
THE SENATE DEBATES

(UNOFFICIAL REPORT)

PARLIAMENT 2008 – 2013

THE SENATE

Wednesday, February 17, 2010

The Senate met in the Senate Chamber, Parliament Buildings, on Wednesday, February 17, 2010 at 11.00 a.m.

PRESENT

His Honour SENATOR Dr. Branford M. Taitt, B.A. (Hons.), M.P.A., LL.B.(Hons.)D.H.L.(Hons.) (President)

Her Honour SENATOR K. F. Ifill, B.Sc.(Hons.), M.B.A. (Deputy President)

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

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.), CMA, F.C.A., (Minister of State, Finance, Investment, Telecommunications and Energy)

SENATOR Mrs. V. I. SANDIFORD-GARNER, CIM, Dip. Mng., M.B.A.,(Parliamentary Secretary, Prime Minister's Office)

SENATOR P. W. B. GILKES

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

SENATOR D. K. A. GRIFFITH

SENATOR J. INCE, J.P., M.B.A., BB.A., DIP (Mgmt.)

SENATOR R. A. HUNTE

SENATOR A. E. HOLDER, B.Sc. (Hons.), MSW., LL.B. (Hons.)

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

SENATOR the Hon. Prof. V. E. NEWTON, S.C.M., M.A.,B.A. (Spec. Hons.). LL.M. (Hons.) (U.W.I.), F.L.A., (Gt. Brit.), L.E.C.

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

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

SENATOR R. O. MARVILLE, M.B.A., M.A. African Studies, B.A.(Hons.), SENATOR R. G. CAVE, CBE, B.C.H.

Prayers were led by Senator the Very Rev. H. E. Crichlow.

Madam Deputy PRESIDENT: This Senate is in session.

ANNOUNCEMENTS BY HIS HONOUR THE PRESIDENT

Mr. PRESIDENT: I am in receipt of an excuse from Senator Thompson from this Sitting of the Senate in a letter from Senator Thompson.

I am also to announce that I have been in touch with Senator Hutson who is making good progress and I expect that he would soon be able to communicate with us. We had a conversation and he has asked me to convey to the Senate his best wishes.

PRESENTATION OF PAPERS

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

1. Defence (Rate of Pay, Loans and Allowances) (Amendment) Regulations, 2010.
2. Report of the Public Enterprise Investment Fund for the year ending March 31, 2009.
3. Annual Report of the Operations of the Barbados Drug Service for the Fiscal Year April 1, 2007 to March 31, 2008.
4. Health Services (Protection of Minors for Tobacco Products) Regulations, 2010.
5. Annual Reports of the Anti-Money Laundering Authority for the periods 2003-2008.

6. Duties, Taxes and Other Payments (Exemption)
(The Barbados Light and Power Company
Limited) Order, 2010.

MATTERS RELATING TO THE BUSINESS OR
SITTING OF THE SENATE

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

The question was put to the Senate and agreed to.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

SENATOR the Hon. Miss M. P. O. McCLEAN: Mr. President, I beg to give notice of the Barbados Water Authority (Amendment) Bill, 2010.

FIRST READING OF BILLS

SENATOR the Hon. Miss M. P. O. McCLEAN: Sir, I beg to move the First Reading of the following:

1. Archives (Amendment) Bill, 2010.
2. Barbados Water Authority (Amendment) Bill, 2010.

The question was put to the Senate and agreed to.

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

Mr. PRESIDENT: Government Business is the order the day.

ORDER NO. 1 – ARCHIVES (AMENDMENT) BILL, 2010

SENATOR the Hon. Miss M. P. O. McCLEAN: Mr. President, the Archives Act, Chapter 19 (b) provides for the custody and preservation of public archives, public records and other documents. This is a simple amendment in terms of the way in which amendments may go from simple to complex. It seeks to expand the Archives Advisory Committee from four persons to six persons.

Specially, the amendment intends to add two individual professionals, the Chief Archivist, and the Assistant Registrar - Archives and Records of the Cave Hill Campus of the University of the West Indies. These two individuals are expected to bring to the Advisory Committee substantial professional capacity and expertise, and indeed, to work on the Committee.

Sir, as I indicated, this is, on the surface, a minor amendment, for which some people may want to give it a mere passing glance. However, I believe that in expanding

that Advisory Committee and incorporating those two individual professionals, it is a recognition of the importance of archives, of records, of historic documents and other materials to be continued in existence of a society, to the development, growth and, in fact, evolution of a society.

If we think in terms of this country, we have been fortunate within the confines of the modest means we have to have established a number of institutions, including a very modest Archives Department, which is of significance not only to individual scholars and researchers, but to public officials and visitors to this island who would want to understand the history of this country tracing back from its origins as a colony.

Sir, I recall, in my days as a student of the University of the West Indies where I initially sought to acquire a qualification in History, the pleasant experience of utilising the Archives, located at the Lazaretto. The ambience was one which was conducive to research.

Sir, notwithstanding the modest means, I was amazed at the information that was captured there. I was also concerned about the need to ensure the preservation of those and the need for enhanced systems of conservation, et cetera.

Sir, I recall that my interest in two very important institutions in this country would have been stimulated from research I did at the Archives. That was in the Friendly Societies and mainly when I got involved in the Credit Union Movement, my interest in the history and the evolution of the Credit Union Movement came from documents which I was able to research at the Archives as I got involved in my early days as a volunteer in that movement.

Sir, it demonstrated for me, as I said, that this society was built on the resources of many small people in many instances. It demonstrated that out of a simple model, A significant institution within our financial services sector has taken root and continues to expand.

Sir, when we talk about archives, I also recognise that within the systems of Government, there is also a critical need for information and the preservation of that information. I am sure, those persons who would have interfaced with any of the agencies in the public sector would recall, sometimes, before the introduction of technology, the use of large volumes of books and so on.

Sir, for example, if you went to the Registry to secure a birth certificate, marriage certificate, or other similar records, you would recall that those things were methodically recorded by hand and showing where we had to pay special attention to the conservation. I am happy to

say, of course, that we have moved beyond those, well hopefully we are moving because I cannot say that we have moved beyond, but we are moving beyond those things.

Again, I would want to stress the necessity of paying attention to these things, and therefore, the necessity for the focussing of this Amendment.

Sir, an archivist brings to a situation and brings to a country or an agency, or an institution wherein he or she works, the capacity to identify, classify and conserve critical information.

S A27 11.30 a.m. Sequence 3

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Senate A27, Sequence 04, 11.30 a.m.

SENATOR the Hon. Miss M. P. O. McCLEAN: Sir, if we are to attempt to understand or to really put the value of that contribution into proper perspective, we can perhaps look in the immediate past to what is continuing to unfold in Haiti, or we can cast our minds a little further back to the situation in Iran after the development there some years ago.

Iran, as we know, is a very ancient society and, in fact, as a result of what took place in terms of the war, a lot of antiquities which tell us something about the very age of those records were lost or stolen.

Mr. PRESIDENT: I am not sure.

SENATOR the Hon. Miss M. P. O. McCLEAN: Mr. President, I stressed antiques and antiquities because I trust that maybe some young people are listening who may want to understand. I was not referring to individuals. I was speaking of objects.

Mr. PRESIDENT: When those young people hear you say, "Mr. President", they might come to the wrong conclusion.

Asides.

SENATOR the Hon. Miss M. P. O. McCLEAN: Mr. President, you are neither an antique nor an antiquity.

Asides.

SENATOR the Hon. Miss M. P. O. McCLEAN: Sir, if we go back to those circumstances and, in fact, if we examine our situation here in Barbados, we often engage in construction and excavation as part of that construction and, perhaps, in that process engage in the destruction of very important items, whether they are tools that might

have been used by our earliest inhabitants, or they may be documents which, for some reason, would have gotten buried in a building that might have been demolished, et cetera, but the key thing is that it is necessary for us to develop a very structured and formal approach to the preservation of vital information. Mr. President, the same thing applies within our business and civil society.

We are people in the Region who are known for the anecdotal collections of our history, but we are not people who are given to documenting, and conserving. Therefore I anticipate, Mr. President, that when we look at a provision like this, it is not simply to undertake an action to amend the piece of legislation for the sake of making it look right, or identifying persons who seem to be appropriate. In fact, it should be a mechanism which empowers an Advisory Committee to be so advised, as to be in a position to make the best judgments about the preservation of critical information.

Beyond the issue of the society, in general, if I could go back to the Public Service specifically, and indeed the private sector, and maybe start at the private sector and come backward to the public sector, in terms of how I listed them.

Mr. President, in recent years, we have seen a number of terrible scandals internationally, in relation to the actions of companies and the efforts to destroy the evidence to cover up those actions. As a consequence of that, because a lot of these documents related to financial information, et cetera, we have seen in recent years, the expansion of the oversight function of the auditing requirements, of the accounting standards, and accounting reporting standards, et cetera, and all of that is intended to protect stakeholders, whether it is the investors, the public regulators, the citizen who wants to understand how businesses operate, et cetera. Similarly, as there is an effort to have greater transparency within the private sector, especially in the arena of public companies which have to publish their financial records, et cetera, we also have the intention within the public sector to enhance transparency and accountability.

It is evident, Mr. President, that this Administration is intent on delivering on its promises to enhance transparency and accountability. If it is to do so, a very important basis of establishing those two elements of accountability, and accountability has to do with the ability to review, access, evaluate and report on necessary documentation on evidential information, et cetera, and therefore, this provision is one in which the amendment facilitates the ensuring of an advisory committee, which has the technical and other capacity to determine what documents and other records or archives are critical, how best they should be preserved, how they should be handled to ensure the integrity and maintenance of those records over time.

Overall, Mr. President, I believe that when we look at this Amendment, it is one which allows a society, as small as we are, to engage in a very structured and systematic approach to protecting our history and those elements of our civilisation and the way we live, which will help generations to understand from whence we came and the contributing factor. It also allows individuals to come to this society, if they want to do research, to have an understanding of what are some of the critical stages to which we have passed.

I recall, Mr. President, on a recent visit of a dignitary from the United States, being able to present him with a copy of his father's Birth Certificate and for him, that was a very emotional moment as he was about to leave Barbados. He knew his father was born here and he came here with his father and so on, but he had never actually seen the document which says, Mr. So So was born here. I do not know if I should call names.

Asides.

SENATOR the Hon. Miss M. P. O. McCLEAN: I can call the name, then, I am speaking of no other than the Attorney-General of the United States of America, Mr. Eric Holder, Jr. I can tell that for him it was a very emotional moment to receive that Birth Certificate. Then, I was able to say to him that there were two persons listed with his grandmother's name, so if he could find out what the middle name was, then he could go a step further and start to trace his genealogy, et cetera.

Sir, that is important because that gives a person some kind of anchor, in terms from whence I came, who am I, what factors influenced me. Mr. President, those are the kinds of things that we need to be able to capture for our future generations.

Mr. President, with those few words, I should have been able to establish that a simple amendment as it may be described, is one that had the potential to make a powerful contribution to the development of our society. Our society

is not only about issues of economic activity and even that has to be captured because the models of our economy are grounded in something. Our models of social practice, et cetera, are grounded in something and a lot of those things are grounded in longstanding practices. Some of them may have developed a reaction to longstanding practices, which we thought we needed to eliminate.

Sir, in essence, as we try to understand the positives and the negatives of our society, what makes us Barbadian, what makes us part of the Caribbean, what makes us world citizens, it is important that we maintain records. Mr. President, to do that in a manner that is befitting of the importance that we have to place on those records, we need to ensure that we have proper structures in place and we have official capacities, those persons who have the ability to deliver.

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

Senate A27, Sequence 04, 11:40:14

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Mr. PRESIDENT: Senator Holder.

SENATOR A. E. HOLDER: Mr. President, I rise to contribute to the debate. Indeed, just as one's past is important to guide one's future, so too is a country's history in relation to a guide for its future.

The Archives Department is a most important department in the history of this country. I have had the honour to visit that Department as an undergraduate student, as a Masters' student and also very, very recently.

The Archives Department is responsible for the conservation and preservation of documents relating to the cultural history and legal aspects of this country. Indeed, from that perspective, it performs a most important role. It is nestled in the confines of the Lazaretto in a most tranquil and serene environment, very unspoilt by the modern architecture of the Errol Barrow Creative Centre for Imagination and is quite a contrast between what you see as an edifice in that building and what we see very close to it. Nonetheless, I can say unreservedly that the staff at that institution performs a most important role. Indeed, the staff is most efficient and courteous, and extends themselves to the public.

Mr. President, what is also important is that there needs to be a link between the Barbados Government Information Service (BGIS) and the Archives Department. Too often, the young generation in this country are unaware of the importance of its history under the Archives Department, and perhaps, the time is fast reaching for our

primary school students to be exposed to our history from all perspectives.

The Repository of the Archives Department has with it the Independence Instruments from 1966. It also has the collections of the Right Excellent Sir Grantley Adams and the collections of Mr. Hilton Bourne. Mr. President, in that body of documents, there is a repository of things so that young people can see what the history was so that it can be a guide to them as they aspire into the future. I will therefore urge that this link be established sooner rather than later.

What is also interesting from a legal perspective, is that it has with it documents relating to Baptismal Certificates, Marriage Certificates, Burial Certificates, and Wills dating from as far back as 1640.

Mr. President, oftentimes when an attorney-at-law is doing matters relating to estates and there are problems occurring as it relates to names, the attorney-at-law has no choice but to seek the guidance of the Archives Department in order to rectify some of the problems.

There are classic examples where names are spelt with an "e" or missing an "e" so that when the preparation of documents has to be undertaken, it becomes onerous and burdensome for the attorney-at-law to use the heading "a.k.a.", also known as, simply because of errors that were previously made, so without the assistance of the Archives Department, the attorney-at-law is oftentimes at a standstill.

What is also interesting relates to Wills and Deeds, which were kept from 1640 until 1959. Mr. President, in tracing documents relative to foreclosure suits, it is most important that ancient Wills be obtained for traceability purposes, so again, without the assistance of the Archives Department, you are at a standstill. What that shows, therefore, is that the importance of such a department cannot be overstated.

Indeed, I am aware that there are now volunteers to the Archives Department who are now trying to input data into a website. I think that as we move into the 21st Century we need to move beyond the conservation and preservation of records only on microfiche or microfilm. Technological progress has demanded that we seek new methods and new ways of preserving documents, therefore I think that it is incumbent that some effort be spent in equipping the Archives Department with the necessary tools to enable the staff to better perform what they are currently doing. Indeed, if it is that there can be volunteers who are now creating a website, I think that it would be beneficial to the country on the whole if the necessary resources are given to this Department.

Mr. President, I think that a staff of three cannot be deemed sufficient in this time for the amount of work that has to be done as it relates to the preservation of our history. We need not forget that it is oftentimes said that we have a rich history, so it is essential to preserve and record all aspects of that history; therefore, the only way that can be done is if the necessary technical expertise is given to such a Department.

That Department also has within its records from the 18th and 19th Century, Drax Hall Plantation, therefore we are rich in a country in history, and we need to understand that. Sir, rather than having oral presentations, the need for documentation and ensuring that they are maintained is of critical importance as we move forward as an independent country.

With those few words, Mr. President, I am in support of the Amendment.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Senator Chandler.

SENATOR Dr. F. L. CHANDLER: Mr. President, I did not intend to speak on this but having listened to the two speakers... Senator McClean mentioned about passing on the Birth Certificate to the Attorney-General of the United States. I remember a number of cases where... I am just bringing out the point that Birth Certificates must be accurate.

I have seen cases, I do not remember the details now, of where children are registered, the names are spelt wrong and sometimes I think the date of birth is after the date of registration and things do not coincide and later in life when the children are going to university overseas and/or getting the passports and all the various documents, it causes them a lot of problems with things that do not add up, so I am just saying that something should be done to make sure that these documents are accurate.

I thank you.

Senate A27 Sequence 05

11.40 a.m.

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Mr. PRESIDENT: Senator Inniss.

SENATOR Miss P. I. INNISS: Mr. President, I want to make a quick comment on what has clearly been already established as a vital aspect of our existence and our history, that is the Archives Department. Sir, it is quite a straightforward Bill but, as has been mentioned by the others, it speaks to the importance of the regulations and

the importance of standing guard to something as important as the Archives.

Mr. President, previous speakers have already spoken to the importance of the Archives. I am quite sure that if not before, Barbadians have now realised the importance of the Archives. Sir, we have spoken to its importance in relation to recording our genealogy. We have spoken to the many things that are housed within the Archives.

Sir, do we realise that the Archives keeps a track on the Laws and structures under which a society is governed? I think we do not often bring it home to the reality that the Archives keeps a track of the systems under which we function - legally, culturally and historically.

Mr. President, mention was made of Haiti, but let us look at Haiti where there has been such destruction of buildings holding archives. Actually, the Caribbean Task Force is now desperate with regard to that problem. We speak of Haiti and of the physical destruction and loss of life, which is traumatic, but as we speak there is a quest to look at reclaiming and preserving the archival history.

Sir, that is a big problem that Haiti now has. In essence, the Tax Office and a number of public historical buildings have been demolished. How then do they reclaim such vital history?

Mr. President, I think that an archives has to be seen not only as some place where old things are kept but as the location and systems which hold those vital records that govern the way in which we function and will continue to function. That is what the Archives means to me and I would hope to many other people.

Mr. President, we speak of title deeds before. Let us think of what would happen to Barbados if per chance our Archives was so destroyed that those title deeds that go back centuries were somehow destroyed. Sir, those title deeds which are relevant today and which are used by a number of Barbadians to identify the original owners of land.

Sir, the Archives is not a system of the past, it is a system to keep order, even in our present time, and therefore, its importance cannot be over-stressed. Mr. President, the Archives also houses legal deeds, court records, population issues, information on the West Indian Federation. Sir, the amount of vital information stored in the Archives which we use presently is very important.

Mr. President, when I look at the Act, I am therefore in support of this present Amendment to the Act. I realise that it contains very important aspects, certainly in Section 12. Sir, I wonder to what extent Barbadians realise that in

Section 12 of the Archives Act it speaks to the fact that no Government records shall be destroyed except with the written consent of the Chief Archivist.

Sir, this means that there must be a correlation between all Government agencies and the Archives. I know that is done in the majority of cases but I would imagine to what extent that is followed through, and that is important. As I said before, not only as it relates to keeping old papers, old bills and old documents but as it relates to the importance of an archives in ensuring that we continue to function.

Mr. President, there is the problem which has been mentioned here and in the Other Place, in relation to archives being kept by private institutions. Sir, as far as that is concerned, the Act speaks to the fact that Chief Executive Officers of private institutions - in other words anything that is not a public or Government institution - only need to notify the Chief Archivist of the documents that are of historical, cultural or little value.

Mr. President, subject to correction, we have maybe four or five trained archivists in Barbados. There are those private institutions who engage persons who have an archivist-type mentality, but to what extent are important documents in a private setting not being directed to such an important place as the Archives.

Sir, I am concerned about this because of the history and continuity of a society. Sir, maybe the Law needs to have a bit more teeth. Is this being followed? Are private institutions, Chief Executive Officers or persons within these institutions mandated to notify the Chief Archivist of such important documents, or do they decide themselves on what is important? Sir, regardless of what institution one is a part of, they may have archival history within that institution which they are required by Law to make sure that once they deem that information to be archival, then they must make sure that the Chief Archivist is notified.

Mr. President, I do not know to what extent that is followed through, and this is a point that concerns me. Sir, maybe in future times there may be amendments, or there may be more sensitisation of the realities that not only Government but that all private institutions need to allow for the storage of archival history within their institutions.

Mr. President, that is an area of concern that I have which relates to the extent of the work that needs to be continued in the Archives. I think it has less than 20 persons on staff now and, therefore, being the repository of such vast information, I am sure it is a mountainous task for those persons working within the Archives, so maybe we need to look at increasing the staff numbers. Sir, I would want to say too that training is essential because, of

course, every document is not an artifact for such history and so training would need to be continued in that aspect.

Mr. President, I support this Bill. I support the fact that maybe the legislation needs to be looked at more carefully, to help with the preservation of our archival history. Sir, I would also encourage the Honourable Minister to continue the vision, as far as the Archives is concerned, in its maintenance, development and marketing programmes.

Sir, I would also encourage the Honourable Minister to continue in its vision for its maintenance and repair. It is not a place where we just keep documents and old things, it is our future which is tabled in documents of the past.

Mr. President, I support this Bill and look forward to more coming. I look forward as well to more coming in areas in relation to protecting the Archives from floods, earthquakes and a number of other things that can be detrimental to the upkeep of archival history.

Mr. President, I think that we are on the right path and I am looking forward to the Archives being a known name, not only in the Halls of Parliament, but in every Barbadian home. The Archives is not a past, it continues into the future. I thank you, Mr. President.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Senator Newton.

SENATOR the Hon. Prof. V. E. NEWTON: Mr. President, I rise to support this amendment to the Archives Act which provides for the addition of persons to the Archives Committee. I think the list is a good one which should ensure that all persons who ought to be concerned in the management of our past records, are taken into account.

The only thing is that I would have hoped that a representative from the Barbados Museum and Historical Society ought to be named specifically. Sir, as the Amendment is phrased, someone from the Museum can fit into one of the categories listed.

S:No.A27 (6)12:00 noon.

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SENATOR the Hon. Prof. V. E. NEWTON: Mr. President, I have a fairly intimate knowledge of the Archives Department because over many years I have had occasion to do research on many matters there. Mr. President, it is one of the best Archives in the Region, both in terms of staffing and in the organisation of material.

Sir, I can tell you some horror stories about some Archives I have visited but this one is among the better ones in the Region. It is managed by a committee currently

headed by one of the country's leading academics and it is used by locals and foreign persons alike who comment positively on the peacefulness of the surrounding, the helpfulness of the staff and of the organisation and the materials generally.

Mr. President, at this point, I think I would like to pay tribute to a former archivist, Mr. Michael Challenor, who was the main person responsible for organising the Archives Department, as we know it today.

Sir, I was an archivist for a short period in my life. I was trained by him and then I moved on to the university and I know of the hard work he has put in under very trying circumstances, no air-conditioning, very hot rooms, et cetera, brittle material and so on and he stuck to it and made sure he trained local persons to take over after he was gone.

Mr. President, I have said a lot of positive things about the Archives but I have to say that, in my view, there is a need for a physical development plan for the Archives. Sir, the Archives is housed in an old building that was not purpose-built. They have made good use of it and most of it is of coral stone, which is good for the preservation of older materials, in that it tends to keep them cool.

The original requirements for temperature that were set according to world standards are still preserved at the Archives. However, it has long outgrown the physical space that it has and the result is that some materials are being stored in less than desirable conditions.

Mr. President, we always tend to say that the Government needs to provide more funding but, clearly, the Government cannot do everything. I would think that the Archives Committee, especially as constituted under this Bill, ought to contain some members of the community who have expertise and interest in raising private funds to assist the Archives.

Mr. President, there are far too many important documents in the Archives that have been withdrawn from use. Just last year I made a recommendation to the Memory of the World Committee to have these books that are in the Archives going back from 1643 to 1959 declared a memory of the world collection and, to do so, I had to examine those materials minutely.

Sir, several of the volumes have been withdrawn from use because they are brittle and they cannot be used. My question was: How is it that newspapers and a whole host of other documents have been allowed to reach the stage where they have to be withdrawn from use?

I think that an institution with a proper maintenance plan, that some person or persons ought to have

responsibility to move through the collection, identify those volumes that are reaching that stage and try to do something about it before that stage is reached.

Mr. President, the Deed Books from the Land Registry are the only ones that can be used. The Honourable Senator Holder mentioned the fact that these Deed Books could be used to find information on conveyancing and so on. They are an extremely important part of our history and that is the reason I sought to make the collection recognised in Memories of the World, and we might have got some funding going along with that.

Sir, to be told very complacently that they could not be used, that they got old, that they are just there but nobody can use them is a totally unsatisfactory stage, especially at this stage in our development, when there are so many ways and means of digitising collections that are about to fall apart. Sir, you have to identify them first and at the appropriate time.

Mr. President, I would recommend that, in addition to a physical development plan, that the new expanded Committee makes sure that the archivist identifies volumes from important collections that are in a perilous stage of disrepair, ensure they are listed and that something can be done about them.

Mr. President, some time ago, I wrote to the Chairman and to the archivist to recommend that they seek funding through the U.S. Embassy because the United States of America has available all sorts of funds for cultural exchanges and so on, to go to the U.S. Archives 2 in Maryland to look at important documents relating to labour on the Panama Canal. I sought information and was told that if a request was made that it might be viewed very satisfactorily. Sir, to my knowledge, not a thing has been done about that.

Mr. President, I made the recommendation for the trip to Maryland for two reasons, first, there is a considerable amount of information there about the Panama migration from Barbados that is not available in the Archives.

Secondly, the U.S. Government has pioneered the development of a vast number of pieces of equipment for preserving materials from all angles. You just put the document on the cover, as we now know it, or you have a scanner, which is excellent for documents that are falling apart. You just open it gently and it scans the material.

