
THE SENATE DEBATES

(UNOFFICIAL REPORT)

PARLIAMENT 2013 – 2018

THE SENATE

Wednesday, May 4, 2016

The Senate met in the Senate Chamber, Parliament Buildings on Wednesday, the March 21, 2016 at 11.00 o'clock a.m.

PRESENT

Her Honour Senator Miss Kerryann F. Ifill, B.Sc. (Hons.), M.B.A. (President)

His Honour Senator the Very Reverend H. E. Crichlow, G.C.M., B.A. (Hons.) Dunelm (Deputy President)

Senator the Hon. Miss M. P. O. McClean, B.Sc. (Hons.), M.A., M.B.A. (Minister of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade) (Leader of the Senate)

Senator Dr. the Hon. E. R. Byer-Suckoo, M.B., B.S. (Minister of Labour, Social Security and Human Resource Development)

Senator the Hon. P. M. T. Todd, B.Sc. (Minister of State in the Office of the Prime Minister)

Senator H. A. Husbands, M.L.I.R., B.Sc. (Public Administration) (Hons.), Ed. Cert. (U.W.I.) (Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry of Education, Science, Technology and Innovation)

Senator J. Ince, J.P., B.B.A., M.B.A., DIP (Mgmt.) (Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs)

Senator Mrs. V. I. Sandiford-Garner, CIM, Dip. Mng., M.B.A. (Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry of Tourism and International Transport)

Senator R. A. Hunte, J.P.

Senator Rev. Dr. D. L. Durant, D.D. (Hon.)

Senator A. R. Worrell, B.A. (Hons.)

Senator Dr. J. X. Walcott, M.B., B.S., F.R.C.S. (Edin.), J.P.

Senator W. A. Abrahams, LL.B. (Hons.)

Senator Prof. Emeritus Sir Henry Fraser, K.A., G.C.M., B.Sc., MBBS, Ph.D., FACP, FRCP

Senator Dr. Sir Trevor Carmichael, K.A., L.V.O., Q.C., B.Sc. (Econ.), M.A., Ph.D.

Senator A. A. Adams, J.P., B.A., Ed. Cert., M.Sc. Ed.

Senator J. A. Watson

Senator Carol Lady Haynes, M.B., B.S.

Senator Miss V. A. G. DePeiza, B.Sc. (Hons.), LL.M. (Merit),

Prayers were led by Rev. Father Errington Massiah.

MADAM PRESIDENT: The Senate is in Session.

SUSPENSION

Due to sound logistics, the Honourable the Senate was suspended until 1.00 p.m.

Senator the Hon. Miss M.P.O. McCLEAN: Madam President, I beg to move that this Sitting be now suspended until 1.00 p.m.

The question was put to the Honourable the Senate and was resolved in the affirmative, without division and Madam President suspended the Sitting accordingly.

RESUMPTION

MADAM PRESIDENT: This Senate is resumed.

ANNOUNCEMENTS BY Her HONOUR THE PRESIDENT

Madam PRESIDENT: I am in receipt of the Minutes for March 21, 2016. Are there any errors or omissions? There being none, I beg to move that these Minutes be now confirmed.

PAPERS

Senator Dr. the Hon. E. R. BYER-SUCKOO:
Madam President, I am commanded to lay the following Bills:

1. VAT (Refund) (All Souls Anglican Church) Order, 2016;
2. Duties, Taxes and Other Payments (Exemption) (Delegation of the European Union to Barbados and the Eastern Caribbean) Order, 2016.
3. Duties, Taxes and Other Payments (Exemption) (Barbados Film and Video Association Inc.) Order, 2016.
4. Duties, Taxes and Other Payments (Exemption) (University of the West Indies) (Sixth Travelling Caribbean Film Showcase) Order, 2016.
5. Duties, Taxes and Other Payments (Exemption) (University of the West Indies) (Errol Barrow Centre for Creative Imagination Film Club) Order, 2016.
6. The Productivity Council 2014 Annual Report.
7. Senate and House of Assembly (Remuneration and Allowances of Members) Order, 2016.
8. Ministers and Parliamentary Secretaries (Remuneration and Allowances) Order, 2016.
9. Invest Barbados Annual Report 2013.
10. Invest Barbados Annual Report 2014.
11. The Green Economy Scoping Study.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Senator Dr. the Hon. E. R. BYER-SUCKOO:
Madam President, I beg to move that the following Bills be read a first time:

1. Caribbean Accreditation Authority (Education in Medicine and Other Health Professionals) (Incorporation) Bill, 2016.
2. Resolution to approve in accordance with Section 5 of the Crown's Land (Vesting and Disposal) Act, Cap. 225 the vesting of the Barbados Water Authority of the parcels of land the property of the Crown situate at Lot 60, the Garden Land and Skeetes Road, Bank Hall, respectively, both in the parish of St. Michael in this island for the public purpose of the construction of a pump station and septic tank as part of the Housing Neighbourhood Upgrading programme.

