deemed him, during the course of a political meeting, a “lilliputian”, he was so called by everybody, BLP, DLP or NDP, once that political campaign was over. Sir, the truth is that once he got the “Lilliputian” vote, there were so few recorded against the National Hero of Barbados, the then Parliamentarian for St. John, Errol Barrow, as he was then. Sir, of course, being a Member of the Barbados Labour Party, I had the opportunity to meet him.

Mr. President, for those who did not know Hutson Linton, he was an utterly urbane and decent person. He had all of the values of the traditional and rural Barbadian. He had a lot of charm and grace. He would stop to help an old lady and would always ask after persons. In fact, he followed one of the very good political traditions of this Honourable Chamber. He maintained a lifelong friendship with another Honourable Member of the Other Place, Keith Simmons, Attorney-at-law. The both of them were very good friends, I believe, to the end.

Sir, Hutson Linton was the kind of person who made many friends of all social classes. He could get on with anybody and everybody. He always had a joke or conversation for you. He was always comfortable, whether speaking in terms of politics, philosophy or very common ordinary things.

I remember one of the business opportunities he got into was a shop in Spry Street, where a lot of liquor was sold and consumed. Sir, I do not know if more was consumed by investors than was sold but large volumes of liquor were consumed. The menu was written in chalk on a blackboard, and one would be treated to things like stew food, yard fowl, roast breadfruit and baked duck.

Sir, not only was the menu very traditional Barbadian food, it was also expressed in the Barbadian vernacular. You did not get baked chicken. You got baked yard fowl. Of course, with it being an establishment owned, in part, by a politician, there were “yard fowls” of all political complexions who would go there for discourse.

Mr. President, I was trying to remember the name of the shop, where occasionally I would pass through for lunch. I am reminded that it was called “The Cabinet”. Sir, what was very interesting about it, because of the nature of

Hutson’s personality when one went there for lunch, persons of all political parties and persuasions came there. Sir, people of all kinds of professional backgrounds had lunch there. It was a place for very, very interesting discussions and debates.

Mr. President, the political argument, the divide on Both Sides, was very cogently and articulately carried by persons who were parliamentarians, ex-parliamentarians and a lot of aspiring parliamentarians, who, in fact, have never made it into either Chambers in this House. One would also have discussions about the issues of the day, about matters of economy and philosophy. Invariably, there were discussions about Barbadian culture and heritage.

Sir, that was not the only shop he had. He also had and carried on business at St. Philip. He was very much a Philipean, in the Philipean tradition. He believed in the people and the things of St. Philip. He defended the people of St. Philip. Sir, the Philipeans had their own accent and their own manner of speaking but Hutson was very much a Philipean.

Mr. President, in the tradition when shopkeepers held a lot of influence in a community, Hutson Linton had a tremendous amount of influence and in the tradition of many shopkeepers, he extended credit and kindness to families who were not necessarily doing well. Sir, shopkeepers know these things. When a breadwinner is laid off or when there is a problem in the family, there were few people in the community who would not have noticed it and, as a shopkeeper, he noticed these things and responded to issues of necessity with kindness, discretion and confidentiality. He could always be relied on to give assistance.

Mr. President, he was not too successful as a politician. He was articulate, but not too successful. He ran, I think in St. John. He contested one or two Elections, but he determined that politics at that level was not for him, and he gave it up with the force of the weight of the votes in St. John that came down against him and was contented thereafter to speaking on political platforms and at political meetings.

Mr. President, on electioneering, they would have the frontline people such as platform speakers and the candidates, but there are a number of people who worked hard behind the scenes to ensure that Government was successful or that a political party would become the Government. Sir, in this regard, Hutson Linton continued, despite the fact that he was no longer a candidate.

Mr. President, Hutson Linton worked and continued to work on behalf of the Party. He continued to give critical information, helping in the field, assisting with canvassing and holding public meetings. In fact, he often chaired

public meetings in St. Philip and St. John which for those of you who had the experience in the last campaign, is not an easy matter.

In those instances, you would have been speaking in the most hostile of political territory and would really have to be very careful about what you said. Sir, often, even though there was a slate of six or eight speakers, with scheduled times for appearing, they would not even bother to come, and so the chairmanship of Hutson Linton would have had to be fortified by something other than water. He would have had to carry on the platform at many political meetings for hours before speakers would turn up, or before he could get relieved.