Sir, there is a whole host of pieces of equipment that they have developed and used, which I felt our archivist could go and see if we could purchase this equipment to assist in preserving some of the material that is falling apart.

Mr. President, I do not know how many people know that a lot of our newspapers cannot be used from the 19th Century. They are not available, they are withdrawn and they are in shambles. Sir, some overseas organisations have been preserving newspapers from the Region and, to that extent, if you know where to look, you might still get information from them, but the Archives Department, the Public Library and the Barbados Museum, between the three of them, ought to have a complete record of our newspaper history, which is simply not there.

Mr. President, mention was made of the staffing of the Archives. Sir, my experience has been that the Archives is adequately staffed. The staff there are friendly and they are very helpful. If you call and ask them to take documents out for you, they will take them out and do some research for you but, in my view, you need some imaginative management at the Archives and that is as far as I will go.

It may well be a question of further training and/or exposure to archives in larger countries and more developed ones that we have, but there is an amount of complacency that I have found very annoying, and other people as well, which suggests that a more proactive attitude and policy has to be adopted in relation to archival policy. Sir, this may not go down well in some quarters but it is not only my view and legislation like this cannot provide for that sort of management.

Mr. President, when the time is ripe, we have to ensure that persons are hired, who can make a greater contribution to the Archives because it is a very important and valuable institution in relation to our history.

S/A27/12:10 Sequence7

Wednesday, February 17, 2010

SENATOR the Hon. Prof. V. E. NEWTON: Mr. President, with those few words I have to say that I support the Bill wholeheartedly. I must say that it was very carefully provided. I am not sure to what extent the present Committee had any input, but if the persons who are named to the Committee all work together as they should, bringing their background information and the expertise on the job of managing the Archives, I am sure that it will be a better place for us all tomorrow.

I thank you.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Senator McClean.

SENATOR the Hon. Miss M. P. O. McCLEAN: Sir, as I indicated in my opening comments, the basic simple Amendment to the Archives Bill is one which empowers the Archives Advisory Committee in a manner that is likely

and is expected to contribute to an enhanced role for that Committee, and the better preservation of important documents.

I think that overall it has been recognised by the contributions of other Honourable Senators that it is a minor amendment, but an important one, and a critical step towards ensuring we preserve our historical records in the various forms.

Sir, the concerns expressed by the Honourable Senator Newton, I believe are concerns that should not be only flagged but addressed, because it is at the loss, or the absence, or non-access to certain information, that we recognise the value of records. Therefore, there is no case that can be made against paying attention to and allocating the necessary resources.

Sir, we would have heard certainly in some of the concerns that inadequate resources in several areas are, in fact, characteristic of what obtained in the past. I trust that notwithstanding other priorities which address a society, whether it is at the level of public officials or within the private, or even civil society sectors, the value of archives is recognised and the necessary attention and resources have been put to those.

Sir, with those few words I beg to move that this Bill be read a second time.

The question was put to the Senate and agreed to.

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

COMMITTEE

Madam DEPUTY PRESIDENT: The Senate is now in Committee.

Clauses 1 - 3, inclusive, were called and passed.

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

On the separate motions of SENATOR the Hon. Miss M. P. O. McCLEAN, the Bill was read a third time, passed and cited as the Archives (Amendment) Act, 2010.

ORDER NO. 3 – BARBADOS WATER AUTHORITY (AMENDMENT) BILL, 2010

Mr. PRESIDENT: Senator McClean.

SENATOR the Hon. Miss M. P. O. McCLEAN: Mr. President, the Barbados Water Authority is seeking through this Amendment to clear the way for the Authority to be under the regulatory framework of the Fair Trading Commission. This is in keeping with modern practice of the regulation of public utilities. We have seen over the years the engagement of two other utilities, the providers of electricity and the providers of telecommunication services undergoing such regulations. It was felt that it was necessary to add the other utility, the supplier of water.

Sir, of the three utilities I would argue that water is of the utmost importance and, therefore, very essential in terms of management, the regulation of the process, et cetera. I believe that in looking at this issue, it is important, perhaps, to understand the factors that have influenced the timing of the decision.

In the discussion in the provision of water services, Barbadians and certainly in recent times, last year I recall when there was a request for an increase in rates there was a lot of discussion, some of it objective in terms of analysis, some of it very subjective and emotional.

People argued that we were putting on Barbadians a significant burden. However it is important to recognise two things, (1) in making decisions, management, whether they are political managers, as in the case of political directorate, managers of the private sector or managers in the public services, one has to look clearly at the situation that we face in order to ensure that what we are able to do is to make decisions in a timely manner.

SA27 12.20 p.m. Sequence 8

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Senate A27, Sequence 09, 12.20 p.m.

SENATOR the Hon. Miss M. P. O. McCLEAN: Mr. President, let me go through that again. As you manage an entity, whether it is a retail operation, a conglomerate or the Government, the ideal situation is that you look at the circumstances you face, you look at the problems you have, you look at the most appropriate solutions and you engage in implementing those solutions in a timely manner.

The Barbados Water Authority is a critical element of our national infrastructure which, perhaps, has not been treated in that way, in terms of how certain decisions were made. This Administration had to take the decision, and I would use a commonly used phrase, "had to bite the bullet" and make certain decisions to increase water rates.

Sir, persons like to refer to the percentage figure of a 60 per cent increase. They often do not talk in comparative terms, in terms of what that translates into in dollars and

cents per unit. They do often talk in comparative terms in relation to what we pay versus other people in the Region, et cetera. I will not, however, go into that discussion because I believe that when we looked previously in this Chamber at the Barbados Water Authority Validation of Water Bills, we would have spoken to that, Mr. President.

I want to take some time to talk some numbers because as we look to make decisions and to do so in a timely manner, we are often guided by numbers and I speak to numbers because 60 per cent is a number that has been talked about and has been used.

I want to suggest that the history of a business entity is perhaps well-captured - I may hesitate to say best-captures because it depends on that entity - but the history of a business entity is captured in its annual financial statements in which it reports - in the case of the Barbados Water Authority - its shareholder or stakeholders, the consumers of Barbados.

Sir, I would even label them shareholders because it is taxpayers' money, which over the years has been put into ensuring that Barbados is able to deliver an excellent service when compared to others but a service which, over several years, has been declining. Sir, it is one's hope, in the case of water delivery, education, health services and retail services downtown that, as we go through the years, services would improve rather than decline. Therefore, it is instructive if we do an analysis of some of our information.

Mr. President, I thought that I would look at the performance of the Barbados Water Authority and before I start to talk about those numbers, I will explain why I took the time to do this analysis.

Sir, before I give that, I also want to say to the officer at the Barbados Water Authority who responded to my secretary yesterday afternoon and provided me with financial reports from 1993 until 2005, a very hearty "thank you". I must say, Mr. President, that was an excellent demonstration of initiative because he said that he probably only had one copy available to him right now. I said I guarantee you that I will send them back, as soon as I am finished and I will do that, Mr. President, tomorrow morning.

Mr. President, the point I am making is - and it is interesting if I can digress a bit. I talked about archives and records, and if I did not have these records, I probably could not make some of the points in the same way. I want to make these points using numbers, Mr. President, because I think the time has come in this Chamber and, in fact in other places, whether we talk about the third estate and the fourth estate and whatever else in the Other Place, as it relates to these hallowed halls, that we start to put on the table, some serious analyses, both quantitative and

qualitative, and move away from making some bland generic kinds of statements, especially when we are appealing to the sensibilities and the sensitivities of our people.

Mr. President, there have been questions raised in the corridors of Barbados, whether they are the corridors of households, in the corridors of businesses or the political corridors about timing, why are you doing this at this time, why are you doing it now, and why you did not do it before you engaged in a 60 per cent increase. I would try to answer that question, why we did not do it before. Sir, it has to do with the whole process of regulation, using a mechanism such as the Fair Trading Commission.

Mr. President, this is something that is dear to my heart, because today being February 17, is five days after the 10th anniversary of the passing of my brother, Wendell McClean, who would have been very much involved in any FTC hearing, if he were alive today. Sir, for me, this is an issue that I do not take lightly because I believe that I owe it to his memory, as somebody who not only sat as, what is the term they use nowadays, an objector.

Asides.

SENATOR the Hon. Miss M. P. O. McCLEAN: An intervener, okay, but I think we used to use "objectors" back then. He was almost the sole objector and I therefore had an appreciation - even though his archives have been lost, but that is another story for another time - to see the amount of work that went into this. Mr. President, I feel that to come into this Chamber and engage in a very superficial discussion would not have been doing justice to my brother's memory, so you have to forgive me.

Mr. President, if I may go back to the crux of my contribution, in understanding the timing of two things, the timing of an increase and the timing of the amendment of this legislation to allow the Fair Trading Commission to regulate water as a utility, we need to look at the changing fortunes of the Barbados Water Authority and therefore I will quote some numbers.

In 1993, for example, Mr. President, the Barbados Water Authority realised an operating revenue of \$42.28 million of which 90 per cent or \$40.68 million was generated by the sale of water. This figure moved from \$42.28 million to \$43.7 million in 1994. In 1996 it was \$43.8 million and it continued - I will stop at 2001 for the moment - to about \$52 million. Sir, in a period of just under 10 years, we saw an increase in operating revenue of about \$10 million, from \$42.2 million to \$52.8 million, almost \$11 million.

Mr. President, if I can go back to the situation in 1993 that \$42.28 million in operating revenue was matched

with an operating expense of \$38.37 million, leaving a net income, a surplus, a profit of \$6.18 million. In 1994 we had a situation where the operating revenue was \$43.7 million and the operating expenses were \$39.21 and there was an increase of \$7.05 million. I flag 1994 because there was an event in 1994 which we all knew.

Asides.

SENATOR the Hon. Miss M. P. O. McCLEAN: Mr. President, I believe there was a change in administration. In 1995 we saw an operating revenue of \$39.9 million, an operating expense of \$39.12 million and there was a net income of \$3.3 million.

Senate A27, Sequence 09, 12:30:14

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SENATOR the Hon. Miss M. P. O. McCLEAN: Of course, if you subtract your operating expenses from the revenue, you would not get \$3.3 million based on those two figures, but there were revenues generated by the actual investment, so there was still some profit. Mr. President, two years after the change of Administration, we had a situation where we saw revenue rise to \$43.83 million, but over that two-year period, 1994-1996, we saw operating expenses jumped from \$39.2 million to \$46.64 million.

That is not all, Mr. President. In looking at that, I asked myself, is there perhaps a major reason? If you look at the statistics, Mr. President, you would find that there was no significant increase in the production or consumption of water and we still had a lot of the issues that we talked about.

Mr. President, if you look at the activities in terms of the improvement of service and so on, there was nothing that I could find in my fairly brief analysis... I have to confess that it was brief. I told you about the time I received the documents but I did not tell you that I was doing this, this morning at 5.00 a.m. The point I am making is that at that point in time we saw a significant increase in operating expenses but not a major jump in customer base. The customer base in 1993 was approximately 87 000 persons and that rose to about 89 000 persons in 1997.

Mr. President, what I am really saying is that when we start to look at this, a certain trend started to develop and we saw a Barbados Water Authority engaged in the delivery of water in a manner which allowed the Authority to generate income and also contain cost.

Mr. President, I would refer to something which, to me, signals perhaps some concern in the 1996 period. It is interesting to note that on page 10 of that 1996 Report, the

General Manager stated, and I quote from that Report which should have been laid in this Honourable Chamber some years ago:

“The Barbados Water Authority suffered an operating loss of \$2.18 million bringing it in breach of Clause 606 of the Loan Agreement between the Government of Barbados and the Inter-American Development Bank.”

Mr. President, I cannot go into all the details of the financing and so on. The point I am making is that as early as 1996, 14 years ago, we saw a trend which, if I had the time and if I did not want to put my colleagues to sleep, I would continue to cite figures... Mr. President, I started that process to illustrate that when we talk about timing, we have to understand what was inherited. We inherited a Barbados Water Authority that was essentially bankrupt.

Mr. President, if you refer to the Financial Statements for 2003, you would see a continuation of that situation with rapidly rising operating expenses and pretty stagnant revenue generating in terms of growth, because Barbados can only generate so many customers, beyond which we have to focus not on new business but probably on efficiency.

Mr. President, I cited those numbers to reiterate the point again that in 1993, when I started to peruse the Annual Reports available to me, the Barbados Water Authority was making money. The Reports would also demonstrate that the management of its capital works was internally financed and they were undertaking work within the confines of the budget and the finances within the company.

Mr. President, I just want to read one other number before I move on. If we look now at 1998, for example, we actually saw for a company that generated an operating revenue of \$46.4 million - in 1993, it was \$42.28 million - an operating loss of \$9.1 million. The accountants, when they read the Report, would realise that it was revised based on a change in accounting policy IAS 12 but we do not need to go into those things.

The point I am making, Mr. President, and I want to stress this, is that the Barbados Water Authority seemed to have gone through a period of inexplicable expansion in expenses, and the question is to what end. If we saw an expansion in those expenses, which translated into a comprehensive and successful mains laying programme, then we could say it was a necessary commitment, a necessary investment, or a short-term strategy for long-term gain but we did not see that. It is still the bugbear that we now have to solve.

Mr. President, I want to stress something else. Mr. President, in 1998, operating revenues, as I said, were pretty stagnant, \$48 million, and operating expenses were \$51.75 million. Mr. President, whereas capital investment was \$5 million and \$6 million in the early years 1993 to 1999, capital investment for the year 1999 was \$15.92 million, of which \$4.4 million was the purchase price of the land to site the desalination plant, which is not owned by the Barbados Water Authority.

Asides.

SENATOR the Hon. Miss M. P. O. McCLEAN: Mr. President, the plant is not owned by the Barbados Water Authority. We could go and find out all the details about that but I do not want to complicate my presentation too far lest I appear to get lost or, in fact, get lost.

Mr. PRESIDENT: I was just drawing to your attention that you are not permitted under the Rules to name anyone.

SENATOR the Hon. Miss M. P. O. McCLEAN: If I may continue, Sir, I just want to say that we are talking about a situation in which operating revenues were pretty stagnant growing no more than \$5 million between 1993 to 1999, but we are spending significant sums.

The question, Mr. President, is to what end because in the history of the Barbados Water Authority, I believe that this entity is in its most perilous state. What that says, Mr. President, is that we have had, as a Government, to make some very hard decisions. I have heard reference made to acceptance of a rate increase but at the wrong time, and why did we not go to the Fair Trading Commission prior to the rate increase. Mr. President, I will speak to that in a second.

Senate A27 Sequence 10

12.40 p.m.

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SENATOR the Hon. Miss M. P. O. McCLEAN: Mr. President, the question is, how does a Government restrain itself from increasing the cost of a public good, when the very entity that is delivering that good is almost, as I said, bankrupt? How does a Government restrain itself from increasing the cost of a public good, when the Government is being asked to support a whole range of initiatives or situations, given the financial circumstances in which it finds itself?

Sir, therefore, it has to make a decision that it would either ask the public, both commercial and individual consumers, to share the burden or face a very real situation,

which is, that we may have a situation of almost collapse of our water supply.

Mr. President, if we talk about timing, I would say from my perspective as a management person, we had no choice but to address the situation and to address it expeditiously. The question, therefore, is that the organisation needed money to operate. As I said, its operating expenses far outweighed its operating revenues. In some instances, the operating expenses were more than 25 per cent. The question is, therefore, answered by saying that we had to do it in order to keep the operation going and to give it an opportunity to continue to deliver to Barbados and to Barbadians.

Mr. President, the second question to be answered is why are we going to the Fair Trading Commission after that increase? The position is that if you speak to anybody who is involved in the delivery of information to a rate hearing or a company that is presenting itself, as in the case of the Barbados Light & Power Co. Ltd., or BARTEL, it had to be in a position to generate a whole mix of information, that being financial and otherwise.

Mr. President, if we stick to the financial information, for example, my information is that the Barbados Water Authority has not been able to produce financial reports beyond 2005. They are now working hard to remedy that situation. Therefore, any regulators who sit as part of the Fair Trading Commission would not be in a position to make informed decisions in the absence of that information.

What is, therefore, required is breathing space for this entity to get its act together, to get its books literally and figuratively in order. In addition, I would also say that in terms of the legislation, while it is not now in order, the legislation should act as a trigger or impetus to get them to get their act together.

That, Mr. President, brings the question of the management and the operation of the Fair Trading Commission into sharp focus. Sir, I am happy that I have with me my honourable colleague, Senator Sir Roy, as I talk about management and operations because we have already talked about human resources. I know that Senator Sir Roy has a vested interest in human resources and in the performance of human resources.

Mr. President, as we talk about the process of bringing the Barbados Water Authority under the Fair Trading Commission, I did mention the need to ready itself in all kinds of ways. I spoke of financial issues. I also want to say that this whole process will necessitate some substantial changes in the management and operations of the Barbados Water Authority.

Mr. President, in the same way that this Administration has given the Authority, its Board and management financial resources in the form of a rate increase, we would also hope that the other elements, such as management resource, which, if we look at financial reports, we will see that there is a longstanding core of managers who have been part of this organisation, that the management resources will avail or equip themselves on all that is necessary to move the Barbados Water Authority from the morass in which it has been for more than a decade, to one in which there is a nimble organisation which is capable of delivering the best quality service to Barbadians.

Mr. President, only this morning on my way to this Session, I heard someone complaining about the failure to respond to a burst main. Sir, we all know the stories. Of course, I am happy to report that some initiatives have been taken to address those issues, where persons will, in short time, be able to get a report, so that we can probably identify where the problems are located.

Sir, in the past, while trying to reach the Barbados Water Authority, I have had to put down the phone. Sir, that is a standard concern which should be addressed.

Mr. President, if Government has created an opportunity in relation to the provision of additional financial resources and there is no corresponding commitment and demonstration of that commitment by action on the part of management to adopt new cultures, in terms of decision-making and resource utilisation, if there is no change in work behaviours, in employee patterns....

Perhaps, Mr. President, we may have to rethink the whole structure. I am sure that in recognising the need to collaborate, that the representatives of our workers and the workers themselves will make a serious commitment to play their part in this process.

Mr. President, overall I believe that there can be no question to the appropriateness of the timing of the rate increase. I will accept and we can argue that in receiving that increased rate, the Barbados Water Authority has a moral, legal and other responsibility to the public, especially those persons who are feeling the pinch. Sir, that, perhaps, has come as a result of a failure to act on the part of others in a more expeditious manner. Therefore, it is like giving medicine to a very ill patient, the dosage may be heavy.

Asides.

SENATOR the Hon. Miss M. P. O. McCLEAN: Mr. President, if you are a good medical practitioner, you would not kill the patient. The injection needle may be large, the medicine may upset the stomach a little bit but

the recovery period would be expedited. Mr. President, I believe that one cannot argue against the need for the rate increase. One cannot argue against the need for the sequence in which that rate increase was granted, in relation to the decision to take the matter to the Fair Trading Commission.

As I said before, the intention was to ensure the survival of the Barbados Water Authority. Sir, under previous Administrations of the Democratic Labour Party, the Barbados Water Authority was able to function profitably as an entity, as it should. It is an entity that is providing a service at a cost, which it has been able to do. Sir, the ability of the Barbados Water Authority to continue to subsidise what appears, obviously from the complaints of the public, day in and day out - its efficiencies, its poor decisions in several areas - cannot be continued.

Mr. President, the decision to push that process further along by timing the amendment to the legislation to create the environment under which the Fair Trading Commission can function independently and make decisions has been taken.

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SENATOR the Hon. Miss M. P. O. McCLEAN: Mr. President, I believe that taking those two things together, this Administration is doing what is absolutely necessary to turn this around and it will require both management by the Board and the political directorate at the very top of the pyramid. It will require all of us paying attention, if we are employed by the Barbados Water Authority, to deliver the best service for which we are paid. It will require the revisiting of systems whether human resources, management systems, compensation systems, systems of information and compilation and analysis. Sir, it requires a total revamping and it is a requirement to which we all must contribute.

Mr. President, it requires me also to look at how I use water because it is a precious resource. We are seeing the evidence of what happens when there is no water, whether it is water coming from the sky or when we are restricted, either imposing self restrictions or as we may have to do down the road, as we have done in the past, restricting people from washing cars, wetting lawns and generally using water in ways that are not compatible with drought and dry times. Mr. President, it will require all of us to play our part. I believe I have sought and I have done so successfully, if I evaluate myself, made a case for the amendment to this legislation.

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

Mr. PRESIDENT: Senator Holder.

SENATOR A. E. HOLDER: Mr. President, I wish to make my contribution to this debate. Mr. President, I first think that we need to examine this Amendment as it relates to water from two perspectives, one, economic in nature and the other, social in nature. Sir, in economic parlance, a monopolist is a sole seller of a good for which there is no close substitute. As a result, he has control over price and quantity. Sir, that is the normal economic definition for a monopolist.

Mr. President, water is an essential item and one cannot get away from that. Sir, as a result, water is needed by everyone. Sir, because water is an essential good, it exhibits what is referred to as an inelastic demand, that is, an increase in price will not bring about a substantial change in the quantity of the goods used, so that, if the price of water is \$10 and you use a certain amount, because it is inelastic in demand, if you increase it to \$20, the amount of usage will not decrease substantially. Sir, that is a given, so we must understand that from an economic perspective.

Mr. President, the Barbados Water Authority is the sole seller of water in this country and all consumers must use it. Sir, regardless of the price charged by the Barbados Water Authority the amount of usage will not decrease substantially. Sir, whether we speak to methods of conservation, et cetera, that is from a pure economic perspective.

Mr. President, the next question must be whether the Barbados Water Authority must be seen only as a commercial entity and whether or not the provision of water is seen as a social good because the aims and objectives of a private entrepreneur are distinctly different from that of a social service, a state corporation, because the aims and objectives are different.

The aim of the State in the provision of water must be that all persons must be able to have the services of water. Sir, with a private entrepreneur, profit maximisation is the overriding factor and, if we examine the Barbados Light & Power Company, a private entrepreneur, its aim is profit maximisation.

Mr. President, therefore, the question must be posed: Must the Barbados Water Authority be seen in the light as that akin to a private entrepreneur whose sole maxim is profit maximisation and given the fact that the Barbados Water Authority is an entity of the State, is that the same thing as the Barbados Light & Power Company?

Mr. President, it has always been said that the provision of water must be seen as a social good for the benefit of all. If that is the case, the question must be asked,

how is it that an increase in the rate of 60 per cent can be justified only in terms of either (a) seeking a profit and/or (b) a return on your investment?

Mr. President, not only that, given the fact that it is a monopoly, it has the capacity to practise what is termed price discrimination, that is, the provision of the same service to a wide range of people but at different prices, as long as it has the ability to segregate and separate the markets.

Sir, for example, the Barbados Light & Power Company has the capacity to offer a different rate to the person who uses the higher or more kilowatt hour than the normal consumer and with the Barbados Water Authority the provision of meters gave it the capacity to discriminate as it relates to any rate increase because the Law says that in order to discriminate you must be able to separate the markets and keep them separate, so that the provision of meters would tell you how many cubic metres of water is being used by A or B.

Mr. President, therefore, I am saying that by having meters, that the Barbados Water Authority has the capacity as it relates to a differential, relative to any rate increase, because it is a monopolist and it can segregate the market.

SENATOR Miss P. I. INNIS: Mr. President, on a point of order. The Honourable Senator is misleading this Chamber if I am getting him correctly. Sir, he speaks of the Barbados Light & Power Company and its rates setting but the Barbados Water Authority also has rate setting so as not to disadvantage lower income persons. It has a block setting for very low use and it has rates, regardless of the meter system. Sir, to suggest that the Barbados Water Authority with a meter system is disadvantaging persons is misleading to the Chamber, Sir.

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SENATOR Miss P. I. INNIS: It has a block for a very low use and it has very low rates, regardless of the meter system. To suggest that the Barbados Water Authority's meter system is disadvantaging the person is misleading to the Chamber.

SENATOR A. E. HOLDER: Mr. President, with all respect, I never said that it was, in essence, disregarding. I never said that. I am saying that, given the fact that there is a meter system that the Barbados Water Authority possesses the capacity to price discriminate, that is a feature of it. So that the 60 per cent ...

Asides.

SENATOR A. E. HOLDER: Sir, I am therefore saying that to utilise a 60 per cent increase in rates cannot be deemed at this point in time to be justifiable, cannot be deemed, whether it is being used as a parameter to gauge for any revenue increase. It must be seen within the social matrix and the social context, so, the question must be, can all consumers, regardless of their financial wherewithal, can they afford to pay such a rate increase?

Sir, not only that, but at this time of recession, given the fact that water is an essential input into everything, would it not necessarily mean that by increasing water rates, that business entities will be forced to increase the price of commodities? We have to see it from that social context.

It cannot be a carte blanche approach to use and to indicate that because of the sour state or perilous state of the finances of the Barbados Water Authority that a 60 per cent increase can be deemed justifiable.