FIRST READING OF BILLS

Senator Dr. the Hon. E. R. BYER-SUCKOO:
Madam President, I beg to move that the following Bill be read a first time.

1. The Caribbean Accreditation Authority (Education in Medicine and Other Health Professionals) (Incorporation) Bill, 2016.

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

PUBLIC BUSINESS

ORDER No. 2

RESOLUTION TO APPROVE IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 5 (1)(C) OF THE CROWN LAND'S (VESTING AND DISPOSAL) ACT, CAP. 225, THE LEASE TO THE BARBADOS CONFERENCE SERVICES LIMITED OF A PARCEL OF LAND TOGETHER WITH THE BUILDINGS THEREON, SITUATE AT TWO MILE HILL IN THE PARISH OF SAINT MICHAEL.

Madam President: senator Sandiford-Garner, you have the Floor.

Senator Mrs. V. I. SANDIFORD-GARNER: Madam President, this Resolution is essentially a very straightforward one, it is for us to approve the vesting of a parcel of land at Two Mile Hill, in the Barbados Conference Services Limited, the company which manages the Lloyd Erskine Sandiford Centre. Now, the Schedules attached to the Bill will explain the details of the particular transaction. Some time ago we would have vested a portion of that property in the Crown and we are just seeking now to tidy up the procedure by ensuring that all of the land on which the Lloyd Erskine Sandiford Centre stands, which is managed by the Barbados Conference Services Limited, is vested in the Crown.

Now, some may ask why are we doing this now, given the fact that we would have invested State's funds as capital in the expansion and renovation of the said building. I would just wish to explain to you, Madam President, that this is a procedure which we would have initiated in 2008, but it is a procedure which we probably need to go back and engage in for a number of other Government properties. I am talking about going back decades because the Crown, really and truly, has protection from adverse possession and you would find that the Crown will many times engage in renovation or enhancements in their properties, take for instance the Gymnasium, the Court, the Hospital, the Airport, are all properties of the Crown but when you form companies and these companies...

Madam President, I am being very simplistic in my explanation so that you grasp what I am saying clearly. When you form companies and companies borrow to enhance these very properties you have a situation where you are entering into very private sector arrangements with Government property which, really and truly, should be vested in the companies which have borrowed the money. Therefore we have a situation where as I said, for instance, the Queen Elizabeth Hospital. I do not know if the Queen Elizabeth Hospital has a lease. When you look at what happened to the St. Joseph Hospital which had 21 acres of prime real estate which should have been vested into a company which would have been indebted and being chased after by those who were owed money, because of the fact that it was prime real estate, you then understand the predicament in which you can find yourself.

Madam President, I will draw the example of the University of the West Indies. The University of the West Indies would have had enhancements done on the main property, the Hill which we all know, but then a couple of years later they would have wished to expand at the Lazaretto, the Lazaretto is located on prime beachfront property. Ma'am, the right thing to do would have been to lease the University of the West Indies that land, but in its wisdom the Government of the day had decided that the University of the West Indies could purchase the land or could own the land. The problem here is that when that land develops, which it has been, and I am speaking hypothetically, God forbid that what I say should happen. Just suppose you borrowed on that land, you were not paying and the creditors decided that they wanted to levy on that property, they would have full rights to do so. What happens when they do level on that property and decided that you do not need those accommodations anymore because they could make better use of the land, that they could probably build hotels where there is presently accommodation for those students?

Madam President, I am not talking of this Administration but the Government of Barbados as an entity. I do believe that we have to set a policy or that we need to develop some type of a policy where just as you decide that you cannot build on land in a national park, that you cannot develop or enter into any private sector agreement on Crown's land unless that land is vested in the entity which enters into the agreement, that we have an ironclad arrangement or policy that that is the case to safeguard certain properties which I consider to be the family silver because land at the Lazaretto, to me, is family silver and when we decide that we are going to enter into private sector arrangements and let it go, we cannot get it back.

12.48 p.m.