Mr. President, in that regard, he was very effective. He spoke well. He spoke in relation to philosophy and politics and to other issues. Sir, he was a good rapporteur and could always give you a tale from the village that would always cause listeners to laugh. Sir, even if you did not intend to vote for this Party, you could certainly have a good evening's entertainment.

Mr. President, as an attorney, he also had some success. He was regarded as a good and competent attorney. He also had a fairly large clientele. He was one of the attorneys whom you could always ask for information and guidance. He was always willing to give support to younger practitioners. He was always generous in sharing work and bringing you in to help you. He had that kind of reputation, and always with his urbanity and sense of humour.

Mr. President, in his latter days, quite apart from his courage, sense of humour and all the things I have already mentioned, I do not know how widely it is known that he had successfully pursued a Degree in Theology. I did not know if he had an inclination that he did not belong on the earth, and would have turned his thoughts to Home and to God, but it is interesting that people could live all kinds of lifestyles and, in their latter years, could seek to get closer to the Church.

Mr. President, in Hutson Linton's case, however, his degree in Theology and his commitment to the Holy Trinity Church... The fact that he was a lifelong Anglican is another area in which he would have contributed to the development of the country and of the parish of St. Philip, and the Barbados Labour Party and this Honourable Chamber.

Mr. President, I wish to express condolences to his family and friends, to those close to him, to members of the Bar, and to all the associations to which he belonged. Sir, may he rest in peace.

6.10 p.m.

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Mr. PRESIDENT: Senator Walters.

SENATOR A.B. WALTERS: Thank you, Mr. President. I join to express similar sentiments to Senator Thompson. I would have met Hutson around September 1957 and we would have gone to school in the early days at Combermere and I believe the Dean might have taught for some. We travelled on the same school bus, Route 11 to Marley Vale. He came from Lucas Street and I lived in St. Patrick and the bus got to St. Patrick around 8:15 every morning and we journeyed to school.

Sir, later on, I met up with Hutson in London and we did a number of things together. We played cricket together for the same team in West London and he also played cricket for the Barbados High Commission team. He was an average player. His brother, Henderson, was a very much better player than he was and really should have gone much further in cricket. I met him again while I was studying at Elen College of Technology while pursuing a national diploma in business studies and Hutson at the time was teaching Law as one of the areas that he had just completed his examinations in.

Sir, in my personal life, Hutson was the master of ceremony at my wedding reception in September 1971 and was also was the attorney who defended my ex-wife in the divorce proceeding. I say that but on the other hand, Senator Thompson, if she remembers also held a brief for me in those said proceedings in 1987, so we had some connection.

Mr. President, a number of the things which Senator Thompson would have said about the late Senator Linton are true. He was quite a jovial, young man. We spent some time in London playing dominoes, playing cricket, old talking and visiting the High Commission. I remember a few occasions when Sir Cameron Tudor was High Commissioner in London, many evenings at the High Commission playing dominoes, eating corned beef and rice. That was the staple diet for the guys who played dominoes.

Mr. President, he certainly made a contribution to the very many people in the St. Philip area. He made a contribution, as far as I am aware, to my own development later not only at Elen, but there was an occasion when he came home in 1981 when I wanted some information to finish off my Masters in Law that, in fact, he offered some assistance in that area. I shall certainly miss him and I would wish to express on my family and certainly on behalf of others Members on This Side of the Senate our deepest sympathy and condolences to his relatives, friends and, may he rest in peace.

Mr. PRESIDENT: The Deputy President and I and our respective families would like to join with the two colleagues who have spoken on behalf of the entire Senate, as we offer condolences to the family, friends and colleagues of the late Senator Hutson Linton. He was, indeed, one of those quintessential Barbadians who, although on the Other Side of the political fence, never failed to exercise the decency and honour with which some of us of the old political school believed that Barbados has been a proud progenitor.

It is not easy to say goodbye to persons who have brought joy into your life but, on this occasion, I believe it would be unacceptable to Senator Linton if we prolonged the discussion of his demise. I think his life is summed up in the fact that at a ripe old age, I say with apology, he found it desirable, necessary and successfully concluded a degree in theology. There is many a younger person who continues to struggle in that direction, not quite as successful.