Sir, not only that. It must be seen also within the context of the purported wage freeze and/or moratorium on wages. How is it that you can increase 60 per cent to the consumer in one breath and in the other breath am I to believe that persons who are now suffering cannot afford to get a small pittance in their pocket to offset the same 60 per cent?

Sir, not only that, what about the timing? We are hearing that we are in a time of recession. Am I to therefore believe that the placing of a 60 per cent at this time where there is a contraction in demand for goods and services that in one fell swoop will cause the recession to be over? This rate increase was placed on all and sundry in July 2009. In February of 2010, we are now hearing that an amendment is being sought to bring it in line with the Fair Trading Commission Act. Justification was sought why this was done after, based on the fact that there are no financial reports available for 2005 and beyond.

Sir, if one examines clearly the Short Title to the Fair Trading Commission Act - Mr. President, I read with your permission:

“To provide for the establishment of a Fair Trading Commission to safeguard the interest of consumers.

To regulate utilities services supplied by service providers.

To monitor and investigate the conduct of service providers and business enterprises.

To promote and maintain effective competition in the economy and for related matters”.

Asides.

SENATOR A. E. HOLDER: Sir, this is full purport and intent of this Act, and we are now coming to involve and include it under the ambit of the Fair Trading Commission after the fact? After you have imposed on the consumers of this country a 60 per cent rate increase? Not only that. Is there any data suggestive of how much revenue has been collected as a result of this increase and/or the social dislocation that has occurred as a result of this rate increase? That is the data that is needed because water is a social good.

Sir, I think the Honourable Minister of Consumer Affairs, elsewhere, said that water must be viewed as a social good. Therefore, if it is being viewed as a social good, what is the economic justification of this inordinate increase of 60 per cent? What is it? There can be no justification whether the revenues and the finances of the Barbados Water Authority are in a peril why this increase was merited. What is the fallout?

Sir, not only that. It is mooted that there are lobbyists in the private sector that are asking, demanding and/or cajoling for a relook and a rethink of 60 per cent, because of the negative impact it is having, but where are the lobbyists for the normal consumer, the ordinary consumer who does not have the financial wherewithal to employ lobbyists to cajole the Government, to rethink and to relook? It is them. What about the end product? Small businesses in this country must pay an increase in water rate. What does that say?

Sir, if you are going to buy a beer, et cetera, there must be an increase in the final product. What does that trigger down effect say? There will be a decline in demand in the economy.

If there is a reduction in aggregate demands in the economy people are worse off. There can be no growth in the Gross National Product as a result. We need to understand that the increase cannot be justified in social terms and/or economic terms. If there is merit in an increase, ask about the tier system, employ that as you said you were. To whose benefit is the 60 per cent rate increase? That is what this Administration must ask. Is it for the benefit of the ordinary man? As I said, because it is a social good and a State monopoly, the aims and objectives must be different to that of a private entrepreneur. We are providing a social good.

Sir, therefore, This Side is saying that there is no moral justification for this increase and that all this increase has done is to produce further hardship on the ordinary person in this country. There can be no justification for the timing of this increase. There can be none. Given the state

of the economy as it is now, there can be no rationale for increasing rates to this amount.

S A27 13.10 p.m. Sequence 13

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Senate A27, Sequence 14, 1.10 p.m.

SENATOR A. E. HOLDER: Sir, you are putting the cart before the horse. What ought to have been done is to amend the legislation, present all your documentation, your records to the Fair Trading Commission and let there be a determination what, in their opinion, would constitute a fair rate increase.

What is even sad is that this rate increase has come at a time as a precursor to all the other increases. It set the precedent for a rate increase for the Barbados Light and Power Company Limited (BL&P), so that when the BL&P was giving an increase, there was a deafening silence on the Other Side if it was justified.

Mr. President, with these few words I make my contribution, Sir.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Senator Chandler.

SENATOR Dr. F. L. CHANDLER: Mr. President, I support the Bill to amend the Barbados Water Authority Act to make rate changes for water and sewerage services, subject to regulation by the Fair Trading Commission.

Since all the other major utilities are subject to this, I do not see why the Barbados Water Authority should not be made to comply. The present increase in water rates is, to my mind, water under the bridge, therefore it is the further regulation of rates by the Fair Trading Commission that are important. I think that this regulation should go a long way towards ensuring that the Barbados Water Authority puts its house in order, and that they can substantiate any further claims for rate increases.

Mr. President, rate increases, to my mind, should not be based on inefficiency and subsidising inefficiency. The BWA needs to be run like a business, like all the other major utilities. All these inefficiencies have been talked about for decades and I think now is the time to correct them.

Mr. President, as I have noted in this Honourable Chamber before, I think that raising the water rates and not collecting the payments will not really achieve anything, because if you have the people who never paid before still not paying the increased rates, then those who have conscientiously paid their water rates are now paying at a higher rate and subsidising those who never paid and do

not intend to pay. I have not studied it carefully, but I still think that there could be some differences in the rates for various sectors.

In the past I will say that although the Barbados Water Authority had a number of inefficiencies, its customer service section was always fairly efficient. You could call and get a response on what your account balance was, or whatever, but now that seems to be nonexistent. You cannot get to talk to a human voice, just as it is in another major utility.

The whole administration I think should be streamlined and all of the slackness should be cut out. Sir, to use a term used by Senator McClean, the Barbados Water Authority needs to bite the bullet once and for all and repair the mains that are leaking. We are paying the higher electricity rates now to pump the water from the aquifers for it to seep back down into the aquifers for it to be pumped back up again, before it reaches the consumer.

On the issue of water, those who should have intimate knowledge of the water situation have been quoted in the Press as saying that they were not aware that there was a drought. I was wondering whether these individuals were on sabbatical overseas, since about October.

Asides.

SENATOR Dr. F. L. CHANDLER: This is because some of the farms that I am associated with, would have had two inches of rain in October, when normally they would have 14 inches, and overall for the year, a lot of the farms are about 20 inches down, so it is a really serious situation. We have gone into the traditional dry season, having had a drought for months, so I wonder what will happen now. Even cane which is fairly resistant to such things, is dying. Then we need additional water for the factories at this time of the harvest season.

I am shocked, as others are, to see the numbers of bush fires and grass fires that we have now. It is a senseless use of water and nobody can convince me that these are accidents. I really do not accept that. I am surprised that there are no controls on the use of water published in the newspaper, because with far less serious situations in the past, I have seen notices published where you cannot wash cars, you cannot water lawns and I have not seen anything published in these severe conditions.

I think now is the time to encourage farmers to use sensitometers. A lot of farmers do not use very scientific methods and I think they must be encouraged to use sensitometers so that they use water to the amount that is needed and not over water, as well as the use of water conservation measures. They cannot start to collect rain water now because there is none, but they should be using

mulching and other ways of conserving moisture in the soil.

Mr. President, someone was quoted recently in the Press as questioning the monies paid for the desalinated (desal) water but I think we have to question why is the price so high. I do not know enough about it but is it because the capacity of the plant is not being used? The plant might have been constructed for a certain capacity and now it is using much less capacity so therefore the cost would be higher. Why is the full capacity not being used? Is it because the distribution system cannot handle the full capacity but I do think that we need the desal water?

Some people might not agree with me but I think that we need the desal water and we need the plant to be working at a higher capacity so that we can make up for the other water that we do not have now, but that is not to say that we should not go back to the original thing of stopping the 60 per cent loss seeping back down into the aquifers.

Mr. President, I support the Bill and I look forward to a substantial improvement in the running of the Barbados Water Authority.

Asides.

SUSPENSION OF SITTING

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 that the Sitting be now suspended until 2.30 p.m. was put to the Senate and agreed to and Mr. PRESIDENT suspended the Sitting accordingly.

Senate A27, Sequence 14, 13:19:07

Wednesday, February 17, 2010

RESUMPTION

Mr. PRESIDENT: This Sitting is resumed.

Senator Marville, before you begin, we have a little housekeeping to do. During the luncheon period, it became necessary for the Deputy President to return home and it is therefore necessary, in order for our proceedings to go in a manner in which we would wish them to go, that we appoint someone as temporary Deputy President.

SENATOR the Hon. Miss M. P. O. McCLEAN: Temporary Chairman of Committees.

Mr. PRESIDENT: We cannot appoint them as Deputy President? I wanted to make him Deputy President,

but we would have to have a temporary Chairman of Committees.

SENATOR the Hon. Miss M. P. O. McCLEAN: Mr. President, I beg to move that Senator the Very Reverend H. E. Crichlow be appointed Chairman of Committees for the rest of today's Sitting.

The question was put to the Senate and agreed to.

Mr. PRESIDENT: It has been properly moved and seconded that Senator the Very Reverend - I almost said the Right Reverend.

Asides.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Would you please let me have my confusion in peace? Not too many people are aware of the very strong bond between this distinguished gentleman and myself and it is for that reason that my confusion might appear at this time, it being Ash Wednesday today. There are those of us who by virtue of our training, our formation recognise...

Asides.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Do I have to be interrupted? Is not there a regulation that when the President is speaking everyone must be quiet? I thought there was.

Asides.

Mr. PRESIDENT: It is a wonderful Ash Wednesday. It reminds us of some things that some of us would rather not remember.

SENATOR the Hon. Miss M. P. O. McCLEAN: Mr. President, I beg to move that Senator the Very Reverend H. E. Crichlow be appointed as temporary Chairman of Committees for the remainder of this Sitting.

The question was put to the Senate and agreed to.

Senate A27 Sequence 15

2.40 p.m.

Wednesday, February 17, 2010

Mr. PRESIDENT: Senator Marville.

SENATOR R. O. MARVILLE: Mr. President, I rise to speak in support of this Bill but I think there are some things we need to add to where we are, for several reasons.

Sir, first of all, I think that within the next decade, 2020, the two items that would be most scarce and at the

same time important to human existence would be fish and water. We are in the fortunate position of having had a good water supply for a long time, but this is going to become more and more problematic.

We are also lucky that even now water is still the service for which we pay least. However, there are all sorts of problems that are involved in the Barbados Water Authority and in personal consumption.

Mr. President, first of all, the Barbados Water Authority occasionally does not turn up to correct a burst main. They do not turn up to look at a meter that is not working. Sir, on top of that, there is this major issue that they are losing 60 per cent in water in pipes that are no longer functional.

Mr. President, about 20 years ago, I said to an engineer at the Barbados Water Authority: "The British have just looked at their pipes and they are losing 40 per cent of water that should be pumped." That engineer replied: "O, that does not concern us, we are not like that." Sir, that was even though we had the same pipes which had been put in by the same British, which were likely to have the same problem. Of course, it turns out now that we are now losing even more water than the British were losing at that time.

Asides.

SENATOR R. O. MARVILLE: Mr. President, the point is, we cannot do that and hope that somehow our water would be supplied to us as usual for the next however long. We have the additional problem of personal wastage. We use water so badly it is unthinkable. Someone would go in the shower, turn on the tap, wait until the water gets warm, put some soap on after wetting themselves while leaving the shower running, so that they end up using about three times as much water than they would have needed. When they are brushing their teeth, they do the same thing. They wet the toothbrush and keep the water running until they finished brushing. This goes true too for the washing machine and everything else. Sir, it is quite amazing how badly we use water.

Mr. President, what is even more is that we have a lot of water that is otherwise wasted, that is not collected for reuse. Rain water containers are relatively cheap, they are plastic, we can all put a pipe from the gutters to the tank and collect water. We can all mulch plants, as Senator Chandler has suggested. These are things we could do automatically but we do not.

Mr. President, in some countries, and I like to quote countries that are not as advanced as we are, Swaziland, for example, the water that is extracted from the sewerage system, which has not been totally purified but is usable

water, is recycled as water for golf courses, lawns, et cetera. Therefore, they do not have to impose another burden on water that is otherwise meant to be drunk.

Mr. President, all of this has to be done, apart from which, of course, we were ideally situated. We had gullies that followed water properly but these are now filled with old fridges and old cars, thanks to our very casual idea of what the environment could take.

Sir, we could create dams practically throughout Barbados. If the dams had some clay at the bottom, it would keep the water for quite a while. We could then have fish farms in the ponds and the water that goes into the ground, then goes back into the aquifer. As it is, most of the water, because of the building systems that we have, runs straight into the sea. That is a lot of water that could be used at times like these, if we could store it when it is there.

Mr. President, I would like to think that beyond this Bill, we would see the Barbados Water Authority looking into these areas and in terms of storage and usage, trying to maximise all the water that we possibly have. I thank you.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Senator Ince.

SENATOR J. INCE: Mr. President, I stand to give my support to the amendment to the Barbados Water Authority Act. Sir, the Barbados Water Authority is an integral part of our society. If it is not an integral part, it is a critical part of our society. It has helped with the development of our infrastructure. It has helped with our economic viability and it has contributed significantly over the years to what we call a beautiful Barbados.

Mr. President, the Barbados Water Authority was formed in 1980. We are now 30 years later and instead of discussing profitability and efficiency, we are looking at financial challenges and at how best we are going to deal with the inefficiencies of the Barbados Water Authority.

I have heard discussions from persons in both the public and political domain about how best we are going to go forward and have this State agency as an agency that delivers an efficient service, an agency that has a surplus in its operations, and an agency that answers to the calls of Barbadians.

Mr. President, on the other hand, I have heard discussions where the challenges that the Barbados Water Authority now face were targetted at this present Administration. One of those arguments is that this present Administration has removed a \$25 million surplus from the Barbados Water Authority, placed it in the Consolidated Fund and as a result of that action, the Barbados Water

Authority has begun hemorrhaging until now. Sir, I smiled when I heard that.

Mr. President, I would want to say that I enjoyed Senator Holder's presentation. It was a well-rehearsed script from the Honourable Leader of the Opposition. He did it very eloquently. Senator Holder said there was no justification for the 60 per cent increase in water rates and that neither was there any justification in looking at the Barbados Water Authority as far as the Fair Trading Commission is concerned.

Mr. President, I think that Senator Holder has forgotten that preparing the Barbados Water Authority for the Fair Trading Commission was done under, and started under the former Administration. Sir, it was not a problem at that time but it is a problem now.

Asides.

SENATOR J. INCE: Sir, that process under the Barbados Labour Party was never completed. Sir, this Administration has decided that we are going to confront the challenges of the Barbados Water Authority. Sir, as Senator McClean said, which I support, we are going to bite the bullet and make the necessary changes. Sir, how did we get to this stage?

In 1996, the Democratic Labour Party was not in office but the Opposition was given or handed an agency. It was a well-oiled machine, management structures were in place and net profits were generated.

2.50 p.m.

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SENATOR J. INCE: Sir, the Barbados Water Authority, at the time, had a strategic plan where they needed to go to deliver services to Barbados. Sir, I am going to look at some of the numbers in the financials of the Barbados Water Authority from 1996 to 2005 to let the Senate know how we arrived at this position.

Sir, there was \$48.3 million in revenue between 1996 and 2005 and, as I have said, the revenue moved from \$43.8 million to \$60.5 million, a 38 per cent growth.

Mr. President, when we look at the operating expenses of the Barbados Water Authority, despite the operating loss of \$2.8 million, which was a result of capital works expansion, the Barbados Water Authority still made a profit and that profit was supported by the investment base of a strategic plan that was initiated by this Administration, when it was in office. Sir, it was supported by fixed deposits, of \$14 million and up, until 1996, going through until 1999.

Sir, they also had Treasury Bills of \$16.5 million as of 1996 and an investment base of \$30.5, million supporting the Barbados Water Authority. Sir, that was the strategic plan of the Democratic Labour Party.

Mr. President, there were signs that the Barbados Water Authority was running into financial difficulties but in the wisdom of the Barbados Labour Party, they ignored the signs and refused to put the necessary systems in place to ensure that if problems occurred, they would have an action plan to minimise any financial exposure to the Barbados Water Authority. Sir, it was not done but yet members on the Other Side had the best brains when it comes to economics. Sir, they bragged of the brilliance and the revenue increased every year.

Sir, in 1998, the revenue increased by 6.4 per cent. In 2001 the revenue increased by 9.72 per cent but look at what happened as we moved on? Losses began to increase. Sir, not only losses, but we saw a decrease in the retained earnings of the Barbados Water Authority. Sir, Government had a supported equity base in the Barbados Water Authority of \$181.2 million in 1996. Mr. President, the Opposition had that type of asset base to play with but by 2005, that base had eroded to \$63 million against a deficit of \$124 million.

Mr. President, when we look at the loan portfolio of the Barbados Water Authority, the Democratic Labour Party left office without a loan portfolio. Sir, the Barbados Water Authority had no loans going up to 1997 because of the structures that this present Administration put in place.

Sir, in 1998, deficiencies and losses were occurring in everything. Mr. President, just take a look at all their projects for 14 years. Whenever there was a problem, they threw money into the project without trying to solve the problem.

Mr. President, when problems developed at Greenland, they threw money into Greenland without solving the problem. When problems developed with the highway, they threw money into the highway without solving the problem. When problems started to develop at the Barbados Water Authority, they borrowed \$15.5 million but there was no strategic plan or any form of planning.

Sir, by 1998 to 2005, the Barbados Water Authority had a loan deficit of \$150 million. Sir, at 2004 and 2005, one year leading up to the General Elections, the Barbados Water Authority increased their debt by \$58.6 million.

Mr. President, over a 10-year period that loan portfolio would have increased by 864.29 per cent from 1998 until 2005. Sir, could you imagine Senator Holder saying that a 60 per cent increase in water rates is going to

dislocate families and that it is going to create hardship for Barbadians? Sir, the Barbados Labour Party created hardship from 1996 until now. They should have known that the Barbados Water Authority had a social obligation but, Sir, why destroy the water bottle and leave the water? Mr. President, when you destroy the water bottle, tell me how you are going to carry the water? When you destroy the pumping stations, when you refuse to replace the mains, when you refuse to maintain the infrastructure, tell me how Barbadians are going to get the water?

Mr. President, they are using the argument about destruction of the poor and hardships but here you have an institution that is in financial turmoil. Sir, this institution has collapsed financially and, like everything else, corrective action has to be taken. Sir, if we do not do it now, we are going to pay a price later.

Mr. President, when we look at the situation within the Barbados Water Authority, we are not saying that the Democratic Labour Party is the best thing in the world. What we are saying is that we have foresight. Sir, we care about people and I would continue to say in this Chamber that whenever Barbadians are faced with a critical situation that is going to affect their children, grand children and the lives of the pensioners in this country, the Democratic Labour Party is in office to make that decision.

We were in office in 1976, we were in office in 1991 and we are now in office in 2010 with one of the worst global crises that the world has ever seen, and the Democratic Labour Party now has to lead the people of Barbados to the promise land and, Sir, that is what we are going to do.

Mr. President, the Barbados Labour Party is saying that the 60 per cent increase is drastic, that it is going to collapse the economy, destroy families and stop people from running their businesses. Sir, they were sitting on retained earnings within the Barbados Water Authority of approximately \$10 million. Sir, in 1996, they had \$10 million and in 1997, it was approximately \$11 million and, Sir, they wiped it out.

Sir, if you look at 2005, and at the fixed deposits that were around in 1999, there were \$31.2 million in deposits; \$18.5 million in Treasury Bills; Fixed Deposits were \$7 million; \$7.7 million in Treasury Notes and, Sir, all of this was done by the Democratic Labour Party. Sir, all of this was due to mature in September 2000 as well as in December 31, 2005.

S/A27/14:50 Sequence 17

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SENATOR J. INCE: Ask where in 2010 that investment portfolio that would have kept the Barbados Water Authority alive and well financially has disappeared? Then we are going to hear about justifiable reasons, and elasticity of demand, but may I explain to Senator Holder that with the elasticity of demand, if the pipe goes and the infrastructures go, the demand becomes thirsty. The elasticity of demand becomes the elasticity of thirst. The elasticity of thirst for those and those that are approaching the reservoir or standpipe, they would become thirsty in the process. This is what I am talking about.

Sir, when we look at the Barbados Water Authority, in its context, we can talk about not only a short-term measure, but we are looking at a short, medium and long-term measure. We know we have a social obligation but we also have an obligation to the taxpayers of this country to manage their money efficiently. Sir, it is all right to speak about a social obligation but when that social obligation calls for funding, or when we abuse and misuse the taxpayers' money, that social obligation is costly, very costly. It is fine to talk about these things, but there comes a time when we have to decide that we cannot allow the taxpayers of Barbados to suffer. We have to give an account of our stewardship with the spending of the taxpayers' dollars. The Barbados Water Authority, that State agency, it is important that the measures are implemented so that we can see a turnaround in the financial fortunes. As I said before, it is going to be very costly in the long-run.

Let us look at this as a way forward of strengthening the management within the institution. This is a national issue. This is not a blame issue. This is a national issue. This is not a Democratic Labour Party issue. This is not a Barbados Labour Party issue, so when the good Senator seeks to shift blame and to shift responsibility towards the Democratic Labour Party, that argument leaves a lot to be desired. It is lacking in content and if I had to grade him, based on today's speech, I surely could not give him 8 out of 10. I would have to give him 5 out of 10, and still pass him, but I will still pass him but I will pass him in C+...

Mr. PRESIDENT: Fortunately, no Senator needs to be graded.

SENATOR J. INCE: Thank you, Mr. President. Let us look at this issue as a national one. All of us in this country form part of Barbados, form part of the Barbados Water Authority, and we have paid, and I repeat, we have paid our dues to society. We are taxpayers and we cannot allow this financial mess - it is a financial mess - to continue and we all have an obligation to ensure that the Barbados Water Authority is a viable and efficient organisation, or an efficient State agency, to deliver a service to one and all within this country.

Mr. President, I am obliged to you.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Senator Inniss.

SENATOR Miss P. I. INNISS: Mr. President, I want to make a contribution to this discussion this afternoon in support of this Bill to place the Barbados Water Authority under the regulation of the Fair Trading Commission.

I have listened for some time to the discourses as they relate to this discussion, as they relate to the Barbados Water Authority and the 60 per cent increase. I have listened to Members of the Opposition trying their best to drum up support stating, in the Other Place as well as in here, that this 60 per cent increase is not justifiable. The times are hard and they have attempted to reduce this colossal mess that is presently in Barbados and attempting to simply win a debate, and attempting to fool Barbadians that this matter is a matter about only 60 per cent, as said by Senator Holder today, and I listened in the Other Place. I am fearful that we run the danger of misguiding Barbadians of what was the status, what is the present position and what has been done.

Sir, what has been done as it relates to the Barbados Water Authority is nothing short of a miracle. That is why I take the opportunity to speak because I feel, sometimes, that as the ordinary public listen to these discourses in the Other Place, they are being tossed too and fro, as if it is a matter of a debate, or only a debate and who has won. This is not about who has won. This is about water. This is an essential without which, they said seven days, and we die. It cannot be put only to a debate or someone saying, as has been said today by Senator Holder, there is no justification, even if the Barbados Water Authority is in peril, I cannot believe that. He cannot be serious, to my mind, with all respect.

Sir, if the Barbados Water Authority is in peril, and it has been, the point has to be laboured, we will have no water. If we have no water we cannot survive, and that is where the discourse has to always lie. The Honourable Senator said today that there is no justification, even if the Barbados Water Authority is in peril, to justify a 60 per cent rate increase.

Sir, in the Other Place as well, I heard over and over that times are hard. Yes, we know that times are hard but the 60 per cent increase was not something bandied about. It was a case that the Barbados Water Authority was collapsing. It was said before. It was said here, but I thought that I had to make my small contribution so that Barbadians understand and keep it in the back of their minds because I am sure it will come again. Sir, if the Barbados Water Authority collapses we are in trouble, and that was the state of affairs.

Sir, when people speak of the bad service, meters not reading correctly, you call the Barbados Water Authority and they were not able to attend, all of that was a part of the collapse, the collapse that has been going on for over 10 years. Sir, I am not going to go into the figures again. I did on a previous occasion and I think it was well-managed here today to show what the situation is.

Sir, some persons have asked, and I heard it in the Other Place, what the 60 per cent increase did? It has been less than a year and there has been a 60 per cent increase. I think all Barbadians are asking - times are hard, yes times are hard. We have had to endure a 60 per cent increase. Some persons said that it is water under the bridge but others have asked if it has helped. What has it done?

Sir, prior to last year, and Barbadians have to understand this reality, the Barbados Water Authority was heading down a slope where it would have not only collapsed. There is a saying that the dog dead. I often heard my mother say that the dog was dying.

SA27 15.10 p.m. Sequence 18

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Senate A27, Sequence 19, 3.10 p.m.

SENTAOR Miss P. I. INNISS: Sir, when we look at the approach taken by the Democratic Labour Party, we cannot consider it as a matter of political favour back and forth. It is salvaging destruction. It has to be seen in that context first. I heard yesterday bandied about in the Other Place, what does this 60 per cent increase do, again, we are debating? There is nothing about debate. I have one or two points here, Mr. President, and I do not intend to be long but it has to be labelled, "What has this 60 per cent done."