Leases can last 99 years but at least you know that at the end of the lease, the property belongs to the people of Barbados. In this instance, the land is being leased for the enhancement of the Barbados Conference Services Limited (BCSL) in Two-Mile Hill. As we know, the Lloyd Erskine Sandiford Centre was the vision of Sir Lloyd Erskine Sandiford, former Prime Minister of Barbados. At the time when that property was developed, it was seen as a white elephant. That white elephant now has become the most important linchpin in Barbados' meeting incentives, conferences and entertainment calendar. We cannot do without it, especially now that we have no gymnasium. The Gymnasium has been closed for renovations and the Lloyd Erskine Sandiford Centre is at the heart of all of the major activities that this country would wish to engage in. I just think that we need to always acknowledge the vision of Sir Lloyd Erskine Sandiford when he made the decision to have that property built.

Since it was built, as you know, much of it would have been left unfinished under a previous Administration for whatever reason. It could not have been a financial reason because there was money then, but it was left undone and it was our charge to finish it. Madam President, I would like to take this opportunity today to outline what has been done at the Lloyd Erskine Sandiford Centre in the past eight years. The land that we are acquiring now or that we are gaining a lease on is for carpark space, but I wish to outline to you all of the work, the new offices, the multi-storey carpark and the upgrades inside. I want to outline all of that to let you know how much it costs and what was done.

The new offices is a project that provided the BCSL with four floors totalling 73 000 square feet of lettable "A" Class commercial space, and this completes the building. The offices that I am speaking about will be fully utilised by Government to accommodate seven Government departments and agencies. Practical completion was achieved in August of 2014, and the final cost of construction is \$37 322 926 inclusive of demolition works. The professional fees would have been \$5.7 million, bringing the total cost of that part to \$43 million. The multi-storey carpark is to provide parking facilities for the new offices during office hours, and are to be utilised for additional parking space when we are using the facility for conferences on weekends. It has been constructed to accommodate approximately 321 vehicles. The final construction cost of that multi-storey carpark was \$8.4 million, with professional fees at \$750 000, bringing it to a total cost of \$9 million.

The kitchen facilities were upgraded and renovated. The renovations of the existing kitchen, which is located on the ground floor, and an extension constructed to house new cold rooms and freezers, in addition to the replacement of all kitchen equipment, cost \$1.2 million. There was also

a replacement and upgrade of the closed-circuit television (CCTV) system. This was required if we were to meet international standards for conferences. As you know, we do host some very high-level dignitaries and delegates in Barbados at that centre, and to ensure that our facility met requirements and was marketable, we had to replace and upgrade that CCTV system. That project was completed in May last year at a cost of \$48 000. This means that we have greater coverage and better quality surveillance of the carpark, the main entrance, and the southwestern part of the building which would not have been covered before.

We are also currently looking at a term sheet for financing, and this is for the retrofitting of the office space which I spoke about before. I would also wish to mention that we looked at purchasing special lighting equipment, because we are looking at our energy costs. As far as possible, we are seeking ways of ensuring that when we are done, our energy costs will be far less than they were before. We have enhanced our lighting and purchased all of the special LED lighting equipment required. We have installed a power factor correction piece and we have re-outfitted to the tune of \$506 000.

We have capital works which entail the fill-out of new offices. Much of the office space will be occupied in the first instance by those persons who occupy Bay Street. Work has to happen at the Government Headquarters on Bay Street, and the Lloyd Erskine Sandiford Centre will provide accommodation for all of those offices now located at Government Headquarters until the renovations at the old Government Headquarters are completed. This capital works project is ongoing as we speak, and these are the four floors I would have spoken about. The cost of that retrofitting inclusive of fees is \$15 million, and the expected duration of that project is 15 months. As I said, we are currently awaiting a revised term sheet which we have submitted to the Ministry of Finance. The briefs were received on July 23, 2013, and the process began in August 2013. The ten-year payback period is the proposed length of time that the Prime Minister's Office and Cabinet are expected to be accommodated at the Lloyd Erskine Sandiford Centre to facilitate the major renovations, and then the offices will be available for lease by the private sector. The cost of the fit-out will form part of the lease arrangement and will ensure the payback in full over the ten-year period.

There are some minor details such as the refurbishment of the removable partitions, which many of you get to see when you attend functions there and so on, but I would wish to move to those areas which are more central to our provision of a service for our conferences and meetings, such as the central audio system. We have had to replace the paging and central audio system for conference rooms and the common areas. This forms part of our disaster emergency policies and procedures manual, and is

required during exhibitions there. The cables for this system were removed during the demolition works in the auditorium area in preparation for the building of the new offices, but it has been noted that the entire system has to meet international standards. We have not reinstalled the old system. We have installed a new central audio system, and that system allows for full control of the public address system in any section of the complex, and it is easily programmed and configured through the computer. That also includes closed-circuit TV capabilities. That cost would have been \$110 000.