An appropriate Resolution will be forwarded to the friends and family as is the tradition of this Honourable Chamber and we will include the necessary and appropriate words of condolences.

I shall now ask Honourable Members to stand in their places as a mark of the approval of the Resolution of Condolence.

(The Senate rose and observed a moment of silence in respect of the late Mr. Hutson Linton, former Senator).

CONGRATULATORY SPEECHES

SENATOR K.D. SYMMONDS: Mr. President, if I may crave your indulgence, I would want to direct the attention of this Senate to a congratulatory Resolution. I think it is only appropriate that this Chamber recognises one of our own. It is all too often, indeed, as we just did, that we tend to recognise and reflect on the achievements of those who would otherwise be our peers when it is, perhaps, too late for them to hear us.

I take some pleasure, at this stage, to direct the minds of our colleagues to the fact that my colleague, Senator Thompson, very recently was called upon to travel to Singapore to receive an award. Not only an award, dare I say, Sir, but perhaps the most premier international environmental award which can be offered outside of the Nobel Peace Prize.

Sir, that is an award that is entitled, "Champion of the Earth". It is presented every year, Mr. President and colleagues, to the seven most outstanding leaders identified by the UN in the context of their contribution to the sustenance of our environment.

Mr. President, at an international time such as these, it becomes even critical that we reflect on the fact that a daughter of our soil; a daughter of our Region, the first black woman of the Caribbean has been able to reach that very lofty level.

Mr. President, what of the award? There are several persons obviously who have received it.

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SENATOR K.D. SYMMONDS: I tease my colleague from time to time and say that she is in such exalted company that perhaps we should now call her Mother Earth. The reality is, among the names of previous recipients are none other than Thabo Mbeki, Mikhail Gorbachev and Al Gore, former Vice President of the United States of America.

Sir, permit me to reflect that all too often in Barbados we tend not to focus on the importance of these achievements. Last year, or year before, this country was admitted to the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations, again an outstanding achievement for a very small State. It does us well to reflect on these types of achievements.

Sir, in the company of Senator Thompson, this year, were Helen Clarke, the New Zealand Prime Minister, who was awarded for developing a national strategy on energy and energy conservation, a Dr. Balgis Osman-Elasha, from Africa, who made a contribution to the United Nations Report on climate change, His Serene Highness Prince Albert 11, of Monaco.

Sir, Monaco, under His Serene Highness, was one of the first countries that had signed the Kyoto Protocol and then established a Foundation for the protection of the environment. Sir, there was another former Senator of the United States of America, a gentleman name Tim Worth, whose name is now synonymous with environmental work, I think spanning nearly four decades.

Sir, our colleague found herself in this exalted company, and she was, in fact, awarded for policies in the environmental protection working relation to global warming and sustainable development, along with community-based environmental programmes.

Sir, today, we heard her speak with some passion, I believe, and some zeal about the Heart of the Barbados Programme. I have, on previous occasions, considered myself to be privileged to hear her expound on the green

economy, an initiative of the last Administration, but again led by my colleague, the way in which one marries business and the environment. These were the issues which, perhaps, for a long time had been discussed in quiet corners in some parts of Barbados, but certainly had not been put out there before the public and, most assuredly, had not been led as part of the national policy.

Sir, the nominees for the awards can come from any State, but once the nomination has been made, it then has to be endorsed by three referees, who come from outside of the Region in which you live. So that it takes on immediately an international perspective. Sir, after that you go through about four more tiers of screening, so that only those who are considered the most authentic contributors can reach this level.

Sir, as I said at the beginning, it is one of the premier, if not the premier, international awards. It most certainly is an endorsement by the United Nations of the astute leadership which has been brought to bear by our colleague, and I would ask that colleagues present support a Resolution noting and congratulating the achievement.

Thank you.

SENATOR the Hon. Miss M.P.O. McCLEAN: Mr. President, I rise to support the last speaker in congratulating our colleague, Senator Thompson, as Senator Symmonds so eloquently put it. She has joined the illustrious company of previous awardees. It demonstrates, of course, in her being awarded Champion of the Earth. I am not sure she would want us to call her Mother Earth.