Mr. President, the record should be put clearly that the Barbados Water Authority is now paying its bills. It could not pay its bills and now it is starting to clear bills that have been more than 10 years in arrears, so it was not a matter of just increasing rates. If you are a householder and you have not paid bills for 10 years, think of what is going to happen to you. The 60 per cent has gone into - of course, we would not elaborate on the specifics - the start of repaying bills.

Mr. President, you will hear the statement, this is not about politics. The BWA is an operating entity and you will soon hear that they are starting to bring in equipment, and I am sure it is around the corner. I know it is around the corner but, of course, I am not in a position to speak on those matters but because they can pay bills, now they can service equipment. I am going to come right down to it because it is a matter of talking about the realities. This discussion cannot continue as a debate of who won.

Mr. President, we have 14 water tenders at the BWA for the longest time, as Barbadians will say, four could not be serviced. We are talking 10 years plus, as Senator Ince and Senator McClean said, and we could not service one water tender of the 13. Four of them could not be serviced because they did not have the parts. They could not afford to pay for the parts because they had arrears and the people would not give them.

Asides.

SENATOR Miss P.I. INNISS: In essence, the people would not allow them to have parts because they have not paid their arrears and they were operating at a continuous loss. One of them was unretrievable and one of them was destroyed so the eight remained in Barbados for the last 10 plus years. When Barbadians are speaking about bad service, this is part of the reason there was bad service. Sir, of the eight water tenders, six of those are from a specific company and the parts are not available here.

Mr. President, you would know that when you do not have money, almost everything seems wrong. I am only pleading for Barbadians to understand that when they speak of all the millions of things wrong with the BWA, almost everything was because of the lack of money. Sir, of the eight water tenders that were in operation, parts could not be obtained for six of them.

Mr. President, the workers at the Barbados Water Authority have to take the abuse from Barbadians, probably justifiable because they want water, but they do not understand it ran back to no money.

Mr. President, now they have almost cleared that debt. In the last eight months that debt is almost cleared so we are looking at the reality that soon enough, they may be able to bring in new water tenders and service the other water tenders. Sir, this is what is being done.

Again, what has been done with the 60 per cent increase? Mr. President, I heard today talk about the meters, and you call and the meters are not being served. Sir, that was because of the lack of money as well. The meters are faulty but let us talk real. The Barbados Water Authority did not, until the last six months, have any money to address meter problems in Barbados.

Sir, what has happened in the last four months since a 60 per cent increase? Sir, through the IDB, they have done a consultation and I know for a fact as well again - this is their business and it is not a matter of us coming out here and just proclaiming a lot of good news - they will do their part and you will see the results.

Mr. President, within another four months, I have heard around May, almost 50 000 meters that will meet

specific specifications for the first time in more than ten years, will be sourced because they have been able to break even and are able to pay for them. Sir, that is what a 60 per cent increase has done.

Mr. President, I go further. We heard this afternoon about the \$150 million, which was brought in 2006, by the former Administration and in the Other Place that this was not only for mains replacement but it was also to service existing debt. Mr. President, I may not be an economist but I am a householder and I manage money and I see little sense in borrowing money to pay for an existing debt and you still cannot service the new debt.

This is what the former Administration did. They borrowed money to pay and consolidate old debt and still could not pay the interest or the premiums on the new borrowed amount. This is the \$15 million, so imagine a Democratic Labour Party coming into power realising what is going on with the Barbados Water Authority. We now will have a \$150 million debt that has been spoken about and was told, "Oh that was to refinance", yet they could not pay it, Sir.

Mr. President, under the former Administration, they had not the foresight or the vision to understand how they are going to pay the \$150 million.

Mr. President, in essence we paid the interest of the \$10 million and, guess what, if you want to know what is being done with the 60 per cent increase, for the first time, Mr. President, the interest is going to be paid by the BWA.

Asides.

SENATOR Miss P. I. INNISS: This has not happened before. Sir, the premium will be paid by the BWA, which has not happened before.

Asides.

SENATOR Miss P. I. INNISS: Mr. President, it means that the Democratic Labour Party has been able, with the help of Barbadians who understand, to put the Barbados Water Authority back on its own feet.

Asides.

SENATOR Miss P. I. INNISS: This is what it is. You are a parent. You want your children to be self-sufficient. Do you want them every minute to be coming back borrowing? This is what has happened. We have said, you have to be self-sufficient so to the question, over and over what has the 60 per cent done - and I heard it about 50 times yesterday and a few times today, as well - the BWA can now service that debt and it can service more debt.

Mr. President, I am going back quickly to this point that had been spoken about yesterday by the Leader of the Opposition in a debate. This is not about a debate. This is about a life and death situation - I heard, "Oh these times are perilous and they are so hard". Mr. President, they are hard for all of us. We are not immune to Barbados' problems. I myself have bills and I am bearing the brunt and feeling it too. They speak as if Members of Parliament are some elites that are not experiencing the problems.

Mr. President, I heard in the Other Place yesterday we should have taken the burden. The Democratic Labour Party should take the burden? Who is the Democratic Labour Party? Where would the money come from? If the Government is to take the burden of the Barbados Water Authority, it has to come from the Barbadians themselves and that is the same point, so where are we taking the burden? An analogy has been made time and time before of this whole issue of the Barbados Water Authority and the economic situations in Barbados.

We are like a boat in a turmoil sea but, in reality, Barbadians have to understand that up to nine months ago, that boat had a huge leak. If you are in water and you had a big leak, regardless of how rough the seas are, you will drown so what has happened in the last few months, with a 60 per cent increase is that the leak has been stopped and it has to be looked at that way.

Again, what has the 60 per cent increase done? I spoke of being able to pay bills. The Barbados Water Authority can now pay its own electricity bill. It could not do it before, and we mentioned that before, some \$10 million that the Government had to support every year. They can do that now. What has the \$60 million done? It means that the Barbados Water Authority can address waste issues for the first time, which it has not been able to do before and there are specific structures how they are able to do that now.

Senate A27, Sequence 19, 15:20:13

Wednesday, February 17, 2010

SENATOR Miss P. I. INNISS: What has that 60 per cent increase done, apart from assessing an Inter-American Development Bank loan? Mr. President, if you are going to access a loan, the persons who are lending to you need to know that you can repay. People seem not to realise that. The Barbados Water Authority could not do that before. They can now access loans because they have payment plans and are able to meet loan requirements. That was not possible before. This is what the 60 per cent increase has done.

Mr. President, we not only know of the Inter-American Development Bank loan, of which a large

percentage is going to go to mains replacement, but there is also the \$16 million loan from the National Insurance Board. The Barbados Water Authority is standing on its own feet now. This is not any injection of funds or money from the Democratic Labour Party and, therefore, the taxpayers of this country. The Barbados Water Authority is dealing with its own business. Sir, even the Caribbean Development Bank loan that the Authority is discussing on its own steam is now possible.

Sir, we heard about consumer problems, issues of human relations and issues of burst mains. Within another few months, the Barbados Water Authority would be able to address the whole mains replacement programme. That is no longer a dream, and Barbadians have to understand that. For so many years, the Barbados Water Authority had caches there of all the different mains that had to be replaced and they could not do anything about them. Sir, when these loans are settled, the Barbados Water Authority will be on its feet and will be paying for these loans and dealing with the Mains Replacement Programme.

Mr. President, that is not pie in the sky. That is on board because of that seemingly drastic step which says that we are all in this boat with this hole sinking. Yes, it is rough, but Barbadians can hold on because we have to stop this hole and we all have to come through these economic hard times together.

Mr. President, what therefore has the Barbados Water Authority continued to do? Manpower is needed, Mr. President, even in addressing the collection of arrears. Mr. President, the big word again money, the Authority had no income to be able to sustain a proper programme for collecting arrears. They have to pay the lawyers or those persons who collect arrears for you, but they could not do it properly because they had no income.

Mr. President, I could continue for the whole day because there are so many things that were collapsed at the Barbados Water Authority because of a lack of income.

Mr. President, we come to a position now that the Barbados Water Authority can now see itself clear. It must be laboured in here, if I do nothing else, the huge gulf between the administrative structures of the Democratic Labour Party and the administrative structures of the Barbados Labour Party because in times, which were not so harsh, the Barbados Labour Party could not, after a rate increase of 38 per cent, bring the Barbados Water Authority to the Fair Trading Commission.

In one year, in the worst of times in the last century, plus the Democratic Labour Party has been able to correct the Barbados Water Authority, which was not done by the Barbados Labour Party, as well as today propose an Act to bring the Barbados Water Authority under the Fair Trading

Commission. Do you see the gulf between the administrative structures of the two parties? It is obvious to me.

Mr. President, in hard times, we got done what in good times for the Barbados Labour Party was impossible. Mr. President, that is the reality that is not debatable in any place. That is the difference between the administrative structures of the Democratic Labour Party and the administrative structures of the Barbados Labour Party. This is a visionary programme.

Mr. President, I do not want to labour it. I only want to speak very quickly... It is amazing. It was even said in this Honourable Chamber today about putting the cart before the horse, that we should have proposed this Bill and the amendments to it first to put the Barbados Water Authority under the Fair Trading Commission and then look at a rate increase.

Mr. President, with all respect, that is ludicrous because the Fair Trading Commission, for those who seemingly do not understand, is not a two by two little organisation where people go in and they just tell you to lower rates or raise rates. That is not what a Fair Trading Commission is. It is an entire structure. You have to go to the Fair Trading Commission prepared. How many times must it be said that the Barbados Water Authority could not go to the Fair Trading Commission?

Even if we brought in a million Acts, the Barbados Water Authority could not go to the Fair Trading Commission because the first thing the Fair Trading Commission would say is that your books are not in order. What am I to look at? I am not only dealing with the rates, I am also dealing with customer relations and a huge number of things.

Mr. President, Barbadians have to understand that this discourse has to end because we are an intelligent people. We understand what a Fair Trading Commission does. It is not only about rates. We have positioned the Barbados Water Authority out of the begging from a Government or an administration to an entity that can operate on its own so that it can then say to the Fair Trading Commission, "Okay my books are in order, tell me, am I correct to raise these rates to 60 per cent". That is what the Fair Trading Commission would look at as well.

Sir, there is this old talk about the 60 per cent, like it is set in stone and it is an 11th Commandment. The Fair Trading Commission can now come in and it would look at a number of things. This could not happen before. Sir, when it is spoken again, that 60 per cent did that as well and Barbadians have to understand it, so we are at this position.

Mr. President, I want to get in one or two more points, I do not know if I have the time but there were so many things that were shut down at the Barbados Water Authority over 10 to 15 years that are now starting. There are some ordinary workers at the Barbados Water Authority who see me... They are not trying to say anything outside of what they can, of course, but they breathe a sigh. Mr. President, could you imagine ordinary workers knowing the things that needed to be done but could not get them done and now they could finally do them?

Mr. President, they are talking about doing things to preserve the water integrity of Barbados. The Barbados Water Authority went to the former Administration in 2005 for self-generation. Sir, do you know that the Barbados Labour Party told them that it could not happen. They could not generate, sorry to bring it up again, because they had no money, so that is what the 60 per cent did. Mr. President, because the Barbados Water Authority is more self-sufficient, the Inter-American Development Bank has established a consultation, which is actually regional but Barbados would also pull up from it. The Barbados Water Authority people are working.

Mr. President, when the Inter-American Development Bank consultation is completed, Barbados will take its portion and the officers at the Barbados Water Authority say, it is not "a hopeful", that they are going to introduce programmes for energy conservation and energy efficiency at the Barbados Water Authority. That is what the 60 per cent has done.

Mr. President, I will move on to another point. I do not want to get technical but it is important. We are now going to upgrade the chlorination of Barbados. Sir, by the time the chlorinated water goes into the wells, it takes a certain amount of time, and if the time is too short, those persons who are taking the water can get bacterial infection. This is what those officers at the Barbados Water Authority have been dealing with. The chlorination times were too short, again because of no money. That has been addressed because of the 60 per cent.

What they had to do then was to spend more money for the last umpteen times. Sir, when you hear the Barbados Labour Party speaking about, oh, the times are hard and what is justifying, our water was in danger because the chlorine time was too short. Sir, the Barbados Water Authority had to send the water off and bring it back in so that they allow a longer chlorination time.

Mr. President, there are so many things the Barbados Water Authority is doing. I do not need to call the amount of monies exactly but they are looking to introduce 23 new tanks. Barbadians will see these things start to pop up all over the place because it is not a political propaganda, it is the Barbados Water Authority doing its job. The tanks will

be going up so that we can deal with the chlorination time and so make it safer for Barbadians. It also means that it will reduce costs. Mr. President, the 60 per cent has ensured that the Authority can access the loans.

Mr. President, it goes on and on. We speak about customer relations and HR relations. The Barbados Water Authority, as ludicrous as it sounds, had no money. I am going to stop saying that because it is getting repetitive but the point has to be made. Even the telephone service was outdated because it could not approach the telephone providers because they had no money.

Senate A27 Sequence 20

3.30 p.m.

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SENATOR Miss P. I. INNISS: Mr. President, guess what? Sir, the Barbados Water Authority is approaching the Telephone Company to install updated telephone systems. If you do not understand what that means, I would want to say that in relation to customer relation, a bad telephone system affects that too.

Sir, money affects the outcome of everything, therefore, now that they will have money, they can now improve their telephone systems, which they could not have done before. Mr. President, they also have to take it to the Fair Trading Commission; before they could not take it to the Fair Trading Commission because their telephone systems were not working properly.

Mr. President, when the Opposition talks about this Government putting the horse before the cart, or the cart before the horse, it is obvious they do not understand that there are now systems in place. Sir, thank God that a Democratic Labour Party came into power. If it had not come in, we would have been in trouble.

Mr. President, it goes further. Sir, we have all heard about problems in relation to water bills. Sir, whenever a Barbadian says that the Barbados Water Authority has such bad service, guess what? Sir, that bad service comes from a lack of money.

Sir, because the billing system is so old, the Barbados Water Authority could not do proper billing. What does it mean when you get a wrong bill? Are you not going to call the Barbados Water Authority? If the Barbados Water Authority cannot access people's accounts correctly, they would not be able to help you. Sir, we equate that to bad service. Everything is bad service. This, as well as the telephone system, as well as a number of other problems, was as a result of the fact that the Barbados

Water Authority did not have any money to make a difference.

Mr. President, I am not talking about the fact that we would like to do that and that we hope to do that. The Barbados Water Authority is replacing its billing system. It is going to happen within a few months. I imagine they will probably not have a big Press conference and call in all of the operatives and make it a political issue. They probably would not do it. They probably would be very quiet because this is not about politics, this is about saving our lives.

Sir, a new billing system is coming into place. The Barbados Water Authority will also be getting better telephones and will be improving customer service. Mr. President, I am not going to talk about human resource management in its wide sense because they are doing a host of things with that too, they now have the funds.

Mr. President, the Sewerage Treatment Programme has been halted for years. Sir, we cannot even bother to talk about the Bridgetown Sewerage Plant and that one of the two digesters does not work. Why could the Barbados Water Authority not address that problem? Sir, they did not have any money to do so.

Sir, I am pleading that Barbadians would close their ears when they hear this banter about what can a 60 per cent do and about hard times. Sir, we cannot live without water. We cannot live without a proper sewerage system.

Mr. President, if we must address something that the Democratic Labour Party is doing, as I imagine you have to do, you can address something else and not the Barbados Water Authority. You can find another way because water is essential. Sir, the upgrading of the West Coast Sewerage Project, which is even worse than the Bridgetown Sewerage Project because it does not have digesters, is going to be fixed. Sir, this is not I who am speaking. If you want me to bring the authorities from the Barbados Water Authority, I am not in a position to do so but I am sure the Minister and others will do it.

It is coming because of structures that have now been put in place because now the Barbados Water Authority can do a bit more than break-even. Sir, the Barbados Water Authority can now bring all of these things to the Fair Trading Commission, where the Fair Trading Commission will not only look at rates, it will now look at a host of other things.

Mr. President, if the Fair Trading Commission and some strong activists can argue that the rate increase is not proportionate to the production, which is part of what the Fair Trading Commission looks at, there could then be an argument there too. The Fair Trading Commission or

activists can then petition for a drop in rates because of the findings of the Fair Trading Commission. The Fair Trading Commission can do that if it sees fit. Sir, we have not just stuck this 60 per cent there in the craw as turkeys would say, we have to do things so that we make things proper.

Mr. President, there are many other things going on but for now, it seems to me, from looking from the outside, that the Democratic Labour Party has introduced a 60 per cent to make things right and then followed through today by saying, as promised, that we are approaching the Fair Trading Commission. Sir, we do not want anyone to say that everything that was done was not done above board, nor that everything was not clear. The Fair Trading Commission will do its job, as I am sure it will.

Mr. President, we have, therefore, a position where the Barbados Water Authority is in a good stead. It is going ahead. Sir, that 60 per cent was for a purpose and that purpose has been achieved. Sir, there are so many things that are now collapsing but I am sure that, as has been done with housing, with water and with many things, it cannot be considered a debate. It was a struggle for survival and the Democratic Labour Party has ensured that the water service in Barbados survives.

I thank you, Mr. President.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Senator Hunte.

SENATOR R. A. HUNTE: Mr. President, I rise in support of the Barbados Water Authority (Amendment) Bill, 2010. Sir, I would hope that it would happen in my lifetime, while I am retired from the political field in every form, that water would no longer be a political football. Mr. President, the days of cheap water have long gone and will not come back. I said cheap water because it was never free.

Sir, even in the days of stand-pipes, water was paid for by the then Administrations. I remember far back water being \$1.25 a quarter. I do not remember what it was before that but, in my time, it was that. It stood that way up to about 1974 or 1975, then it moved to \$6 and from thereon there were incremental increases in water.

Mr. President, there is a beginning and the history of the water supply in Barbados dates back to about 1858. That is when it had begun to be harnessed and administered. Of course, at that time the water came, and still does, from springs, ponds and wells. A number of those springs, I remember as a boy, swimming in one of those springs. I was never a good swimmer. There was "Pa Hoyos" spring over there where the hospital is now.

One of the early and most lucrative springs was the Beckles Spring over in the Bayland. In those days that

Beckles Spring had a production of 289 000 gallons. The persons who had owned the land on which there was the spring used to sell that water to individuals. That water was carted away throughout Bridgetown and was sold at two cents per four gallons. That was in 1858.

As time went on, there were a number of bodies, one was the Barbados Water Supply Company, who was then given a contract by Government to harness the water. They then built a number of stand-pipes around the country.

3.40 p.m.

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SENATOR R. A. HUNTE: Then, of course, they had a rival which was the Barbados Water Supplies and another rival which was the Bridgetown Water Works Company. Sir, that came into being in about 1888. There were two companies but one could not supply the amount of stand-pipes that were requested by the then Government and they fell short.

Sir, stand-pipes were erected around the island, and particularly throughout Bridgetown. Sir, one of the companies came to the point where they could not install all the stand-pipes, hence they asked for more money but, at the same time, they could not produce.

Mr. President, the company that eventually took over was the Barbados Water Supply Company, which X out the other company. Of course, that moved up the ladder until we had the Barbados Water Authority established in the 1930s. Sir, water was never free. It was only cheap and it was cheap because it suited the day. Sir, even the stand-pipes that were installed then had to be paid for.

Mr. President, the Water Works Act of 1957 had a problem and Senator Holder, being an attorney-at-law would be familiar with the Court of Chancery in those days. Sir, all of that which I am not going to bore you with any longer, are the early origins of water supply in Barbados. It was cheap but it was never free. Sir, there was always a cost attached to water.

Mr. President, I want to show how the Democratic Labour Party, as an administration of this country, came into being where Government is concerned in 1961. The Democratic Labour Party has always had, and will always have the record, no matter the change in personnel, of advancing Barbados and taking tough decisions, no matter what and, Sir, I will show you the records.

Mr. President, I always wonder when I lived through those early times because I was born in 1949...

Asides.

SENATOR R. A. HUNTE: Sir, I listened to all my political campaigns on Empire pasture because in those days everything used to be on a pasture. The Mobile Cinema was on a pasture. The political meetings were on a pasture. Mr. President, everything was on the pasture and I found my way to Empire pasture and I listened to everything there.

Mr. President, sometimes I wonder what happened before 1961. Sir, between 1961 and 1966 there was a transformation that took place in Barbados under a Democratic Labour Party Government. Sir, in 1961, there were 17 831 water connections in private homes in Barbados. Sir, by 1976, there were 51 271 connections and, of course, that was almost a 200 per cent increase in water connections in private homes in Barbados. Sir, today the Barbados Water Authority has a customer base of 100 000 which is understandable.

Mr. President, the change in utilities took place after 1974 when we had an oil crisis around the world and small developing countries like Barbados felt the brunt of it. Sir, you may wish to be reminded of it or you may not wish to be reminded but then, of course, you were a Minister of Government then, being a member of this Chamber, when we had the oil crisis of 1973/1974. Sir, how did this affect Barbados?

Mr. President, the fuel crisis caused an almost 25 per cent increase in prices. Sir, I was then a salesman around Bridgetown and I can tell you that oil stoves, that nobody remembered in a bond, came out and were selling for \$200 and \$300. Sir, people were using gas but people went back for those oil stoves. Sir, that is the effect the oil prices had on Barbados.

Mr. President, our fuel bill rose from \$22 million to \$69 million between 1973 and 1975. Sir, I recall that the inflation rate in Barbados was about 40 per cent. Sir, inflation galloped and went down the road during this crisis and it affected all the utility companies, whether they were controlled by Government, or whether they were in private hands, as indeed the Barbados Telephone Company and the Barbados Light & Power Company. Sir, when the Democratic Labour Party was thrown out of office, reluctantly by the people, if you look at the "Martin Report", it was down to 12 per cent.

Mr. President, all that changed when the Barbados Light & Power Company, introduced a fuel adjustment charge with the blessing of the Public Utilities Board. Sir, some felt that the fuel adjustment was even higher than the actual rate that you consumed. Sir, that is what the fuel prices did to this country. It transformed all the utility operations in Barbados but because Government was controlling the Barbados Water Authority, then known as the Water Works Department (WWD), Government

continued to hold strain until all that changed around 1974/1975, when the then Government had to go to the IADB to acquire a loan to install the sewerage system in Barbados.

Mr. President, you were a Minister then and when the rate changed to \$6, Sir Frederick Smith, a former member of this Chamber was Minister of Transport and Works because the Ministry of Transport and Works was linked to water, and water was under the Ministry of Transport and Works. Sir, when that loan had to be negotiated, a former Prime Minister was then Minister of Health, Lloyd Erskine Sandiford, I can call his name because he is not a member of this Chamber...

Mr. PRESIDENT: I have to call to your attention that you cannot call his name.

SENATOR R. A. HUNTE: Sir, a former Prime Minister.

Mr. PRESIDENT: You can say that.

SENATOR R. A. HUNTE: I have said it, Sir, thank you very much. Mr. President, that was what went down all those years, the whole transformation. Sir, I had to do this because you have to look at the transformation of the cost of utilities. Sir, that is why I have said that water was cheap, but it was never free. Sir, it rose to about \$6 by 1974/1975.

Mr. President, I wish to say that when I hear these comments about a Democratic Labour Party administration "butting about" like a blind man in a dark room, I think it is unfair. The record of the Democratic Labour Party speaks for itself. It has always been a Government that has brought this country out of crisis but, Sir, people do not see it that way because sometimes the people get influenced by a lot of propaganda and then the Democratic Labour Party gets thrown out of office.

Sir, sometimes better does not come. It might come for certain individuals but, in the long run, it does not come for the country.

S/A27/15:50 Sequence 22

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SENATOR R. A. HUNTE: Sir, during that period of time, after an oil crisis, it came down to 12 per cent when the Democratic Labour Party was thrown out. They had three credit institutions that all developing countries, as long as they were members had to go to. I am going to call them. There were the IMF, the World Bank, the UN Oil Facility, and, of course, you will remember the creation of the Special Trust Fund.

The Democratic Labour Party Government did not apply to not one of them for a red cent. They fought on their own resources and brought this country right back, and they were thrown out because some people thought that better was going to come.

Sir, pensioners were getting \$2.15 when the Democratic Labour Party came into power in 1961. By the time they left, they were getting \$13 with a pending increase, which went to \$16. The new Administration at the time could not have changed that because it was in the public domain. Not only was it in the public domain, it was in the records.

Sir, I am bringing this down the line because after all of this, do we still expect cheap water and cheap electricity? We will all like to pay a reduced cost but it will not happen no matter how much political propaganda is displayed in this forum, as it did yesterday in the Other Place. No matter what, it will not happen.

Sir, when we talk about biting the bullet and facing reality, you have to face reality.

Sir, I looked at some of the records of the Barbados Water Authority and my colleague, Senator Ince...

Mr. PRESIDENT: You must not get confused between Senator Ince and Senator Inniss. I am sure that Senator Ince would not wish you to get confused with him and Senator Inniss. There are two distinct individual Senators.

SENATOR R. A. HUNTE: When I look at the Reports of 1993 and 1994, what caught my eye is this. Whenever it boils down, we are here as legislators, but we are consumers, workers, individuals, and we all have to drink out of the same bowl of soup in this country, so no one should spit in it, but reality is reality. Everybody has their job to do.