I believe, of course, this demonstrates that small countries like Barbados can, in fact, stand out in any arena. It is my hope, as I congratulate her on behalf of the Members of This Side, that she will continue in her efforts and, certainly, to focus on environmental protection in various capacities, and she will work hard to ensure that we in Barbados, live up to the reputation of being a country, a first. On that note I support the Resolution of Congratulations.

Mr. PRESIDENT: On behalf of the Deputy President and myself we would wish to join in the congratulatory utterances that have been made by our two distinguished colleagues. Fortunately for me, or unfortunately, depending on your political position, I have known the Senator in her capacity as a child.

I know from whence she has got the ability to fight for the earth. I think that if you know her mother it would be difficult to call her Mother Earth. I am not going to go any further except to say, that we happily join in this congratulation of one of our own who has distinguished

herself. We will see that the appropriate Resolution is forwarded to the appropriate Place.

I thank you.

SENATOR Miss H.E. THOMPSON: Thank you very much. Sir, I just really want to make a very brief comment to thank the mover of the Resolution, and Honourable Senator McClean who supported it on behalf of the Other Side. Sir, we have our political differences, but I believe that on this occasion, because it was something that was achieved for Barbados, I am truly honoured and humbled to have received an award at this level, because when one goes to work every day and does one's best, one does not really expect to get something like this.

Before I resume my seat, apart from thanking those today who spoke, I want to say that political service has given me tremendous opportunities and great gratification and satisfaction, the service of my country. Sir, that I am able to bring honour to it is, perhaps, the greatest gratification.

I would wish to thank all of those persons who contributed. Very often they are politicians who are awarded and rewarded across the world, who are recognised for excellence in policy development or achievement, but I would want to thank all of the civil servants. We did not always agree, we will not always agree, but I want to thank all of the civil servants who would have, by implementing the policies which I envisioned, allowed me to be the recipient of this award. I stand on their shoulders, because unless they had done the work, I could not get this recognition at the international level.

Sir, I also want to pay tribute to my parents, both of whom are now well past their mid-eighties, who were born poor black people in Barbados, who I think raised me with a set of core values that allowed me, as I travelled the world for Barbados, to have the confidence to make the interventions necessary to have Barbados recognised, elevated, and to make us stand out in whatever the forum was. Sometimes it took a tremendous amount of fight. So I pay tribute to them and to the other members of my family, like my sister and my husband, whose support I always have.

Mr. President, I would also want to say that I have learnt a great deal from senior politicians in this country on both Sides. I saw when I came to the House that spirit of fight in yourself and other members of the Democratic Labour Party, who were then in the Opposition. Sir, that I was able to do it, I am simply saying that there has been a lot of inspiration from several quarters that has allowed me to achieve this, and I want to thank all of those persons who would have contributed.

I said all of the civil servants, in particular those persons who would have been my Parliamentary Secretaries, the same secretary, I found her in the Civil Service, who would have worked for me for 13 years, and my Personal Assistant, and all those who contributed and helped me to achieve this. It has been a wonderful moment for me and I am glad to have achieved it for Barbados, and to be able to receive your congratulations.

I thank the House for the graciousness in congratulating me in this very formal way.

6.30 p.m.

Sequence 39

Wednesday, May 21, 2008

Senate A4, sequence 40, 6.30 p.m.

ADJOURNMENT

SENATOR the Hon. Miss M. P. O. McCLEAN: Mr. President, I beg to move that the Senate be adjourned sine die.

The question that the Senate be adjourned sine die was put to the Senate and agreed to and Mr. PRESIDENT adjourned the Senate accordingly.

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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. Order No. 2, take-slip S:No.A4(32) about 5.20 p.m.. After the take-slip, a passage of about 480 words on the development of the Harrisons Point lands carries the label ‘SENATOR A.B. WALTERS’ with no call from the Chair. It reads as a continuation of Senator the Hon. D. W. Boyce’s speech. Please confirm the speaker.

Q3. Throughout. The source has ‘A’ and ‘@’ in place of opening and closing quotation marks (e.g. ‘Athe Registrar may temporarily register a person who desires to work,@’) and ‘=s’ in place of an apostrophe (‘Prime Minister=s’). Printed as in the source.