Sir, whatever operation, whether it is a small or big country could survive when you have salaries and wages outstripping almost everything as far as expenditure is concerned in every operation. You cannot survive, will not survive.

Sir, there is a 1993 report where I see salaries and wages at 35.7 per cent and 1994, 40.1 per cent. I am saying that nobody has a quarrel. We are all workers. Whenever it boils down, we are all consumers, but the position is, people expect better service and if Government does not provide the finance, the expertise, in terms of putting in place the structures, if they do not do it now then when will they do it?

Sir, when I heard yesterday - Do you know Opposition politics are really sweet because anybody can criticise?

Sir, I heard the late Lloyd Smith. Can I call his name? He is dead. I heard the late Lloyd Smith, at St. Elizabeth School, when his son was about to accept the nomination to run in St. Joseph in 1970, he had a unique way of speaking. This is what he said: "After, of course, you know where his stance was for all the years- "Mr. Chairman, you see this school here, it took all kinds of brains to build this school. Any fool could lay it down." That is exactly what we have now. Any fool can criticise. It should not be 60 per cent. It should be 1 per cent. It should be 2 per cent, not at this time. Sir, if not at this time when is it going to be, for my children and grandchildren to suffer?

Sir, when is it going to be? It has to be. That is why I always said that I will always be a record person. I read out the record where there is no law or legislation that the Barbados Labour Party has ever repealed because they are frightened to do it. They always think about the next Election, if you do this thing, the people are going to throw us out.

Sir, I have reached the point in politics that if something has to be done, it has to be done. The people are going to throw you out whether you do something good or when you do something bad.

Sir, you could not want a better record than the Democratic Labour Party Government for 15 years. Everything that was ever produced for the good of humanity was produced in that 15 years.

Sir, there was a former Minister, not under the Democratic Labour Party - there were a number of buses that came, that is why the Ministers should not be selfish no matter which Party they are in. A number of buses came in, and there were 26 of them. That Minister was so selfish that for the 26 buses, all 26 drivers recruited were from his Constituency. Do you know he still lost? Sir, a good friend, not a friend as such, we grew up together, he was a supervisor there but he retired now. He said to me: "I cannot understand." People that never drove bus, minibus people and all kinds of people came, and he still lost.

I am saying to you that the point is, you cannot be selfish in politics. If you do good and the people feel like throwing you out, they will throw you out because there is somebody you will not satisfy. If the Democratic Labour Party has to pay a penalty for doing what is right for the Barbados Drug Service I will associate myself with that. Gone are the days when we feel that you must be in there until Jesus comes.

Asides.

SENATOR R. A. HUNTE: Sir, I do not know if I am prepared. I do not look forward with any great desire, but if it comes, it comes.

The point is, there are some people who feel that only one political Party should be in power, only certain persons should be Prime Minister. It has never happened and it will never happen. The Democratic Labour Party has to make decisions for the interest of the people of this country.

Sir, I can reveal here - there are so many things that this great Democratic Labour Party did and they were told not to do them, they would break the country. The country is not broken yet.

I heard a Member say that somebody's pay worked out to \$1 a day. A former Minister in the Other Place said, "Do you know how many people who cannot get a dollar?"

Mr. PRESIDENT: I have to stop you because you are not permitted to make reference. Under the Standing Orders of this Place, we are not permitted to make reference to what someone has said in the Other Place. You may continue.

SENATOR R. A. HUNTE: Sir, I am sorry.

SA27 16.00 p.m. Sequence 23

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Senate A27, Sequence 24, 4.00 p.m.

SENATOR R. A. HUNTE: Sir, if anyone any part of the world had looked at water or any other commodity, Sir, cost averaging \$1 per day and then went on to say...

Asides.

SENATOR R. A. HUNTE: We are talking about Barbados. We are not talking about Haiti or any of those places.

Do you know how many people cannot get \$1 now? I am going to tell the honest truth, not only in Barbados because I hear a lot of people saying things are tough but I want to add not only in Barbados. I listen to the BBC a lot. I get a lot of my education from the BBC and these are the words I hear: "Economic collapse, an economic downfall."

I may not find the note on it, Sir, but when a BBC reporter asked the Chairman of the Audit Committee in the British Parliament what he thinks about the economic crisis, he said it is savage. These are people who live in

countries that produce 150 times more than what we do. Do you hear how he described the world economy? Savage, but here in Barbados now, "Oh the Democratic Labour Party is responsible." A Government in power for two years, in a crisis situation is responsible for everything, including the drought.

I think, Sir, that I have listened long enough but when I tell people that I get tired of that kind of politics, I really honestly get tired of it. I think the days of gimmicky and fooling people and just saying what people want to hear - Nobody likes to pay increases but you have to pay it.

I will say this. They could well do not fool the people. There will be no cheap water ever in this country. There is not going to be any cheap electricity, no cheap telephone. No matter what you say, you will not get those things cheap. We are talking about people not wanting to pay for water that they are using but yet, you see the people actually making a living out of selling bottled water.

Two things - either they could afford to buy bottled water or our water is no good and we are supposed to have the best water in the world but we do not want to pay for these things. We do not wish to pay for these things and I do not get vex with people for doing their job, but it gets to the stage now where you have to face reality and stop fooling people and telling people just what they want to hear.

I will just tell you that a small country like us had to bear a 400 per cent increase in fuel costs. They did not get it any cheaper. When the oil fluctuates up and down, it fluctuates up and down to suit a particular period but it still goes back up and what goes down must go up. I take these matters very seriously.

I think, Sir, the time has come when we have to look seriously at our water resources in Barbados, how they are used, how they are paid for and we have to bite more than one bullet. We probably have to bite a whole rifle.

Asides.

SENATOR R. A. HUNTE: Sir, I have one concern about the 1980 Barbados Water Authority Act. When you look back into the 1898 period that I read just now from the records, I recognised that back then springs were controlled. Sir, that is not mentioned in this Act. What it did mention is that Government could move in any land base and take control. Yes, but why are we allowing so many springs around the country, where people could wash their clothes and bathe as they like, and we are not controlling them?

Sir, those springs should be controlled. I am not seeing it in this Act at all. I read this Act and I did not see

one thing mentioned about streams. I am not a lawyer. It might be under a different something but certainly not a spring. I have not seen anything about springs in that Act that I looked through just now and we have a number of springs in Barbados and doing what the name is, springing water, and you are telling me that those springs should not be controlled?

Those springs should not be left to run wild for people to go and dive in and Rastas dive in, with all due respect to the brethren.

Mr. PRESIDENT: I wish you to address the Chair only.

SENATOR R. A. HUNTE: I am more conscious of my origins and the type of person I am, than a lot of people who only parade. That is one of the reasons why in Barbados nobody has been able to push me around. I have suffered as a result of it, Sir, because I have never “cow-toed” to anybody, so whether it is the brethren or the sisters it does not matter to me. Sir, that is my nature and my nature is always to speak frankly no matter who, where or what, as long as it is in the interest of this country.

I feel that my six children should be able, along with their children...Thank God that they went to school and they got their worth at the educational level. I am proud of my children, but my grandchildren and my children should not be able, Sir, to suffer the consequences in this country because of a Government refusing to take decisions because they do not want to become unpopular. Sir, sometimes your own mother or father would get unpopular if they have to help deal out some heavy manners to you. There are mothers and children who do not speak for years.

Mr. President, a Government is not about individuals, per se. A Government is about a country. I was impressed - and I said this more than once - with Senator Chandler's contributions to this Chamber, who brings a complete balance of moral, intelligence, truth from the heart, impresses me. She does not look or sound like one of those persons that anybody could push here or push there. She speaks from her heart and I say she is a true Barbadian. I followed her contributions before I came here.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Senator, you have five more minutes.

SENATOR R. A. HUNTE: Thank you very much, Sir.

I have listened to the contributions coming out of the Other Place and to me those contributions coming from the Opposition Benches, appear to be very disjointed. It seems to me as though some of the Honourable Members on this

particular Bill, seem to be taking strides in different directions.

Asides.

SENATOR R. A. HUNTE: What I am saying, Sir, is that people make all kinds of statements and one in particular was, that if the Barbados Water Authority has to go before the Fair Trading Commission, it has to get its act in order. “Cu'dear”, what is this? Who else, other than the Government can put structures in place? They are not popular. In fact, the only thing that is coming out of this is about a 60 per cent increase.

Asides.

SENATOR R. A. HUNTE: We are underestimating the public servants in this country. The public servants are providing the kind of information to this Government, including the last Bill, the Public Sector Reform Bill that we had, Sir. It was the public servants who said that they were not enjoying that Amendment of 2007. We are underestimating the public servants in this country.

Asides.

SENATOR R. A. HUNTE: It is the public servants that prepared this information for the political administration.

Sir, in the dying minutes of my contribution, I wish to say that in all sincerity, I support this Barbados Water Authority (Amendment) Bill, 2010, and I invite all Honourable Senators to do likewise because this is not about “we” and “you”, and “us” and “them”. It is about Barbados and decisions have to be taken. Mr. President, that is my contribution.

I am obliged to you, Sir.

Asides.

Senate A27, Sequence 24, 16:00:14

Wednesday, February 17, 2010

Mr. PRESIDENT: Thank you, Senator.

Senator Benn.

SENATOR H. LaV. BENN: Thank you, Mr. President. I rise to make a contribution as well to this debate and to support the Barbados Water Authority (Amendment) Bill, 2010, which is before this Honourable Senate.

Mr. President, this Bill will amend the Barbados Water Authority Act, Cap 274A to make the power given to the Authority to determine rates and charges in respect to the supply of water and sewerage services subject to the regulations by the Fair Trading Commission.

As you are aware, Mr. President, there was an increase to the rate of payment for water by consumers which became effective July 1, last year, and the Barbados Water Authority was the subject of discussion in this Senate Chamber and in other places.

We were in this Senate a few months ago to validate a decision taken by the previous Government in 2005 when that Administration increased the water rates to the public. I understand that increase in 2005 was in the tune of 38 per cent. No fanfare, Mr. President, was made of it, so it was okay. There was no hue and cry at the time.

We were told that the Barbados Labour Party Administration borrowed \$150 million supposedly for mains replacement and for refinancing of the debt incurred by the Barbados Water Authority over the years. Mr. President, the funds were used up. Some mains were laid but the debt position of the Barbados Water Authority worsened. Its operations reported substantial losses in successive years, in some cases up to \$10 million a year. Mr. President, I do not think that this is the end of our debate on the Barbados Water Authority. We will be back in here at some future time to discuss the operations of the Barbados Water Authority again, I am sure about that.

Mr. President, the new Administration, after taking a very careful look at the operations of the Barbados Water Authority and having studied the financial situation of the Authority decided that rather than borrow more money, it would have to go for a rate increase.

Mr. President, when the request for the interim rate increase was made, the financial position of the Barbados Water Authority was in tatters. They were on the brink of woe. It was suggested that their operating revenue was \$87 million but their expenses were to the tune of \$100 million. That means that their operating losses were to the tune of about \$12.896 million. Mr. President, when you look at the interest expense and the pension expense, they were staring at a projected net loss position of \$41 million.

This Administration, therefore, decided that we would go for a rate increase and that rate increase was widely debated. The Opposition had and are still having a field day. They have been using that 60 per cent increase as their buzzword. They have not told consumers that they have had to pay from \$20 to \$32, that would have sounded too small, which is less than 50 cents a day for such a precious commodity as water.

Mr. President, these are some people who would pay \$500 for a nice golden tap for their kitchen or bathroom. It is \$12 a month increase, from \$20 to \$32, but it pleases the Opposition to talk about the 60 per cent.

Asides.

SENATOR the Hon. H. LaV. BENN: Yes, 12 over 20 is 60 per cent. We are not saying that you are wrong, but it is political mileage for you to beat your chest and say that it is 60 per cent because, Mr. President, every time there seems to be some kind of increase that seeks to be at the disadvantage of Barbadians, the Barbados Labour Party people beat themselves in their chest as though they are so happy to know that people are going to be suffering, perhaps at what they are saying.

Mr. President, they come into this Chamber and seem to sing from a tune of joy and gladness whenever there is an increase in some commodity to the Barbadian public. These are the same people, Mr. President, that would pay \$600 for a fancy shower gadget and \$1 000 for a chandelier, but would complain about the cost of electricity.

Mr. President, these are the people who would pay \$150 000 for one of these SUVs but complain about the road tax. They have people who would quarrel about the movement from \$265 to \$450 but they own a vehicle that cost \$298 000.

This Democratic Labour Party Administration, Mr. President, after much thought, said that the rates would have to be increased. We did it at a time...and I would say this to you. I also heard mentioned in the Other Place yesterday ...

Asides.

Mr. PRESIDENT: You cannot refer to...

SENATOR H. LaV. BENN: I am not referring to anything said. I said I heard it said. I am not saying what was said, Sir, but thank you. I will be guided by you.

The point I was raising, Sir, is that if the Barbados Water Authority was to go before the Fair Trading Commission, it would have to have its house in order. Sir, imagine that the Barbados Water Authority is cash starved, their financial statements have not been audited since 2005 under the careful watch of the Barbados Labour Party, we would have had to wait until such time as the auditors' statements are ready and then have its house in order before it could go to the Fair Trading Commission. Mr. President, we respect the role and function of the Fair Trading Commission, so we have made a decision to honour that respect that is due to them so we are here today to amend

the Barbados Water Authority Act to allow for the Fair Trading Commission to determine the rates and charges in respect to the supply of water and sewerage services. We have not shown them any disrespect. We recognise their role and responsibility. We made a decision, and we have come today to have their Bill amended so that for the future we will go the route that other utilities have gone.

Mr. President, we recognise that the role of the Fair Trading Commission, which was established in January, 2001, was to safeguard the interest of the consumers, to regulate utility services supplied by service providers, to monitor and investigate the conduct of service providers and business enterprises and to promote and maintain effective competition in the economy and for related matters.

The Commission's role, among others, is to ensure the efficient and safe provision of regulated utility services at reasonable rates; safeguard the interest of consumers, as I just said; and promote and encourage fair competition.

Mr. President, I want to make it clear from the outset that I have relatives, friends and supporters who work at the Barbados Water Authority. As a matter of fact, Mr. President, the person who calls the shots at the Barbados Water Authority, I taught him at school, Mr. Boyce.

Asides.

SENATOR the Hon. H. LaV. BENN: I withdraw that. I am sorry I should not have called Mr. Boyce's name. I was saying, Mr. President, that the person who calls the shots at the Barbados Water Authority I taught him at school.

The services by the Barbados Water Authority are very key to the future development of this country, its citizens and its visitors.

Senate A27 Sequence 25

4.20 p.m.

Wednesday, February 17, 2010

SENATOR the Hon. H. LaV. BENN: Mr. President, I have the strongest feeling that the employees, both management and staff of the Barbados Water Authority, have already decided that they are going to do everything possible to ensure that the confidence we have placed in them is not betrayed. I am sure that the Barbados Water Authority, under the watchful eyes of strong leadership of the unions, would want to do the things that would cause the Barbados Water Authority to be spoken of glowingly.

I do not believe that the management and staff of the Barbados Water Authority would want to be subjected to the unwarranted criticisms that they have been getting over the years. I too have criticised them because only a few weeks ago, I received a call from a lady in St. Peter, who had her meter knocked away by a vehicle that was turning around in her front yard.

Sir, I called the Barbados Water Authority. At first I could not get anybody. I then called a plumber who was able to fix the pipes back without the meter. The Barbados Water Authority was called and told of the problem. They were also told that we had corrected the problem. Management said that we should not have corrected it. I told them that it had been reconnected and that it was done at no cost to the Barbados Water Authority. Sir, I was scolded, I was told: "You should not have done that. You should have let the water run." I told them that I had left a message on the machine last night, to which he replied: "That machine is a joke. We don't read that machine too often."

Mr. President, I am confident that despite all the criticisms that the Barbados Water Authority and staff get, that they are at a point in their lives now, having recognised that this Democratic Labour Party is interested in their welfare, having recognised that the very Prime Minister has taken time out of his busy schedule to go there, to meet and to talk with them, I am confident that with the astute leadership provided by the unions and the fact that this Democratic Labour Party has provided a means by which they have an increase in income, that they will do justice to the confidence that has been reposed in them. Mr. President, I am, therefore, looking to brighter days from this day onwards from the Barbados Water Authority.

Mr. President, when our gas goes out, we burn wood. When the light goes off, we burn a candle or a "smut" lamp but let the water go off and you are cooking.

Asides.

SENATOR the Hon. H. LaV. BENN: Well, for those of us who live in the country, we would use an empty bottle with a corn husk and some kerosine oil in it. It is very smutty but it provides light. Sir, many of us did our homework with smut lamps.

Mr. President, I am showing how useful and important is water. Sir, many times the water goes off and even though you know that the water is off, yet every time you would reach to turn on the tap. Sometimes if you are not careful, you would leave home and leave the tap on. You may leave the candle burning and it would burn down to the end but when you leave the tap on and the water comes back on, you would have problems when the water comes back on and you are not there to turn the tap off.

Mr. President, I am telling you, nothing can be more frustrating than not having water. We must therefore not underestimate the importance of the personnel who are employed by the Barbados Water Authority and the function that they provide. I want them not to underestimate their importance as well. I want them to recognise that, oftentimes, even though their interest may be to earn a higher level of income by having to report back in...

Mr. President, I had the same problem as well. I was in Boscobelle one day, where I saw water gushing out between the playing-field and the houses. Sir, one of the Barbados Water Authority's truck was parked a little further down, where men were working. I drove there and told them about the burst main further up the street. They told me that they would have to go back in and report first, then to come back to repair that main. Sir, that was mileage, a wastage of time and more overtime for them.

Asides.

SENATOR the Hon. H. LaV. BENN: I cannot refer to it as stupidity. I would say that somebody would have told them that and that who talked to them about that does not talk stupidly. The people who tell them that is how things are to be done, to those people it may be the sensible thing for them. Sir, the point I want to raise is that I am confident those days are at an end. I believe that even as we speak, all the officers of the Barbados Water Authority are tuned into 100.7 F.M. and are hearing us because that is where we are being broadcast live.

Asides.

SENATOR the Hon. H. LaV. BENN: Mr. President, I want the management and staff of the Barbados Water Authority to understand their particular role. I want the unions to understand their roles of educating, guiding and exercising some degree of control.

Sir, from where does water come? How does water get into the aquifers and back? Sir, the Barbados Water Authority, under the direction of its senior staff, Permanent Secretaries and staff who set policies, would by now recognised that there is a need to create linkages between themselves and the Ministry of Public Works and Transport. Sir, we have to look at the distinct possibility of making sure that wherever possible all of the suck wells in the fields and around the island are kept well and cleaned. Sir, when the rain falls, the water finds itself into the suck wells and into the aquifers.

The Prime Minister, in his wisdom, would make available to farmers an amount of money, up to \$7 500, for getting the wells on their farms cleaned and maintained. Sir, I am trusting that all farmers, large and small, who

have suck wells on their farms would use that incentive to get their wells organised.

Mr. President, that is also creating a linkage between the Barbados Water Authority and the Ministry of Agriculture. We have to provide clean, healthy water and, therefore, a linkage could be created between that agency and the Ministry of Health. We need to clean our suck wells. We need to clear the drains and the gutters.

Mr. President, many years ago, when I was a boy, we had people working in what was called the Road Board. Sir, those guys would weed and clean the gutters and there would be no debris left at the side of the road. They were using donkey and cart to move it. Today, when people weed the road, they leave the grass, which originally would be about 18 inches on the road but by the time the people are through weeding the road, that grass is about three feet from either side. It is also left there to create some form of mulch.

Sir, we need to create linkages so that when the National Conservation Commission or the Ministry of Public Works do their work at the side of the road, quick action would be taken to move the debris, so that there would not be blockages of wells.

Mr. President, we need for farmers to employ better harvesting techniques. We need to capture the water that runs off the roofs of existing buildings. I am calling on every farmer who has a dairy, poultry or pig farm, that where there are existing buildings, to look at the possibility of providing the guttering and the eave on the building to capture that water. They can also use a tank.

I am going to be expecting that the Prime Minister in his urge to support the conservation of water, to provide means, if not in this Budget but in a future budget, for farmers to access soft loans or grants, where they could purchase tanks or generators. Such water could be used on farms to wash down livestock and do vegetables and flower gardens.

4.30 p.m.

Wednesday, February 17, 2010

SENATOR the Hon. H. LaV. BENN: Sir, I am expecting this to be a development in the future. Sir, I am also urging organisations in cooperatives, schools and service groups to tap into what the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation and Agriculture (IICA) is doing right now, building cement tanks on farms to capture the water.

Sir, they can hold up to \$18 000 gallons and the cost of building one is about \$8 000. Sir, the Minister of State within the Ministry of Finance would want to join with us

as we seek to provide some sort of financing to assist those people so that when the rains start to fall again, we could be in good water.

Mr. President, water wastage throughout Barbados is something that is sickening. Sir, I went into the Scotland District close to one year ago. It was a rainy morning and all the work that was done by the Soil Conservation to trap the water in the underground pipes to prevent slippage, all of that effort seems to have gone to nought because, at the end of the pipes, the water was gushing into the sea at Bath and where we were, on top of the hill, you could see the brown mud and the water from about a mile away.

Sir, all that water came down through the pipes and, Sir, when the last Administration was in office, the last 10 years to 15 years, they could have gone a step further, organised dams and other things to capture that water that could be used to irrigate and to wash. They went thus far and no further to trap the water but, Sir, we are going to go the next step and seek to have that water harvested for future use.

Mr. President, Government will continue to look at ways of providing incentives for our people to upgrade themselves. Sir, I am talking about agriculture in this point in time. As I have said, we have to build tanks on the farms. We have to provide rebates for the installation of the equipment and we have to look at ways of harvesting and storing our water.

Mr. President, nobody has touched much on the management of water from the desalination plant but I am also going to leave that ball outside the off stump.

Asides.

SENATOR the Hon. H. LaV. BENN: I will pad up and leave it for somebody else to play. I am told that another batsman can play at that ball. I might edge it.

Mr. President, how do we manage our scarce resources in the face of drought which we are experiencing at this time? I heard Senator Chandler saying that people do not seem to be tuned into the fact that we are into a drought situation because we turn the tap on and water comes out. Sir, we go to wash a spoon, turn away and answer the phone but the water is still running. Sir, I have not washed my car yet for the week because I am leading by example.

Asides.

SENATOR the Hon. H. LaV. BENN: I have not washed it because I cannot get the water to wash it, but it still looks clean.

Mr. President, seriously, I believe that we have to get all Barbadians to understand that it is their responsibility. Mr. President, I want to ensure that the Barbados Water Authority will set up a quick response unit, if they have not set it up yet. I know that the Honourable Senator, Sir Roy Trotman, K.A., will ensure that is done. Sir, he is going to provide that leadership for us to set up that rapid response unit so that when we call the Barbados Water Authority we do not get just a voice, but we get action out there.

Mr. President, the sugar factories have just started and are having to use increasing amounts of water. Sir, we know that every year, even in the times of regular supply, the folks in Apes Hill, Boscobelle, Indian Ground, the Castle, Mount 1 and Mount 2, those people suffer from water shortages, so imagine what is happening now that the water is scarce in this country.

Mr. President, we are faced with an increasing amount of bush and cane fires in this country and last week, we had to start harvesting of the sugar crops a week in advance of the stipulated time. Sir, it was to be started on February 15, but they had to start on February 8, to accommodate the canes that are being burnt.

Sir, I passed through St. John and I could not believe my eyes. I drove the road from St. Patrick's down to Boarded Hall and, Mr. President, if you see the amount of canes which were burnt, I stopped short of saying that it was deliberately done.

Mr. President, there are too many fires and, Sir, those cane fires not only affect our ability to produce adequate amounts of sugar for our market but those fires affect our ability to grow root crops for the future because when canes are burnt, and the trash is burnt, it makes it a little bit more difficult when the ground is very hard for the tractors to go in there and do the mechanical work. Sir, whatever root crops are planted in that field for the next year, have no trash to provide mulch for the ground and, therefore, yields would not be as great, especially in those areas where the farmers depend on water for the rain to feed their crops.

Mr. President, when canes are burnt indiscriminately, it has greater devastation than what people might be thinking. I am making an appeal, at this time, for people to stop the indiscriminate burning of canes and where people are burning the bush and the grass fields. Sir, they are working the firemen very hard and they are going to create havoc for the coming years when it comes to our agriculture.

Mr. President, as I wind down, I want for us in this Honourable Chamber to support this Amendment to this Bill. Sir, for those who have to speak after to make the appeal as well to Barbadians...

Asides.

SENATOR the Hon. H. LaV. BENN: Sir, I know that Barbadians are sensible people so they should not mind the talk from the Opposition about 60 per cent. Sir, they have to do that but I want to let them know that Barbadians are very educated people.

Once upon a time the Opposition could go into the country side and talk to the field workers and people they thought were not educated enough and tell them certain things but now they are dealing with educated people and younger people who have been taught to think for themselves, so there is no point in bombarding the airwaves every day about this 60 per cent increase in water.

Mr. President, I know that we used to get it cheap at \$20 but, Sir, it is only \$32 now. Sir, a fellow said to me yesterday "Benn, I do not understand what these people are saying because it is only \$32 now." Sir, this is a fellow who would go and buy a bottle of Absolut, absolutely for \$70, but we feel we can go around the country telling Barbadian that the Democratic Labour Party has hit their pockets for water, that there is going to be an increase in electricity cost, that telephone cost is going up too and that gas is going to go up too. Sir, the fellow said, "So what, we have to pay for it".

Mr. President, years ago, people used to work for \$20 a week. Sir, I started working in November 1967 for \$110 a month.

Asides.

SENATOR the Hon. H. LaV. BENN: Yes, I am better off now. Senator Hunte said that water was never free and that utilities are never free. He said that they might be reasonable in price or you might call them cheap.

S/A27/16:40 Sequence 27

Wednesday, February 17, 2010

SENATOR the Hon. H. LaV. BENN: We must recognise that the people in this country are rich in knowledge and they pray every day for God's wisdom and understanding. Sir, you talk about their pocket? Last Valentine's Day Bridgetown was abuzz. People were buying dresses for \$500, suits for \$1 800 and that kind of stuff, also shoes for a one-day event, red and white affair that ended on midnight of the 14th. People are aware that these things will happen. Sir, the Democratic Labour Party will never seek to bring hardship to people. We are a dearly loving people.

Sir, I will thank you for the opportunity to say a few words in supporting the Bill. I am urging Barbadians, there

were batsmen at the crease for 14 overs and did not make any runs. We are just facing two overs and you expect us to win the match already.

Asides.

SENATOR the Hon. H. LaV. BENN: Mr. President, you understand what I am saying?

Mr. PRESIDENT: I would recommend Psalm 37.

SENATOR the Hon. H. LaV. BENN: Thank you very much. My Psalm is God is my refuge and strength, a very present help in time of trouble. God bless you.

I thank you.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Senator Sandiford-Garner.

SENATOR Mrs. V. I. SANDIFORD-GARNER: Sir, I rise to support this draft Bill to amend the Barbados Water Authority Act to facilitate the Barbados Water Authority's regulation by the Fair Trading Commission. This morning we were treated to a lesson in economic theory by our Opposition Senator. I listened attentively because I am always open to learning.

Sir, following the economic lesson I did not hear from the Honourable Senator of any solution. I would have expected our Honourable Senator to say, well you introduced the 60 per cent, because his argument centred on the 60 per cent increase. It did not necessarily focus much on the fact that we are seeking to regulate the Barbados Water Authority, but I would have heard when would it have been expected that we would look to remedy the ills of the Barbados Water Authority. There were no solutions.

Sir, I think when we come to this Chamber rather than repeating what we are told within our conclaves when we meet, we change the CD somewhat and introduce suggestions, put in another CD, put in something that tells us how we address the problem. This Government is open to suggestions, but I realised, as was stated by others, that this whole matter is being used as a political football.

Sir, the Honourable Senator said that water is a social good and it is an economic good. We heard all the reasons why water should not be used as a political football from a spokesperson from an institution that has been using this increase as a political football.

Sir, on my way back to this Assembly, I had to step out, I heard a public service announcement that a school in Hillaby has closed because there is no water. Every single week you hear of a loss of production in Barbados because of a problem with the water supply. We are in dire straits.

The 60 per cent is not easy. I am intimately acquainted with a business that used to pay \$2 200 for their water bill, because it is a water-base industry or business. The water bill since the increase is \$3 900 and that organisation cannot look to its customers to increase their cost of service. They would not do it, so we are all feeling it. Sir, it is a bitter pill to swallow, but we have to address the situation.

Sir, rather than kick around the 60 per cent, come with suggestions. Show us how we can do differently at this time because it is not the right time.

The Democratic Labour Party has always known that it is a Party that has to act when people least want certain action. The Honourable Senators - a previous administration knighted a gentleman who acted when Barbadians did not wish that action to be taken.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Senator.

Asides.

SENATOR Mrs. V. I. SANDIFORD-GARNER: Yes, Sir. I was referring. Sir, I take your guidance.

Sir, I am saying that we in this Administration are accustomed to making unpopular decisions. We are not in a situation that we are unaccustomed to, but we love Barbados. We understand that making decisions for cheap political gain is not in the best interest of Barbados and we do what we have to do, even recognising that whenever the country does get back on its feet and the pitch is laid, we have to exit the field. It happens all the time, but Barbados is always better off as a result. So we are a Government that understands we have to act now.

Sir, we have to act so that Barbadians understand that the supply of water is a 24-hour process. Therefore the systems in place at the Barbados Water Authority, now that it says it is an 8-hour a day process, have to change. It may mean introducing a shift system, which may mean that the wage bill spoken about earlier in this debate may be reduced, but more Barbadians will find work. We will make sure that we move towards greater efficiency.

Sir, it is also incumbent upon us to address that and the Barbados Water Authority can become proactive and responsive. These are areas which you have to introduce if you are going to be brought into a regulatory framework, so we are preparing for that and have already looked at that system.

Sir, we have to act now because Barbados needs to have a water conservation culture. Sir, 70 per cent of the people who use water in Barbados are domestic consumers, household consumers. We need a vibrant creative national

campaign in Barbados launched at the domestic level to create that culture.

At present, the Barbados Water Authority is one of the few public entities or corporations with its own public relations' persons on board. We need to enhance that capability or capacity so that department can ensure that our people are educated from primary school level on how they must conserve that precious resource.

Sir, we need to act now so that we could have a Mains Replacement Programme that has been talked about since I was at secondary school and that was a long time ago.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Senator, with those suggestions, you must not mislead the Chamber. It cannot be such a long time ago.

SENATOR Mrs. V. I. SANDIFORD-GARNER: Sir, I can bring the record. Would you wish me to present the record, Sir? A long time ago, a Mains Replacement Programme, although I thank you for the compliment because I am sure it is a compliment.

In all seriousness, we need to have a Mains Replacement policy because right now we are told that up to 60 per cent of water is leaking, or we have haemorrhaging of water, so we have the haemorrhaging of money and the haemorrhaging of water.

SA27 16.50 p.m. Sequence 28

Wednesday, February 17, 2010

Senate A27, Sequence 29, 4.50 p.m.

SENATOR Mrs. V. I. SANDIFORD-GARNER: I heard it likened to a store having 60 per cent of its stock walking through the door every day with the customers not paying, and how can a business survive with that level of inefficiency, some have to act now.

Sir, we also have to act now on the zoning proposal. We have heard the cries of the people of the Belle. We have heard the cries of the people who cannot have running water in certain areas in St. Thomas. There are certain areas in Barbados where you cannot have piped water because of the fact that you are a danger to the water supply, as simple as that, so we have to act now to ensure that those people have the running water, as I said in the Belle and other places. We have already started the tendering process to ensure that their plight is alleviated. We are acting but all of these things cost money.

We need to act now to ensure that Barbados has a Reverse Osmosis Programme. What the Minister of

Agriculture mentioned earlier in the debate is very relevant. We have a situation in Barbados where certain nitrates used in agriculture can affect the water supply of the country, so we are looking at having the Reverse Osmosis Plant to control that. I would advise that the Ministry of Agriculture and the Ministry of the Environment sit down and collaborate with the project, so that we can also look at alternative measures of agricultural facilitation.

I would also hope and I am going to say this because I think I would have said it in a previous debate, the Estimates debate - and the Honourable Senator from one of our labour unions is here - that we have to take a serious review, an examination of the structure of the Barbados Water Authority and how they do business.

Sir, there is no accident that when you talk to young men in Barbados a lot of them tell you that they want a job at the Barbados Water Authority because it is perceived that working at the Barbados Water Authority is a lot of overtime money and easy work. Sir, that is a general perception in the community and these areas have to be examined if we are serious about making the Barbados Water Authority a tighter and more efficient entity.

I heard mention made of the fact that you would see a burst pipe outside and a truck would be there, and when you tell the driver or the workmen that there is a burst main or a burst pipe, they have to go back in and report the fault and then come back out to work and that is inefficiency at the highest level. It is lunacy and we need to do away with these practices. If we are to be serious as a Government about addressing these issues, we have to act now. It makes no sense fiddling while Rome burns and that is what happened for 14 years.

Mr. President, you could imagine that since 2005, we have not had financial statements from the Barbados Water Authority and voted millions of dollars to the entity every single year? It is a shame, Sir, and we are being told that we must not act but we are not being told when we should act.

Sir, I support the Government in this move. It has not been an easy decision to take. I have to walk the road as a representative of this Government like everybody else and I hear the cries of Barbadians, especially in St. Andrew where the water is off today at Hillaby/Turner's Hall Primary, where the water goes off in St. Simon's whenever there is a problem with water and when the water goes off in certain parts of Boscobel, St. Andrew. I hear it all the time so people cannot feel happy that they have to pay that kind of an increase, when they do not feel they are receiving the service for which they are paying. Asides.

SENATOR Mrs. V. I. SANDIFORD-GARNER: They cannot feel good about it but I assure Barbadians and

I give them my word as a member of this Government that help is on the way.

Asides.

SENATOR Mrs. V. I. SANDIFORD-GARNER: It is a bitter pill to swallow, but I am assuring my fellow countrymen that, in the long run, our children and our grandchildren will have a better service and a service that we can truly be proud of, Mr. President.

I thank you, Sir.

Asides.

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

SENATOR Sir Roy TROTMAN: Mr. President, I rise to indicate to you that I am quite comfortable in giving support to the Bill before us, which is a Bill that will address a slight modification in the Barbados Water Authority legislation.

Sir, as I stand to speak to this, I need to do something else. I need to thank Honourable Senators for being so fulsome in their presentations that I was able, along with Senator Garner and Senator Benn, to fulfill an obligation to attend a funeral and still get back here to make a contribution.

Indeed, Sir, at the very outset, I had no intention of speaking to this simple piece of legislation because it was so straightforward, but every single Senator on the Side of the Government, and one Senator present on the part of the Opposition have chosen to beat on me and on the Labour Movement.

Asides.

Mr. PRESIDENT: I wish to assure you that the Chair did not at any point assume that anybody was beating on a fellow Senator.

SENATOR the Hon. Miss M. P. O. McCLEAN: Mr. President, I need to rise on a point of order. Sir, maybe we have a different definition of beating but I thought I was very complimentary. In fact, I solicited the assistance of Sir Roy so if that is his interpretation of beating, I will do it again.

Mr. PRESIDENT: I would be concerned as to his further definition of other verbs in these matters. Beating and things that rhyme with beating I would have to hear him before I could speak to the matter.

Senator, Trotman, you have the Floor.

SENATOR Sir Roy TROTMAN: Mr. President, I am now forced to either withdraw my statement or justify it by quoting examples and I choose to give examples.

Mr. President, take the one that says the union has to be spoken to and I understood that to be the Barbados Workers' Union because we have situations where water is gushing from between houses and playing fields, and when my workers are asked to fix those areas of water leakages, they choose instead to go back to their offices. I would wish to say that it is true that the workers do not fix the leaks right away. They go back to the office but I wish to make it equally clear that it is not the wish, the intention or the disposition of any worker to do that.

Mr. PRESIDENT: I was merely saying to you, Senator, that under Psalm 37, the first line of Psalms 37 is in keeping with what is proper. If you wish, I could lend you my Bible so you could read Psalms 37 but it begins:

"Fret not thyself because of evildoers..."

SENATOR Sir Roy TROTMAN: Sir, I am fretting myself because of people who spoke. Are you asking me to conclude that they are evil persons?

Mr. PRESIDENT: They cannot be if they are Honourable Members of this Senate.

Senate A27, Sequence 29, 17:00:09

Wednesday, February 17, 2010

SENATOR Sir Roy TROTMAN: Precisely, Mr. President. All I am saying is that Honourable Senators, though they be, they may still, inadvertently, have served to mislead and misguide the public into the sense that the workers who work for the Barbados Water Authority are involved in nefarious behaviour, disloyal service and unpatriotic behaviour towards our country.

Mr. President, I am satisfied that is a misrepresentation, though inadvertent misrepresentation, of the position of the workers in the Barbados Workers' Union and generally of the workers in regard to this matter that is before us.

Mr. President, it is the management that has established a system where any leakage or any other fault has first to be recorded, then analysed by other management people and then have other management people determine when the job is to be fixed, by whom it is going to be fixed and how long it is going to be fixed, whether it involves overtime or whether the work has to stop regardless of the effect on the country of Barbados.

Mr. President, I want the public to understand that even though I welcome some of the beatings, that it is misapplied and misdirected. It is a context of management that needs to know what to do, when to do, and how to do.

Mr. President, if you think that there is too much overtime, there is not a non-management worker anywhere in Barbados, including somewhere that we know, where the non-management worker determines his overtime, not even in the Honourable the Senate.

Asides.

SENATOR Sir Roy TROTMAN: The overtime is determined by the Presidency.

Mr. PRESIDENT: I have to draw to your attention that there is no such thing as overtime in this Honourable Senate. Honourable Senators work according to the needs. No Senator would ever be in overtime. I have never heard it, I have never sanctioned it and I could not be party to it, even though you are getting assistance and directions from on high.

SENATOR Sir Roy TROTMAN: Sir, that is one of the reasons I respect you so very highly because you give directions to me from your higher position since you are about six inches taller.

Asides.

SENATOR Sir Roy TROTMAN: Mr. President, I think that you would appreciate that since there has been so much which may give the public the impression of trade union misbehaviour that I should have an opportunity - while still sticking to the subject, I am not going off on any excursions or going around roundabouts - to address certain things. For example, I would wish to speak to the matter of the reasons given by the Minister of Agriculture for the \$150 million loan.

At the time when that loan was negotiated, I was a Director before I was asked to leave. I had done nothing reprehensible, and one of the reasons, if the public must know why we were seeking to have that loan, or why the bank where I served was willing to consider that loan, was that there was a need for a new Barbados Water Authority headquarters because we had outgrown The Pine facility. We were still going to remain in the Pine and the Government was going to build the new headquarters in the immediate vicinity of the Pine Hill Dairy. That was the purpose. Mr. President, obviously there were other things, at the time, that would not have been all that you would use \$150 million for.

Mr. President, I only say that to say that the building was being considered because it was recognised that

workers cannot work in conditions that are unhealthy and unsound. That is one of the reasons why so long ago that was part of the reason. You want high productivity. You want levels of internal customers and a worker satisfaction and so you would have to realise that part of the need has to be to make conditions under which people work salutary and satisfactory, and that building, if it was not satisfactory then, you would appreciate that it has problems now, and in the last year or so the Barbados Water Authority has had to move to different quarters to satisfy this.

Mr. President, I just think you should be aware that one should not always rush to be critical of workers and to say awful things about them. I have heard, as another example in this discussion, the suggestion coming from Senator Hunte that it is the money that is paid to workers that is causing the Government a very great concern. I want to say that the workers have not gotten any more money than the money that they have negotiated for, and that successive Governments have been willing to negotiate with those workers through their trade unions.

SENATOR R. A. HUNTE: On a point of elucidation, Mr. President. At no time did I say in my speech that the money paid to workers is of concern to the Government. From what I read in the Reports, I said that it has to be some concern, I did not say to whom.

Mr. PRESIDENT: That was no point of elucidation.

Asides.

SENATOR Sir Roy TROTMAN: I was going to say that in private enterprise you can get some companies where the percentage level for workers in the enterprise might be in the region of 16 or 17 per cent. In the Government service industry it is much higher. It is 50 per cent, give or take a percentage point but at the Barbados Water Authority I think the reports, with the lead of the Senate, would show it is down to 32 per cent.

Mr. President, if we have that position, we have to be careful whatever we say and however we trip with the "footballery" that may be involved in the exercise, to recognise that the problem is not at the level of wages at the Barbados Water Authority. I think these things have got to be made because the impression went out very clearly, since we got back here from the funeral, that the problem at the Barbados Water Authority lies with people who do not work during the day and then get a lot of overtime. I have extrapolated that from what has been said when colleagues in here spoke so much about how they are told that they have relatives who want to work at the Barbados Water Authority because of the amount of overtime that there is in...

Asides.

SENATOR Sir Roy TROTMAN: Well, I do not know about perceptions that may not be interpreted as truth depending on where you are, who spoke, and who interpreted. I want to accept that is the perception that the Honourable Senator may have.

I also want to understand that it is the real damage that lands on my doorstep from the perceptions that others may have. When that perception is given, then all the efforts that we try to make, end up as being areas for barriers, conflicts and disagreements.

For example, Mr. President, I am sure you know, because as President I know that you have vast knowledge and you would be able to help the others, that this business of wanting to have a new system of work where people do not only work 8:00 to 5:00 o'clock, but where there is a restructuring to take in a 24-hour system of work, I think that you should permit me to tell the other Senators that has been acceded to by the Barbados Workers' Union, the main trade union in that area, not yesterday, but years.

Senate A27 Sequence 30

5.10 p.m.

Wednesday, February 17, 2010

Mr. PRESIDENT: Honourable Senator, I hate to intercede here but as a member of the Barbados Workers' Union, I think you ought not to divulge to the population at large my association with the Barbados Workers' Union.

SENATOR Sir Roy TROTMAN: Mr. President, I heard you but the only reason I am here is because I am a member of the Barbados Workers' Union. If I were not a member, then I would not be here, therefore, I have to tell you that I am a Senator through the Barbados Workers' Union. I am sorry, Sir, but as long as it does not break any rules, then I have to make reference to my representation of the Trade Union Movement.

Mr. President, what I am saying is that years ago, we said that we would try anything that was reasonably put, provided adequate safety and health considerations were discussed and put in place. They were tried by a previous Chairman, many years ago, now deceased, but were not pursued because they were not able to bring the conditions in line with what would have satisfied the Ministry of Labour at the Labour Department.

Mr. President, we had a similar situation at the Bridgetown Port. I heard people saying that we were opposed to a number of things. We said if they wanted to have a 24-hour service, we were prepared to give them that 24-hour service, provided that health and safety considerations were brought in line.

Mr. President, when people make comments which spring from an abundance of enthusiasm and an effervescence of emotion, that may be all right, but what the implications may be for the relationship between the employer, be it a private sector employer or the employer as a public sector employer, we have to understand that we may cause unnecessary differences.

Mr. President, I know that the procedure for dealing with repairs is a problem. We have, on several occasions, from the workers' perspective, sought to point out how some matters could better be addressed, but we have not always been able to impress upon the people who run the establishment. Sir, I am satisfied, like every other Honourable Senator here, that we in Barbados do not know what percentage of the water that is running in the veins of our water system. We do not know how much of that is lost through leakage.

Sir, it must be a terrible thing that we have the most precious commodity which we all want and all need to preserve, yet we do not know what more has to be done in an effort to make it all the much more controllable, or to bring it under greater levels of control. We would feel that something needs to be done swiftly for us to treat and treat urgently with some of the problems.

Sir, we agreed that we are in a crisis. We also agreed that there has to be a corrected water service. Sir, please note that I did not say an adjusted water service, I said a corrected water service because I am accepting up front that the current service is in need of correction, more than an adjustment, and that at that lies with a number of issues, just one of which I will touch on.

Sir, it will seem to me that if we are going to be faced with a crisis, then in our effort to treat that crisis, we are going to have to look to make friends and to influence people. Sir, there is nothing happening at the Barbados Water Authority at the leadership level that would impress me that any effort is being made to make the workers understand that management and the senior level of governance beyond management understand that they need the workers to make any concessions. Therefore, rather than trying to work as a team, there is still the setting of boundaries, barriers and rockets taking place in that place as we speak.

Sir, I can only say to you that if you are not willing for 364 days to respect the humanity in people and to respect the humanness of individuals who are people first and employees afterwards, then you must not expect that on the 365th day you could kill a cow, call a party and have people join with you to celebrate.

Sir, we are not bringing any prodigal son who was lost and is now found. This is no prodigal son coming back.

This is if you want good to attend you, then you have to do good. If you want the Golden Rule to be applied, you should start applying it first. That is the only way through which we are going to have success.

Mr. President, let me move, if I may, to a number of things. I have heard so much "footballism" in this business of the 60 per cent and the water rates and electricity rates that I think persons wanted to hear me making a comment on them. I thought I had done that before because I had made it absolutely clear that I understand what it is that Government wanted to do and that although I sympathised with Government, that does not mean that I have to agree with them.

Mr. President, as we said, the Law was passed and that is now history, but the truth of the matter is that contrary to what many people are saying, we do use percentages very much in Barbados. It is not true to say that nobody understands what you are talking about. In fact, in some areas, people have percentage increases from a two-year period to another two-year period. When you ask what are the real rates, only a few people know what are the real rates.

Sir, in any community, 60 is a big number. Every Sunday during cricket season in Barbados you see pictures of people and particularly one or two of them making a big shot, looking nice and the score is 24 or 27. Sir, that is all the scores you see in Barbados' newspapers these days. Therefore, when a fellow gets to 60, that is a big score he has to make in the Barbados team. Look at all the newspapers. It does not matter what it is 60 per cent of, 60 is big, even in age. Sir, you know that by now, Mr. President, that 60 is a big number.

Mr. PRESIDENT: I am not sure where you are going with this but I am fully seized of what 60 represents.

SENATOR Sir Roy TROTMAN: Mr. President, I know that you know, you are like me, we know. Therefore, let us not let us fool anybody into thinking that when you talk about an increase of 60 per cent that it is the same thing as if you said it is an increase of 6 per cent. The only common thing there is, is the 6. Sir, if the zero had come before, it would not have been a problem but the zero comes after and that makes it a problem.

Sir, that is now, I supposed, water under the bridge and so I am trying to get those people who will talk to the public after the Estimates in March, about how we might be able to readjust that right-arm punch to the solar plexus, by some level of cushioning, easement and help, especially to those who are least able to bear the brunt of that 60 per cent unless you think that is a lot of old talk and that it does not really matter.

5.20 p.m.

Wednesday, February 17, 2010

SENATOR Sir Roy TROTMAN: Mr. President, yesterday, I was faced with a young person who came to our office. Sir, that person was a good member of the union for many years and told me that she had her light bill, her gas bill, the water bill and that she was going to drop out of the union. Sir, the person has given up protection of her rights because the \$5 is the only thing that she can respond to.

She cannot respond to the water, she cannot respond to the gas and she cannot respond to the electricity. Sir, even though next week she may get into trouble with her employer and may need the representation, she prefers to go down to somebody in this Chamber or elsewhere and pay \$500 and take that chance than to pay union dues amounting to \$6 or \$300 a year of which there is a refund of \$240. Sir, that is the reality.

Mr. President, you think that I do not need to respond to these things but I tell you it is a very real problem although I do not accept the argument of the contradiction between the euphemistic approach versus the social approach. I think that my dear friend, Senator Holder, if he is dealing with the economic situation, then he has to compliment the Government because anybody who is going to run a business from a pure economic standpoint has, as his first order of business, to maximise profit or to reduce loss. Sir, you cannot at one and the same time talk about efficiencies and then say that you must not do it.

Mr. President, that is why I do not agree with him. I agree that we must accept a certain level of inefficiencies because we must recognise that we are a welfare state. You may not want to call it so and the Minister of Finance may not want to call it so in our current circumstances because he may have to argue that he can only carry a welfare as far as the money you have would allow you to.

Sir, I will accept that as an argument but we are concerned, not with maximisation of profit, but rather with an optimisation of profit, that is, when you put the economic approach side by side, that you need to have a socialisation programme that establishes that we are building a community, not by discriminating against one level in the economy and another level but one that says that we have a responsibility to feed the lamb and to feed the sheep.

Mr. President, we have to understand that we have to cater even unto the least among God's children. If we do not do that, what will be the result? Sir, the results will be social instability. The results will be violence, disorientation and a society that eats among itself, into

itself in such a way that the calm and the peace that was Barbados is lost forever.

Mr. President, we have been working with the private sector in that regard. There are many private sector employers who are at the stage we have been at during this crisis might have taken positions where they would have reduced staff, then reduced more staff but because we have joined in the partnership, they have agreed to carry more staff and to carry that staff at 40 hours a week in an effort to maintain a community where we can walk the streets in the day or at night in such a manner to make Barbados stand out to what Barbados always was.

Mr. President, that does not come about by wanting so to destroy Barbados because it is better for a one-eye man to rule in a blind country than for all of us to be healthy. Sir, that approach cannot withstand the seasons.

Sir, I just want to make it absolutely clear that so far as labour is concerned, we who speak for them are of the view that, yes, the rate was too high; yes, that rate is going to be brought under the control and the aegis of the Fair Trading Commission and, yes, because it will go under the Fair Trading Commission, it is quite possible that the employer might then go before the same Fair Trading Commission to ask them to look for an adjustment. It is clear that adjustment might be downwards but it is equally possible that it could be upward.