Q4. PRESENT. Two pairs of names are run together on single lines (Senators McClean and Walters; Senators Sir John Stanley Goddard and Crichlow), and the list spells ‘SANDIFORD-GARDNER’ where the speech labels have SANDIFORD-GARNER. Printed as in the source.

Q5. Committee, Clause 32. The clause as quoted by Senator the Very Rev. H. E. Crichlow reads ‘attempting to procuring’ and ‘a fine of \$5 000’. Printed as in the source.

Q6. Obituary speeches. Senator Miss H. E. Thompson’s second speech is labelled ‘SENATORr Miss H. E. THOMPSON’. Printed as in the source.

DEBATE SUMMARY

(Editorial summary — not part of the record.)

The Senate met in the Senate Chamber, Parliament Buildings, at 11.10 a.m. on Wednesday, 21st May, 2008, with the President, Senator Dr. B. M. Taitt, in the Chair; prayers were led by Rev. Father Errington Massiah. The President announced a request from Senator J. A. C. Hutson for leave of absence from June 27 to July 27, 2008.

Under Order No. 1 the Leader of the Senate, Senator the Hon. Miss M. P. O. McClean, moved the second reading of the Nurses Bill, 2008, which repeals the Nurses and Midwives (Registration) Act, Cap. 372, in order to maintain professional standards and deal with registration and training at a time of world demand for nurses. Senator Miss H. E. Thompson said the Opposition would support it,

noted that nurses were not mentioned in the Democratic Labour Party manifesto, and spoke of the Queen Elizabeth Hospital and of a specialist and management stream for nurses. Senator D. K. A. Griffith urged active recruitment, including of male nurses, drawing points of order from Senator Thompson. Senator the Very Rev. H. E. Crichlow cited the Standing Orders on the right to speak, with exchanges involving the President, Senator Sir Roy Trotman and Senator Miss P. I. Inniss. Senator Dr. F. L. Chandler spoke briefly, and the Sitting was suspended until 2.30 p.m.

On resumption Senator K. D. Symmonds put the number of nurses and nursing aids at as many as 1 600 and spoke of the need for a secretariat and of Antigua’s School of Nursing. Senator the Hon. A. B. Walters explained that the Bill set up a Nursing Council of Barbados in place of the General Nursing Council. Senator Miss P. I. Inniss noted that the practising certificate would require two years of continuing education, and Senator Mrs. V. I. Sandiford-Garner recalled her mother’s nursing training in Britain in the 1950s. Senator McClean replied amid points of order from Senator Symmonds. In Committee, with Madam Deputy President in the Chair, Senator Symmonds questioned temporary registration under clause 8, and Senator Crichlow asked whether the \$5 000 fine in clause 32, against \$500 in the old Act, was too heavy; Senator McClean said it was meant as a deterrent. The Bill passed as the Nurses Act, 2008.

Under Order No. 2 Senator McClean moved the Resolution vesting about 33.51 hectares (82.8 acres) of Crown land at Harrisons Point, St. Lucy in the Barbados Tourism Investment Inc. for tourism development. Senator Symmonds did not oppose the vesting but criticised matters ‘tangential and collateral’ to it, including the Prime Minister’s new political adviser; the debate brought repeated points of order from Senator McClean and several rulings by the President on the Rules. Senator Rev. P. A. V. Millington, Senator Dr. F. L. Chandler, on agri-tourism and heritage tourism, Senator Crichlow, Senator R. O. Marville, Senator the Hon. D. W. Boyce, on the need for more hotel rooms, and Senator Thompson supported the Resolution. Replying, Senator McClean said the rooms lost in 28 properties exceeded those added in the same period, and the Resolution was agreed to.

In obituary speeches Senator Thompson, Senator Walters and the President paid tribute to former Senator Hutson Linton. Senator Symmonds then moved congratulations to Senator Thompson on her ‘Champion of the Earth’ award, received in Singapore, which he called the most premier international environmental award outside the Nobel Peace Prize. Senator McClean and the President

joined in, and Senator Thompson replied. The Senate was | adjourned sine die.

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