Mr. President, we must not lose sight of the fact that the Fair Trading Commission is governed by a different set of standards than those standards that govern the Government because the Government has no control over the Fair Trading Commission. They have standards that govern their treatment of an issue.

Mr. President, for example, the Government has control in the Barbados Light & Power Company issue. I have no doubt they would have delayed the implementation of that rate increase because it would be politically sound but the Fair Trading Commission has control over what it puts and when it would commence it.

Mr. President, I happen to believe in the integrity of all Parties, so those who might think that the Government was able to influence the Parties, I would think that if you know the people who are involved on the part of the Fair Trading Commission, you would not even think about it.

Mr. President, the Transport Board was able to come under the Fair Trading Commission too, but the Government clearly understands that cannot be profitable or proper in the last 14 years, before this new Administration, or now in these two years within this Administration because that one is too close to home. You cannot dare bring that under the Fair Trading Commission,

not now, unless I am misunderstanding what it is that goes to make for rational political decision-making.

Mr. President, I am very clear that what we have to do is to move towards a treatment of the two things, the need to get money and the need to make sure that people are able to maintain themselves with as little grief as may be necessary and where there is that grief, we need wherever we can, to give easement and the cushioning for some people.

Mr. President, part of my authority in this goes back to 2000 and to the very important comment of the former United Nations Secretary-General, Kofi Annan speaking in 2000, when he made the comment that it is critical for all Governments around the world to understand that economic growth without social development will destroy the economies that are involved in that approach.

S/A27/17:30 Sequence 32

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Sir Roy TROTMAN: Sir, what I take that still to mean is that the development of a country is not only based on how much money the Chancellor of the Exchequer would have but, very important, is how that society is able to see every citizen advance from a social point of view to be able to be able to enjoy development living improvement that will cause that person opportunities for growth, satisfaction with standards and, therefore, bring the society into a frame of mind that provides for growth and provides for happiness. Sir, I wish to make a few more comments.

Sir, I just wish in closing to say that water cannot afford the luxury of any very lightheaded, lighthearted frivolous responses. Water is much too critical to all of us. I am quite happy to be able to say that I think, as Senator Benn, Minister of Agriculture, all workers not only in the Barbados Water Authority, but all workers in Barbados understand the seriousness of the water problem, and all workers in Barbados want to be in a position to work in whatever way we can to improve and assist in ensuring or shoring up the future of this very precious commodity. What we think the Government has to do is to have a plan of a clear picture, and has to be willing to expose that plan to full consultation and discussion sooner rather than later.

We do not believe, as at least two of our colleagues think, that a freeze or moratorium or anything that is predetermined by anybody is the way to go. So far as we are concerned there is no freeze, moratorium or any other special device that anybody can think of. What there is, is an opportunity, an opportunity for people to talk.

Several months ago I spoke to the Leader of the Opposition last year, and I asked her whether she would be agreeable to a position where the Government and the Opposition acted together in this crisis, which is a worldwide crisis. This is not a crisis that was started in Bridgetown on November 1, 2008. This is a worldwide crisis that was started in Washington and started in Berlin and wherever else.

The crisis is of such a nature that it will be resolved only if the type of consultation at the widest levels are held with a view of finding a magic formula, and there is no magic formula anywhere, but devising the constructive measures of whatever programmes there will be for recovery, and this must be done where everybody is willing to take us out of that morass knowing that it is not the fault of the former Government, nor is it the fault of the current Government, nor is it the fault of the labour movement.

I thank you.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Thank you, Senator.

Senator Griffith.

SENATOR D. K. A. GRIFFITH: Mr. President, I rise to support the Bill before this Senate and in doing so I can take into consideration the several contributions that have come before mine. I think it has been readily agreed upon that there is a problem and there must be some change to rectify that problem. I think that is the common ground that we have thus far reached. I think we have all agreed that we must do some sort of restructuring of the Barbados Water Authority to get there.

Sir, I often say, whether it has been poor management because we have to look at several areas - I do not think it has been disputed thus far that the Barbados Water Authority can be a very productive entity. It has been productive in the past. It has met its costs in the past and we have a very real time line that has been presented for that, for not 16 years ago the Barbados Water Authority was a productive entity. It was meeting its demands and it was doing so without costing the public purse considerably. We need to get back to that point.

Sir, I think rational people in this debate have thus far understood that it cannot be done without having to incur some costs. Where those costs are directed seems to be the crux of the argument. I think it has been an issue in this Chamber from the time we began two years ago, to discuss what was the way forward for Barbados. We have heard from Members of the Opposition that we should always defer whatever it is, whatever challenge we are facing must be deferred.

I always remember when the oil crisis first struck and we were dealing with the change of gas and diesel prices, the Leader of the Opposition in the Other Place being very adamant that we must not let oil prices rise in Barbados. We must defer them. We must put loans into the system. We must pour more money at the situation. This is the same tactic we are hearing today and we have heard it on every single major issue we have faced in the last two years.

Sir, fundamentally, I think the people of Barbados are intelligent enough to understand, had we listened to the policies of the Opposition our country would be in dire straights. Any housewife can tell you that you make do with what you have. You cannot spend money you do not have but the Opposition seems to think that our simple course to steering this country, should be borrowing money and pay for it later, but who has to pay for it?

Sir, as a young person this completely mystifies me because it is going to be the next generation that has to repay these loans. It is not something that will disappear. It is simply an opportunity to sidestep responsibility. It is a crucial fact of leadership that leadership is simply making decisions that are not necessarily popular but are prudent.

Sir, today's Amendment is prudent. The actions with regard to the Barbados Water Authority have been prudent. We are not having the party now and paying for it later. We are going to pay our way through whatever changes need to come.

Sir, I have not heard the Opposition come to account for their tenure in office when \$150 million went into a Mains Programme that we are still paying for and cannot see the benefits of. We have not seen the benefits of infrastructural development as yet, still we have to pay for the debt. It becomes a matter that there was an increase in water rates. It was an increase that we do not like. I do not think anybody in this Chamber would say they were happy about the increase, but it was an increase that was necessary. It meets a predetermined goal.

Sir, we have to decide, as a people, whether we are going to face up to our responsibilities head-on. We are going to take care of them. We are going to adjust and make sure that we meet those responsibilities in good time. If we take the opposite tact and try to defer there is never going to be a good time for doing anything that has a bit of sting or a bit of a burn. That is always the case.

Sir, we saw for the entire tenure of the Barbados Labour Party, a period where there were incredible amounts of money going into the public purse, but no thought went into using it to pay down debts, instead more debts were run up. Now we are faced with a situation where all of this debt has to be compounded, by continuing

the scenario as feasible when we face such dire global recession. We continue to pay for those bad policies, and it must be said in this Chamber that the Opposition is diametrically opposed to this Administration and it comes back to looking at what is beneficial for this country.

SA27 17.40 p.m. Sequence 33

Wednesday, February 17, 2010

Senate A27, Sequence 34, 5.40 p.m.

SENATOR D. K. A. GRIFFITH: If this Administration has to make hard decisions so be it, but we make them with the full understanding of what we are doing. I have heard all about how people are going to be direly affected by this increase in water rates of which the minimum rate, I think is from \$20 to \$32.

Most of the people that we are speaking about spend more than \$10 a week on their cell phone and that is a fact. The cell phone apparently is a necessity but the water is a luxury. It is about making personal choices about your own development.

Further to that fact, I think it was an admirable activity by this Administration to ensure that the social safety net for people who are affected by price increases over time, is still very much in place. This Administration has never said if you are in dire straits we will let you suffer. What we said is that we have to re-look what we consider to be something that is unmanageable. Tighten your belts and yes, it is something that most people do not like to hear but tighten your belt, make sure that you are taking care of your needs and not your wants.

It might seem condescending but manage your affairs in such a way that you make sure that you are taking care of what needs to be taken care of first, so do not say that you cannot afford to pay \$12 extra in water, when you can afford to spend \$100 every weekend on partying because it shows a lack of priorities. Then, when you are in such a dire strait that you cannot make ends meet, we have put into place, the facility that you can be assisted because we are not leaving anybody behind.

Asides.

SENATOR D. K. A. GRIFFITH: Secondly, I think we need to look at the overall vision for the Barbados Water Authority. I think that having the shift in how rates are looked at is just a bigger part of a puzzle of moving to better management. I will continue to say in my speeches that I have come to the conclusion that the Barbados Labour Party's problem has always been management and this is why every time we make a decision in this

Administration, it has to show how we are going to implement effective management structures.

I heard talk about reverse osmosis and other aspects of it and specifically for me, I think the crucial point in that discussion is about the things we should be doing, because we have had larger discussions on greening economies and what we can be doing. When we make changes with the Barbados Water Authority now, when we make changes in general in this country, they must be leading to some lasting development, something that helps us to maintain an edge when we get to the other side of the recession, because while recessions can be long, they are never permanent. The world economy goes up and it goes down and this sort of infrastructural development is critical.

I was reminded of the fact yesterday that the last Administration, in its development in the South Coast Sewerage Project, built a secondary treatment plant for sewerage, instead of a tertiary treatment plant. I smile today because had they the foresight to do that, we would have a system in place, where a lot of the crops that are suffering from drought now, would have access to water from the system that is now being pumped out to sea.

Asides.

SENATOR D. K. A. GRIFFITH: Sir, that was their logical solution. They could only see the present at that point in time and so, despite the advice of very educated professionals, they were able to say that we are not going to take your advice, we are going to do something else and that fundamentally has been the problem with the policy.

We look far too often at the needs of today, so that by the time we complete the projects for today, we are well behind where we need to be, and that is fundamentally what separates the tigers - for lack of a better word - who overcome things like recessions and come out on top. Therefore, I believe that for us, we need to start taking into consideration what a future for the Barbados Water Authority is going to be like and what we are going to do.

Sir, from my perspective, I think we have to come with a set of policies that do not just advise people to look at their environment and their water uses but we sensitize them.

Mr. President, as a student in secondary school, I was always brought into contact with solar technology. If you look at the Caribbean today, Barbados has the most penetration of solar water heating technology and that was because of wise action by a previous administration to sensitize the use of that technology. If we are going to say we want people to look towards water conservation, we need to sensitize it.

We have started to sensitize things like electricity conservation, so you get money for making adjustments to your property to do with electrical conservation. We need to come up with a complete package of incentives. We need to start pushing those incentives and we need to use the youth of this country because young people tend to be willing to change and adapt more so than people who have been around a little longer.

They are willing to take on the new knowledge that is necessary and to apply that knowledge in such a way that we can start to see these things happening. It is necessary for these young people to go into business places and make necessary recommendations.

For instance, I think that we lag behind many of the developed countries in the world in terms of solutions we use for things. Barbados does not have a push for low flow toilets, or for low flow shower heads or anything of that nature. I can remember during the 1990s for a brief point, there was a campaign about conserving water and then it went away.

Asides.

SENATOR D. K. A. GRIFFITH: We have allowed those things to go out of our lifestyle and that is the problem. When we make these changes, they cannot be temporary, they have to be permanent lifestyle changes so when you talk conservation, you must live conservation and as such, when we look forward for the Barbados Water Authority, it has to be with this comprehensive vision.

I think that is what has failed, therefore, without vision there cannot be good leadership or good management and we see the problems that we have today. Sir, it is necessary to take the actions like the ones we are taking today to get to the point, where we can say that we have an accountable water authority.

Sir, I have heard about the 60 per cent and as a recent manager of my own household, I am now learning the impact of utilities on lifestyle. As far as I am concerned, water is the least of my concerns. A number of things had to happen in my household to ensure that I was able to meet my monthly commitments and I think it is necessary for that attitude to be taken up across the length and breadth of Barbados because we cannot say we demand and we expect that these utilities must come whenever we turn on the tap, or we flip the light switch.

I remember very vividly my first experience with Trinidad as a teenager, going to a small hotel and being told, well you know, we do not have water every day because we are being rationed by the Water Authority so we have water on Tuesdays and Saturdays and in-between

we have to get water from a system and if the system runs out, we have to do without.

I do not wish to ever see the day when that comes to reality in Barbados and I think everyone in Barbados needs to understand that while we have a good situation, we have to work hand in hand to ensure that we continue to benefit from the good infrastructure that has been built up over the years and that means maintaining it and developing it to deal with new needs.

Senate A27, Sequence 34, 17:50:14

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SENATOR D. K. A. GRIFFITH: Sir, as we expand our housing infrastructure and our business plants, there is always going to be greater demand on our water system, therefore we have to conserve what we have and be more efficient in how we use it. That fundamentally, along with having the clear vision, are the things that are necessary to ensure that we can maximise the benefits of what we all have.

Mr. President, I thank you for your time today and I am very resolute in my support for this Bill.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Senator Boyce.

SENATOR the Hon. D. W. BOYCE: Thank you, Mr. President. Let me also support this Bill to amend the Barbados Water Authority Act to bring it under the aegis of the Fair Trading Commission. I think that the very change in the legislation would signal to the Barbados Water Authority that we expect that the institution would become, sooner rather than later, a first-class utility that is able to pass muster with the Fair Trading Commission and subject itself to the service standards and efficiency standards, which it would be required to meet under the Fair Trading Commission because the Commission not only deals with rate increases, it also deals with the issue of reliability and service standards for the utility companies.

Mr. President, that says to the Barbados Water Authority that we expect them to be able to satisfy those conditions which are necessary to be able to work with the Fair Trading Commission.

Mr. President, this is a matter that has been on the cards for a very long time for the Barbados Water Authority going back several years even before the change of Administration. I believe that an issue has always been that it costs so much to prepare themselves for the Fair Trading Commission routines and it took so long that it has never been acted upon.

We are acting upon the matter now because we have made it possible for the Authority to have the resources that it needs, therefore, we are saying to it that we expect you, having got those resources, to do what the public of Barbados expects of you and to make this Authority and the service you provide a first-class one because you have no reason now for saying that you cannot do what you are supposed to do. You have your resources and it is up to you now to do what you have to do.

Mr. President, the matter of making the Barbados Water Authority ready for the Fair Trading Commission had to depend upon some sort of resources being made available to the Barbados Water Authority. They have to modernise a whole lot of equipment that they have up there to be able to know where the leaks are, and then to relay the mains where the leaks are and fix those things up.

They also have to expand the capacity of the distribution system to take it into the areas where people are building houses now. Mr. President, that has caused them to have to make plans for much larger distribution mains in those areas. They have to provide those resources.

They have to provide resources for improving the reservoir system that they have. They have to provide resources for drilling more wells and for doing more reverse osmosis plants, or desalination plants, or whatever it is they have to do to make sure we have the amount of water we need in the country.

They have to change their management systems and put in their computer systems and all sorts of things to make sure that they can answer the questions they will be asked by a Fair Trading Commission, and they have to keep records so that they can probably handle themselves.

Mr. President, to deal with those matters is not going to be a cheap task. I have not talked about the West Coast Sewerage System yet, nor have I talked about the efforts to change the existing sewerage systems to tertiary treatment systems in order to save the water.

All of those things, Mr. President, I believe would add up, in the course of 10 years, to probably \$800 million or \$1 billion in work to be done to make sure that what we have in this country is a water utility that serves the current and future needs of this country and enables us to meet a lot of the other social needs that we have in the country.

Mr. President, that programme would not only help us to meet the water needs. It would also help us to meet the employment needs of the country because you do not spend \$100 million a year in capital expenditure without employing more people and, therefore, that would help us also to keep the economy going even if things get a little bit rocky with the outside world from time to time.

Mr. President, you could not deal with that matter through central Government except you were going to provide for the Barbados Water Authority anywhere in the range of \$20 or \$30 million a year to cover an operational deficit as well as provide funds to service debt and to provide for the capital works. Mr. President, that is why the rate increase had to come.

Mr. President, while we are waiting to get the Barbados Water Authority ready for the Fair Trading Commission, we still have to provide houses for people who do not now have houses. When you are in a situation where you cannot get planning permission for houses because the Chief Town Planner is not in a position to say that water would be available to you, then you are frustrating all the ambitions of those many young Barbadians and poor Barbadians who want to get a house. Mr. President, we cannot do that, therefore, we have to deal with that matter. Mr. President, because of the water situation, we cannot deal with commercial developments that would employ people in construction on an ongoing basis. We have to deal with that and therefore we have to make resources available to the Barbados Water Authority.

Mr. President, we have done these things after having made provision for those people in our society who were at the lower end of the scale. One of the very first thing this Administration did was to increase the Reversed Tax Credit in the Budget of 2008. We brought forward the tax credits and made a lump sum increase in 2008.

We went further and removed the bus fares for school children travelling on the Transport Board buses. That translated in one term to about \$180 per child using one trip. Mr. President, that \$180 for one term is enough to cover the increased water rates for a whole year, and the parents have two terms worth of school bus fares that they save.

Mr. President, we went further and provided free summer camps for all of the children in this country, whoever wanted to come could come, and that saved a tremendous amount of money to poor parents.

Mr. President, we went further again and when everyone said that we should not deal with wage increases for the Public Service, we did a 10 per cent increase for the Public Service, which gave the public servants the capacity to handle the crisis to be able to keep spending and keep the economy from imploding.

Mr. President, we also constructed some buildings and that has employed people and kept the economy going. Mr. President, when you add it up, it probably comes to almost \$300 million in spending. Mr. President, most of that spending was targeted to create jobs and to keep jobs going.

We have kept the tourism industry going with jobs with the Tourism Industry Relief Fund. We have done things to help the poor people. We have provided jobs for people. We have kept every person employed in the Public Service. We have kept the wages up in the Public Service and we have done things to keep those things going.

Mr. President, we provided first for the people and then the rates got changed. Mr. President, if we keep jobs going, we cannot subsidise the Barbados Water Authority to take care of 1 per cent of the Gross Domestic Product if we are going to keep the rest of the economy going.

Mr. President, I support this Bill completely. I thank you.

Senate A27 Sequence 35

6.00 p.m.

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Mr. PRESIDENT: Senator Walters.

SENATOR the Hon. A. B. WALTERS: Mr. President, I had already planned to rise, on this occasion but I rise now to support this Bill to amend the Barbados Water Authority Act and to place it under the ambit of the Fair Trading Commission. Mr. President, at the outset, I must admit that probably I am a senior in this Honourable Chamber because I remember the days...

Asides.

SENATOR the Hon. A. B. WALTERS: Mr. President, my memory goes back to the days of the \$1.25 per quarter for water, and to the days of bringing water from the standpipe.

Mr. President, I would want to say that since I can remember some of those incidents, I am probably ancient and I also remember the days when people referred to water as the most precious commodity. I remember when I first spent a few days in London in 1967 and people thought of London as this glorious place in which one could live and I went into a district next door to Paddington where there were still outhouses - and I do not think that many of us in here, who have not had the experience, can imagine having to rush into an outhouse in the winter. In the days when a Friday night was the night that you go down to the bathhouse and put a shilling into the machine...

Asides.

SENATOR the Hon. A. B. WALTERS: Mr. President, certainly conditions have changed between the 1960s and now, And certainly in supporting this

Amendment, I would have to make the point in 2010 that we now have to look at better proficiency.

Mr. President, what I remember about the Water Works Department when it was near to the Central Police Station, that I had an uncle who was a night superintendent. I think he used to get the princely sum of \$26 a week and he normally would give me a little “berry” to buy an occasional “bread-and-two” when he saw me in the bus stand.

Mr. President, my main emphasis this evening is that in all that we do in 2010 and beyond, there must be some serious restructuring of the Barbados Water Authority, and that part of the funds which are going to be collected over this 60 per cent increase has to pay for that type of restructuring. It has to be fundamentally restructured. I have worked with a number of institutions in Barbados that had gone through some form of restructuring to bring it into the 21st Century.

I remember one of the areas where one thought it would not have been possible was in the Barbados Sugar Industry where we have some very outdated and outmoded systems of work and we brought some of those systems in the 21st Century by a series of mechanisms. I am dealing with the human resource and employment relation issues.

Mr. President, as Senator Trotman has made the point about looking at improving and enhancing the working conditions of the employees in that agency, I suspect they are no worse than what would have obtained in the sugar industry in the early parts, certainly around 2003/2004. Sir, we have to pay some attention to that.

We probably have to do some redevelopment of those human resources. We have to develop some training schemes in place. We have to look at new systems of operation to bring it up to 21st Century status. This all means that change is going to be necessary but to achieve that change, I think the Government and the other stakeholders have to be in a position to sit and consult what is the way forward to make the Barbados Water Authority more efficient than it is currently.

Mr. President, that consultation has started. Sir, it was not fair for Senator Holder to say that this matter has not been consulted on because at the last meeting of the Social Partnership, the private sector agency raised the question of rates. There is a meeting on Friday where there is a proposal from the Private Sector Association that the rates will be again discussed. I suspect they again will be discussed early in March, that being the economic consultation.

Mr. President, it is not to say that there has not been any consultation, certainly between Government, the trade

unions and the private sector on this matter. I would not wish to deal with some of the issues that were raised by Sir Roy, because as Minister of Labour, certainly some of the contentious matters which Senator Roy has raised in this Honourable Chamber may actually reach me. Therefore, I would not want to be put into a position where I may have to adjudicate on later, so I will leave some of those matters for negotiation in the room as opposed to in the public domain.

Mr. President, with those few remarks, I support the Barbados Water Authority (Amendment) Bill, 2010.

Mr. President, I am obliged to you.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Senator McClean.

SENATOR the Hon. Miss M. P. O. McCLEAN: Mr. President, I rise to wrap up this debate on the Barbados Water Authority (Amendment) Bill 2010. Sir, in doing so, perhaps at this somewhat darkening hour you may think that there is not much more that I can or should say, based on the several very useful contributions made during the course of this debate.

Mr. President, I believe it is critical that I clarify a number of issues. Perhaps I could start clarifying one of them by referring to a comment made by the penultimate comment of Senator Boyce.

6.10 p.m.

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SENATOR the Hon. MISS M. P. O. McCLEAN: Mr. President, Senator Boyce did make the very important point that the Fair Trading Commission deals not only with tariffs but with service standards, et cetera and, therefore, in readying itself for regulation by the Fair Trading Commission, that the Barbados Water Authority has a number of things to do, and that it needed not only the resources, but the time. Sir, to that end, I would want to share with my honourable colleagues and others, a bit of information.

Mr. President, hopefully, as we are aware, the functions of the Fair Trading Commission are, among other things, to enforce the Utilities Act, 2000, and any Laws relating to consumer protection. I believe that in trying to suggest, as was done by the Honourable Senator on the Other Side, that the Barbados Water Authority should have gone to the Fair Trading Commission first for a rate increase, the point needs to be made that it has to be ready.

Mr. President, the point was made that there needs to be a process of readiness and it is important to understand why. We have to look at Part 4 of the Utilities Regulation

Act, Clause 20, which speaks to services and facilities because that puts certain responsibilities on the entity to be regulated here. Sir, it says and I quote:

“In respect of duty to provide adequate service, every service provider:

a. shall maintain its property and equipment in such condition as to enable it to provide service to the public which is safe, adequate, efficient and reasonable.

b. shall make such repairs, changes, alterations, substitutions, extensions and improvements to such service as shall be necessary to ensure the provision of service to the public that is safe, adequate, efficient and reasonable”.

Mr. President, what that really says is that there is clearly, in the situation of the Barbados Water Authority, the need to get its house in order. Sir, it is not a game, a slogan or whatever that this Administration is trying to foist on the people. It is a reality because there are legal requirements in relation to that.

Mr. President, I could also probably quote that failure to do that leads to the issue of Clause 21 of the same Utilities Regulation Act, 2000, which deals with compensation:

“Where a service provider fails to meet the subscribed standards of service, the service provider shall make to any person, who is affected by the sale, such compensation as may be determined by the Commission.”

Mr. President, again, what we are saying is that you better be able to live up to the standards. Sir, if it has not been shaped and trained to set those standards, to achieve those standards and to maintain those standards, you can imagine what would happen in terms of calls for compensation, and justifiably so.

Mr. President, it is against this background that there is the urging of the Fair Trading Commission to initiate proceedings against the Barbados Water Authority - I have heard that mouthed in public - would probably make no sense because the Fair Trading Commission itself also understands this.

I am sure that the mature, professional, serious members of that Commission would understand what are the parameters within which they have to function as Commissioners and what needs to happen in order for a utility provider to be in a position to be regulated according to the rules and regulations.

Mr. President, hopefully, I would have put paid to the notion that we could not go ahead and regulate or allow ourselves to do it. It was not a question of being callous or

being pragmatic in a coarse way. It was a matter of understanding the systematic processes that must be gone through in order for the Barbados Water Authority to be ready to allow itself to be regulated.

Mr. President, overall, I believe that a clear case has been made. I notice some concern about the time. I will not say from whence that source has come but I guess I can see through the side of my eyes and so on.

Asides.

SENATOR the Hon. Miss M. P. O. McCLEAN: We are always reminded that we should address the President and the President only, so I am minded of the lateness of the evening.

Mr. President, I simply want to say that the necessity for the rate increase was as a consequence of the failure to act in the past by the previous Administration. Sir, failure to act has left this Administration with little elbow room.

Senator Boyce clearly articulated the cost we would have had to incur in the form of subsidies, approximately \$20 million to \$30 million, should we not have imposed an increase in rates. It is basically a case of the inability of the society to countenance and to survive under a sliding Barbados Water Authority, the inability to continue, frankly, down a slippery slope.

Mr. President, we also have a situation where the problems of better tapping our ground water supply is a major problem and that has to be financed. Sir, I want to demonstrate why it is important that we do that.

It is my understanding that currently, as part of the arrangements with IONIC Fresh Water, the company receives approximately \$12 million a year. At this point in time, that company is only supplying at a maximum, 12 per cent to 14 per cent of the water supply for \$10 million. If you can do the maths, if we had to expand and pay similar rates, you could imagine what the cost would be.

Fortunately, Mr. President, it is my understanding that contract is basically one in which we are paying for capacity that is not yet being utilised. Therefore, hopefully, we can increase at little cost the supply from that source. Sir, the point is, regardless of whether or not the supply is increased, it is an expensive source and, therefore, we have to spend the hundreds of millions of dollars necessary to address an aged pipeline.

Mr. President, overall, I believe that we have heard that the concerns of the populace and those persons who are less able have been accommodated in other ways.

The point was made that if you have a school child travelling on one bus per day, you are looking to save \$180 per term, which translates into approximately \$540 per year. Sir, show me the person, who if they are paying the minimum would be paying substantially more than that in water or near the minimum and, Sir, we also could look at other benefits. Sir, it is not a case of the Government being unmindful of the difficulties.

Mr. President, in addition, there are also the social safety nets that are provided by our social agents. Sir, welfare benefits have increased and tax benefits have increased.

Mr. President, before I close it would be remiss of me not to say that the Honourable Senator, Sir Roy Trotman, seemed to have ignored my suggestion. I think he focussed on what he saw to be the licks shared but my suggestion was, or my comments were, because it was really not a suggestion, it was an assumption that in whatever efforts we undertake, I am positive that we can count on Sir Roy, as the representative of the workers, to mobilise his troops.

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SENATOR the Hon. Miss M. P. O. McCLEAN: Asides

SENATOR the Hon. Miss M. P. O. McCLEAN: We are trooping to the rescue of the Barbados Water Authority.

SENATOR Sir Roy TROTMAN: On a point of order. The Honourable Member is inadvertently misleading the public and this Honourable Senate. She has accused me of failing to respond. Sir, you know that I did say in my presentation that we have responded in the past and we are willing to respond, but we must be brought into discussions earlier rather than later.

SENATOR the Hon. Miss M. P. O. McCLEAN: Mr. President I will accept that but I said that he failed to respond to me.

Asides.

Mr. PRESIDENT: I have to draw to the attention that the Honourable Senator is not able to respond to you. He can only respond through the Chair.

Asides.

Mr. PRESIDENT: What you all wish to do, you may do.

SENATOR the Hon. Miss M. P. O. McCLEAN: Sir, on that note I believe that we have made a clear case for the amendment to the legislation against the background of the absolute necessity for a rate increase, 60 per cent, notwithstanding the size in proportion to 100 per cent has to be contextualised, but that has been debated over and over.

On that note and with those words I beg to move that this Bill be now 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, SENATOR the Very Reverend H. E. CRICHLAW in the Chair.

COMMITTEE

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The Senate is in Committee.

Clauses 1 to 5, inclusive, were called and passed.

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

On the separate motions of SENATOR the Hon. Miss M. P. O. McCLEAN, the Bill was read a third time, passed and cited as the Barbados Water Authority (Amendment) Act, 2010.

ORDER NO. 2 – RESOLUTION TO APPROVE IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 5 OF THE LAND ACQUISITION ACT, CAP. 228, THE COMPULSORY ACQUISITION BY THE CROWN OF PARCELS OF LAND SITUATE AT APPLEWATTHES IN THE PARISH OF SAINT GEORGE, BLACKMANS AND EASY HALL IN THE PARISH OF SAINT JOSEPH, FORTY ACRES IN THE PARISH OF SAINT THOMAS AND VINEYARD IN THE PARISH OF SAINT PHILIP IN THIS ISLAND FOR RESIDENTIAL PURPOSES.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Senator McClean.

SENATOR the Hon. Miss M. P. O. McCLEAN, I do not propose at all to be very long. This Resolution, as has been indicated, is intended to approve in accordance with Section 5 of the Land Acquisition Act, Chapter 228, of the Laws of Barbados, the compulsory acquisition by the Crown of several parcels of land in the parishes of St. George, St. Joseph, St. Thomas and St. Philip. Over the

several Sittings today, we have had similar acquisitions or vesting of lands, which are all part of an effort to facilitate the housing programme of this Administration. We would have debated and discussed the parameters of that programme, the intention to cater to the needs of a cross-section of Barbadians.

This particular land is to facilitate the initiative of housing every last person. It is intended to facilitate acquisition of land by first-time owners. It is, therefore, critical and I do not believe that any Barbadian would question the importance of Government's efforts at facilitating the acquisition of properties and homes. Therefore, I cannot anticipate that there will be any objection or resistance to a housing strategy such as articulated by this Administration.

Sir, therefore, with those words I now ask that this Resolution do now pass.

SA27 6.30 p.m. Sequence 38

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Senate A27, Sequence 39, 6.30 p.m.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Senator Holder.

SENATOR A. E. HOLDER: Mr. President, I rise to make a brief contribution to the Resolution before this Honourable Chamber. This Side supports the Resolution. Anything that is seen and done to the benefit of the poor and disadvantaged in this country, we are supportive thereof.

Sir, what I would wish to ask of the Leader of Government Business here is if this Resolution is part and parcel of the Financial Statement and Budgetary Proposal of 2009. Sir, I am querying if the proposal so articulated at page 52 of that document, in relation to the proposals of the National Housing Corporation, relative to developing the 38 acres of land and the provision of residential lots and commercial lots, is the Honourable Senator in a position to indicate to this Honourable Chamber how much of that has been met in the financial year 2009-2010.

Sir, given the fact that the Honourable Senator is seen by That Side, as the miracle worker, do the statistics to date, in truth and in fact, represent such an acclaim? Again, is the Honourable Senator in a position to indicate to this Chamber how much of the proposals so articulated before this Chamber and elsewhere, as it relates to the provision of low income housing for persons under the Housing Every Last Person, for example, if the Honourable Senator could indicate how much of that has been so satisfied, given the grandeur proposal so articulated? I would be much obliged.

Mr. President, that is my contribution and I am obliged to you, Sir.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Senator Chandler.

SENATOR Dr. F. L. CHANDLER: Mr. President, this Resolution involves the change of use of agricultural land. I am constantly told by my colleagues and friends that I am wasting my breath when I continue to speak out about the change of use of agricultural land.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Possibly you are wasting your breath speaking in this Honourable Chamber. I wish to assure you and I give you my assurance that you are not wasting your breath when you speak in this Chamber. The Chair listens with consummate ease to whatever you have to say.

SENATOR Dr. F. L. CHANDLER: Mr. President, at my age too, I do know how much breath I have left so I have to use it quite sparingly and wisely.

Mr. PRESIDENT: The President is not aware of your age and does not wish to become aware of your age. The President listens only to the expressions which you make and I wish to assure you that there is no indication whatsoever of a loss of breath.

Asides.

SENATOR Dr. F. L. CHANDLER: Yes, Mr. President, but in spite of all that, I will continue to say that I am never in favour of taking land out of agriculture, especially in high rainfall and fertile areas like St. Thomas, St. George and St. Joseph, when I know that there is ample non arable land available for housing. My job involves driving around the island and I know there is ample non arable land available.

In this case I am not as concerned as with other cases because this is a sort of fill-in. It is in the areas of already established tenancies, but I am still concerned that the work of the plantations and farms can be stymied by bringing residents who are not accustomed to country life where agricultural practices are being carried out. I hear about the time who sprayed gramoxone and who did not, who has asthma and who does not, and who is being affected. Sir, as I have always said, if you cannot stand the heat, stay out of the kitchen and this is agricultural land, so if you come into agricultural land to live, then to me, you must fit in with the agricultural practices and vice versa.

Mr. President, I have another concern. I noted an article in yesterday's Nation newspaper drawing attention to the fact that Section 9.(3) of the Town and Country Planning Act must be observed in all land acquisitions, including those acquisitions by Government. I question

whether the required public inquiry has been undergone in the acquisition of these lands. I cannot say for sure but I am not aware of all of these public inquiries going on.

Sir, I will repeat what I have said already. I think the process of changing the use of agricultural land, both by Government and by private developers, seems to be too easy.

Mr. President, I know that housing is necessary and I certainly agree with having adequate housing for everyone, but I have noted the large number of houses that have been constructed, supposedly for low income earners, and yet I see many of them unoccupied for so long. I am wondering why is it? Because they cannot afford them or is it because of the bureaucracy and red tape is stopping them from occupying these houses?

I am also disappointed with the number of housing projects that seem to be fraught with problems like the Buckeley Meadows Project where I understand that one house had to be demolished and various problems that occurred.

I also have a client who is in the Mangrove area and I watched the construction of three houses using, I think, a new technology which allows the houses to be constructed very quickly and they were very attractive houses but they have been there for months, maybe going into years now, surrounded by bush and still totally unoccupied. Sir, to me, that is a waste of resources when people are supposed to be in dire need of housing.

There always seem to be conflict in most of the projects that we carry out and I am wondering why. There are always overruns, conflicts and something that cause these projects to fall into problems. I was wondering why we do not make sure that the projects are on a sound footing from the start, monitor what is happening and make sure that we do not continually have these problems of poor construction and all kinds of controversies surrounding all the projects that we carry out.

Mr. President, I just thought that I might make these few comments. I thank you for your consideration, Sir.

Asides.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Senator Trotman.

SENATOR Sir Roy TROTMAN: Mr. President, my comment goes to a procedural matter, not the procedures under the rules but more a procedure under our obligations. My first address in a parliament was in Another Place in 1986 and I would like to claim that I still have a consistency. The Minister of Housing and Lands at that time was concerned about acquiring land in the Six Mens'

area and proceeded to introduce that in three minutes. I was of the view, as was the Leader of the Party, when he had spoken that did not do justice to the Chamber.

Senate A27, Sequence 39, 18:40:14

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SENATOR Sir Roy TROTMAN: It did not do justice to the Party's need to present itself for what it stands for and it did not do justice to the Barbadian population as an electorate. Mr. President, after more than 20 years, I still have the same view.

I am of the view that the Government achieves a greater mileage by being able to position this discussion about such important pieces of land, particularly one that borders three parishes, within a broader, fuller discussion, practically and philosophically, and to inform the public of Barbados.

Mr. President, I would wish, I do not think it is too late, to suggest that this matter should not be completed in discussion today but that we should defer it for another Sitting of this Chamber when we could be better informed of what governs where we are going and we may have the chance through our deliberations better to inform the public and to make a decision on where we are going that is informed better by what the Leader of the Senate would have to tell us about where Government is going and to answer the questions about what success we have and have that discussed by us in this Chamber rather than discuss in a soap box somewhere in the country.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Senator Benn.

SENATOR the Hon. H. LaV. BENN: Mr. President, this is a very brief intervention to respond to one or two of the queries by Senator Chandler. I want to make it clear that this Government's policy is one... I know that we have indicated in our Manifesto, in the Throne Speech and in our Budgets...

SENATOR Sir Roy TROTMAN: On a point of order. Mr. President, I made a motion. It has not been seconded I know but it has not been offered for seconding.

SENATOR the Very Reverend H. E. CRICHLAW: Mr. President, I beg to second the motion moved by Senator Trotman.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Senator Trotman, you have to put the motion in order so that I could see what you are saying.

Asides.

Mr. PRESIDENT: You might have thought you did but in the opinion of the Chair, you have not.

SENATOR Sir Roy TROTMAN: Mr. President, I am guided by you in your thoughts. You said you thought that I did not put the motion, so I will put it formally now if it was not perceived that it was a formal motion.

Mr. President, I beg to move that this Senate defers consideration of this Resolution until another occasion where we may more fully address the subject.

SENATOR the Very Reverend H. E. CRICHLAW: Mr. President, I beg to second the motion.

Mr. PRESIDENT: The question is that further debate on this Resolution be deferred.

The question was put to the Senate. A division was called for. The bell was rung. The Senate divided as follows:

Noes: SENATOR the Hon. Miss M. P. O. McCLEAN; SENATOR the Hon. H. LaV. BENN; SENATOR the Hon. A. B. WALTERS; SENATOR the Hon. D. W. BOYCE; SENATOR Mrs. V. I. SANDIFORD-GARNER; SENATOR Miss P. I. INNIS; SENATOR D. K. A. GRIFFITH; SENATOR J. INCE; SENATOR R. A. HUNTE.

Ayes: SENATOR A. E. HOLDER; SENATOR R. G. CAVE; SENATOR Dr. F. L. CHANDLER; SENATOR the Hon. Prof. V. E. NEWTON; SENATOR Sir Roy TROTMAN; SENATOR the Very Reverend H. E. CRICHLAW.

Noes: 9 Ayes: 6 The motion was defeated.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Senator Benn.

SENATOR the Hon. H. LaV. BENN: Mr. President, this is no attempt by this Administration to rush over any piece of legislation or resolutions for the acquisition of land in this country. This Government has made it clear that we will ensure wherever possible that people who are seeking to be housed will be housed and have embarked on a very aggressive programme to house every last person.

Mr. President, I want to make it abundantly clear as well that my Ministry has been very supportive of the retention of agricultural land for agricultural purposes. Senate A27 Sequence 40

6.50 p.m.

Wednesday, February 17, 2010

SENATOR the Hon. H. LaV. BENN: Mr. President, my officers have been very consistent in their noting and comments in the classification of land as it pertains to the Physical Development Plan.

Mr. President, I want to make it quite clearly to all and sundry that not every piece of land that is being subdivided or that work is now being done, has been approved by the Democratic Labour Party. We came into office and found a lot of land, including agricultural land that was approved up to 2005. We also found a lot of that land approved in 2006 and 2007.

I have here a list where substantial parcels of land in St. James and in St. Thomas - 97 hectares on one hand, 870 acres on another hand - were approved as close as September 22, 2005. This is land at Staple Grove, above St. David's Church. This is also deep land where they cannot even fund the foundation. That land was approved under the Barbados Labour Party Administration. I have on record every piece of land that was subdivided by the Barbados Labour Party leading up to 2008 and every piece that has been given approval.

Barbadians, when they drive around the country and they see land under the tractors, get the impression that this is something the Democratic Labour Party is doing. Mr. President, I can tell you that up to January 14, 2008, the day before Elections, permission was being granted for change of use of land. Therefore, not every piece of land that they see that is being subdivided in this country in 2009/2010, is being done since the Democratic Labour Party came into office. Sir, I can provide you with all the facts.

Mr. President, this Minister has been very careful in not exposing this Ministry and this Government to the unwarranted and unnecessary criticisms of seeking to put every piece of land at the disposal of the Ministry of Housing and Lands. We have recommended, in many cases, to persons who have made requests that they go back, relook and come back, if they wish, with subdividing marginal lands. Sir, there are enough marginal spots in Barbados to house every last person. If every piece of marginal land in Barbados were utilised, we would not have to use one piece of arable land for housing.

Sir, this Government is very watchful and very mindful of its responsibility to feed this country, as we embark on our policy of food sovereignty and food security. Mr. President, I would want to say to you and to the Honourable Senator Chandler that if everybody had the same mind as I, or the same spirit of the Prime Minister, we would want to see every piece of arable land under food production - non sugar, livestock, even sugar - and we would make available every inch of marginal lands around Barbados available to the Ministry of Housing and Lands,

or private land to developers to be developed. That is our mandate as we seek to take the process forward.

Mr. President, as I close, I want to say that this is not an attempt by this Government to railroad or hoodwink the public of Barbados. Sir, the public of Barbados can rest assured that we will do all we can to preserve the heritage of this country.

Mr. President, I thank you.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Senator Trotman.

SENATOR Sir Roy TROTMAN: Mr. President, for those who may not quite understand, when I rose just now, I rose in relation to procedure. I was not presenting in my right as a person speaking to the subject that was put forward. Mr. President, I think that Senator Benn, the Minister of Agriculture, has just confirmed for me, and I believe this Honourable Senate, the merit in the position which I used when I sought to have a procedural change.

I am a believer in democracy and I accept that we have made a decision but I would just wish those who did not understand or who may not have understood, that I am very firmly of the view that when I meet in this Honourable Senate, I need to be satisfied of all the parameters that are impacting on any decision which is up for consideration.

Mr. President, if there was a discussion when we discussed the land in St. Joseph, when I made suggestions about Bathsheba, that would be fine and all right if it were yesterday, but today we are not dealing with that. We are dealing with another area for different purposes. Therefore, when I look at that, I have to weigh each submission and I have to be satisfied that when I speak, that it is understood that I have a constituency, as we all have, and that although we are not like the Other Place where our constituencies are bordered by line or a map, it is still understood that we have a constituency, which is the whole of Barbados, and that our function in this Honourable Senate has been very clearly set out for us. If I have not met with the full agreement of all parties, then I regret that sincerely, but I wish it to be clear that I have benefitted very much from the comments which have just been put forward by Senator Benn.

Mr. President, I understand better now that he has spoken to how I am able to respond to issues which had bothered me and still do bother me but I am happy to discover that there is an approach which he has shared with us and with the public, which could cause us to take a different approach in these issues.

Sir, if we do not challenge those kinds of things and we go a little too quickly, then nobody would understand and therefore we make decisions that we cannot justify to

any level of constituency that we may have. Sir, I understand part of this explanation but I still have the other part that is still not explained.

Mr. President, I thank you very much. I bow to democracy.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Senator McClean.

SENATOR the Hon. Miss M. P. O. McCLEAN: Mr. President, I rise to wrap up this debate, and I think it is incumbent on me to respond to Sir Roy Trotman's concern about procedure. Let me say that in relation to the housing programme of this Administration, there have been several occasions in this Honourable Chamber where, as the Honourable Leader of Government Business, I would have articulated clearly the broad policies and programmes. I would have spoken to specific initiatives within those policies and programmes.

Mr. President, like the Honourable Senator, I understand the position of procedure and I will never compromise but I do not believe that anyone should question my decision to be brief on a particular occasion. Sir, that does not preclude any other Honourable Senator from asking questions or from elaborating.

Sir, I have to make a personal judgment and I believe in the context of deliberations that have gone before, that all of us do miss Sittings and some debates, large or small, but I believe that we do a good job at articulating this Administration's policies. This particular piece of land - and I speak twice in any debate - is a situation in which we are talking about utilising strips of land.

7.00 p.m.

Wednesday, February 17, 2010

SENATOR the Hon. Miss M. P. O. McCLEAN: Mr. President, Senator Chandler queried the use of agriculture land and this is a concern that we have in a small country like Barbados. Sir, it has been articulated here before that there is an effort to use what we call fill-in lots, lots where there are tenancies, and where there are strips of land that are not under agriculture cultivation, and I would have had a chance to say that.

Mr. President, I made my opening comments, but there was an assumption where and how long this debate would have gone on, which I think was unfair to me but, Sir, I will proceed.

Sir, there will be several vestings because there is an ambitious housing programme that we intend to roll-out in

five years and which we have started to do very successfully.

Mr. PRESIDENT: It seems as though there is some hiatus in the minds of people to the methodologies that I use in this Senate. I wish to draw to your attention that the Rules require that a person who wishes to speak stands in his or her place and is recognised by the Chair. Unless someone stands, it means that no one wishes to speak and that is all there is to it. If no one stands in his or her place, then there is no reason for the Chair to recognise or acknowledge anyone to speak and that is all there is to it.

My ineptitude failed to recognise that there was a motion before the House. That motion is now before the House because I was able to correct my own ineptitude. I have been able to do that in my life before and sitting in this Chair does not preclude my capacity to do it again and the very next time it occurs, I will function accordingly.

Is there anyone who wishes to speak on this Resolution before the House?

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

ADJOURNMENT

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

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

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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, opening speech. The opening speech of Senator the Hon. Miss M. P. O. McClean on the Resolution is set under Mr. President's call ('Senator McClean.') and begins 'SENATOR the Hon. Miss M. P. O. McCLEAN, I do not propose at all to be very long', with no speech heading of its own. Printed as in the source.

Q3. PRESENT. The PRESENT list does not include Senator the Hon. Miss M. P. O. McClean, who led the Government's business throughout, and Senator R. G. Cave is run into the same line as Senator R. O. Marville. Printed as in the source.

Q4. Opening. The sitting is opened by 'Madam Deputy PRESIDENT' ('This Senate is in session.'). but the announcements that follow are made by Mr. President. Printed as in the source.

Q5. Order No. 3, Leader's reply. In her reply the Leader says IONIC Fresh Water 'receives approximately \$12 million a year' and then that it supplies 12 to 14 per cent of the water 'for \$10 million'. Printed as in the source.

Q6. Matters relating to the business of the Senate. The motion reads 'Standing Orders Nos. 22 (1) and 45)2)', with an unbalanced bracket; one speech label reads 'SENTAOR Miss P. I. INNIS'. Printed as in the source.

Q7. Take-slips. One take-slip reads 'S/A27/16:40 Sequence 37' between slips for 6.10 p.m. and 6.30 p.m., presumably 18:20; another reads 'S A27 13.10 p.m.'. Printed as in the source.

DEBATE SUMMARY

(Editorial summary — not part of the record.)

The Senate met on Wednesday, 17th February, 2010 at 11.00 a.m., with the President, Senator Dr. B. M. Taitt, presiding; prayers were led by Senator the Very Rev. H. E. Crichlow. Mr. President announced that Senator Thompson was excused. The Leader of Government Business, Senator the Hon. Miss M. P. O. McClean, laid six papers, among them the Health Services (Protection of Minors for Tobacco Products) Regulations, 2010. Standing Orders

22(1) and 45(2) were suspended and the Archives (Amendment) Bill, 2010 and the Barbados Water Authority (Amendment) Bill, 2010 were read a first time.

Senator McClean moved the second reading of the Archives (Amendment) Bill, 2010, which adds the Chief Archivist and the Assistant Registrar - Archives and Records of the Cave Hill Campus to the Advisory Committee. Senator A. E. Holder supported it and said a staff of three was not sufficient; Senators Dr. F. L. Chandler and Miss P. I. Inniss also spoke, and Senator the Hon. Prof. V. E. Newton, a former archivist, described the deterioration of the Deed Books from 1643 to 1959, and called for proper conservation equipment. The Bill passed all its stages.

On the Barbados Water Authority (Amendment) Bill, 2010, which places the Authority under regulation by the Fair Trading Commission, Senator McClean traced the Authority's finances from an operating revenue of \$42.28 million and a surplus in 1993 to losses from 1996 and stagnant revenue against rising expenses, and argued that the 60 per cent rate increase was needed for its survival. Senator Holder replied for the Opposition that water was an essential good with inelastic demand, that a 60 per cent increase in a recession could not be justified, and that the Bill put the cart before the horse by bringing in the Commission after the increase. Senator Chandler supported the Bill but urged better management and the full use of the desalination plant in a drought.

After the luncheon suspension, the Deputy President having gone home, Senator the Very Rev. H. E. Crichlow was appointed temporary Chairman of Committees. Senator R. O. Marville spoke of the loss of 60 per cent of water through old pipes. Senators J. Ince and Inniss set out the borrowing of the previous years, Senator Ince saying the Authority's loan deficit had reached \$150 million by 2005, and Senator Inniss listing what the increase had made possible, including an Inter-American Development Bank loan and new meters. Senator the Hon. H. LaV. Benn said the minimum bill had risen by \$12, from \$20 to \$32. Senators R. A. Hunte and Mrs. V. I. Sandiford-Garner, Senator Sir Roy Trotman, who supported the Bill but defended the Authority's workers and asked for relief for those least able to pay, Senator D. K. A. Griffith, Senator the Hon. D. W. Boyce and Senator the Hon. A. B. Walters also spoke. Senator McClean replied, citing the Utilities Regulation Act, 2000, and the Bill passed, Senator Crichlow in the Chair in Committee.

Senator McClean then briefly moved the Resolution approving the compulsory acquisition of land at Applewathes, St. George, Blackmans and Easy Hall, St.

Joseph, Forty Acres, St. Thomas and Vineyard, St. Philip for residential purposes. Senator Holder asked what progress had been made on the housing proposals in the 2009 Budget, and Senator Chandler objected to taking agricultural land for housing and asked whether public inquiries had been held under the Town and Country Planning Act. Senator Sir Roy Trotman, seconded by

Senator Crichlow, moved that the debate be deferred so that the matter could be more fully discussed; on a division the motion was lost by 6 votes to 9. Senator Benn said much land had been approved for change of use before January 2008, Senator Trotman accepted the decision, and after Senator McClean's reply the Resolution was agreed to and the Senate adjourned sine die.