The 11-year-old carpet in the Lloyd Erskine Sandiford Centre was also replaced. The carpet, if you would have noted when you walked, was due for an upgrade for a very long time. The air-conditioning system is in its final stage of upgrade as well. We need additional funding to do that, but it will result in better temperature control management and a more efficient energy system. We have also replaced the air-conditioning in the interpreter's booth. As I said, our centre is used for global conferences, and on many occasions we have to hire interpreters to assist us with our work, and recently they have been working in some very hot and uncomfortable conditions.

12.53 p.m.

The building is an old one and we have had to purchase and install a new air-conditioning system for the administration block. It is not fully operational now but it will be, and that air-conditioning system will also service the booth that the interpreters utilise. Madam, we have also added lighting to the access areas of the centre, the pathway. The lights there are 20 years old and we have had to replace and upgrade them as well and we are planning to replace all of them within the coming year with solar power lamps which again, impacts on the energy which we will have to incur. This will provide better illumination along the path and the grounds of the centre and introduce another energy efficient measure, as I have said, to assist with the reduction in our electricity costs.

Madam President, in a nutshell that explanation is what we have done in the past couple year at the Lloyd Erskine Sandiford Centre and I have also outlined what our future plans will be for that facility. It is still my hope that at some point in Barbados we will have an even larger indoor entertainment centre because we are using the Lloyd Erskine Sandiford Centre for conferences and entertainment. I do think it is time now that we seek to move forward with our plans as a country to have a multi-purposed facility for entertainment which can host any act possible in Barbados and which also gives us a boost in the MICE agenda because that conference market is a market that Barbados can easily fit into if we are able to provide the indoor accommodation necessary to host very large

conference and very large entertainment activity, which we would wish to attract.

Madam President, with that said, I do believe my task here has been completed and I beg that this Resolution do now pass.

Senator W.A ABRAHAMS: Madam President, I rise to make my contribution in this debate. Madam, I have no difficulty as Senator Sandiford-Garner said with tidying up what needs to be done and I also agree that there are times when the Government needs to sell property and there are times when the Government needs to lease it. The objectives of each Government are not the same. The priorities of each Government are not the same. I must commend Senator Sandiford-Garner on her most comprehensive update as to what has been taking place at the Lloyd Erskine Sandiford Centre. I am heartened by the renovations, the improvements, the upgrades, the foresight, the effort and the money being put by this Government into what it considers a priority into upgrading or conference facilities, into providing carpark space, into changing the carpet and CCTV. Madam, by my count, if I discount the \$43 million for the conference facilities and the office space, just in terms of general upgrades, I estimated that to be about \$11.8 million spent since 2008. I believe in investing in things that give a return. I believe that if we have a conference centre, we should try to make it the best. We should look at how can we gain business from the conference centre and at how we can properly use this fantastic resource. Madam, I am not ashamed to say it. I consider the Lloyd Erskine Sandiford Centre to be an indispensable part of the cultural and business landscape in Barbados. Madam, as I have said, it is a matter of different priorities and I call a spade a spade. I have been to many conferences, seminars and the Bar Association has used it and it is an excellent facility. I commend anyone who takes the initiatives in upkeeping it and keeping it useful and purposeful and usable for the purpose for which it was building, so Senator Sandiford-Garner without hesitation, I would say that I have no problem with the \$11.8 million spent but, as I have said, it is all about priorities.

Madam President, I do wonder how we can spend \$11.8 million on the Lloyd Erskine Sandiford Centre and not spend one red cent on the old Supreme Court. I read in the Nation News today an article where a piece of the building dropped down during court yesterday. Madam, I saw that myself. I came in, I saw a chair across the archway and the guard shepherding people from under the archway and I asked what was going on and a piece of the building had just dropped down into the carpark. This is a functioning and functional premises and facility. It is the old Supreme Court and I am not disputing that, we have a brand new Supreme Court but that compound is used for the Magistrates Court of Barbados. It houses the District A Magistrates Courts 1 and 2 and the Traffic Court and

hundreds of people utilise that compound every single day. The archway for those who have gone into the court is where people sit, stand or congregate to await their cases being called, so that archway actually has the greatest traffic of the entire compound.

Madam President, a couple of months ago, I drew attention to the fact that the roof of the verandah was about to collapse and I hammered it home and somebody propped it. They did not fix it, they propped it but at least it is no longer dropping down but now parts of the building are dropping down. Madam, if we are serious and if we intend to use that compound for something or for anything that compound should be made safe. Madam, it is a case now of fix it or shut it down because it is a danger. The bench in front the archway was meant to stop cars from driving under it, so no car would get hit but what about the people, that court is opened this morning. Madam, if you look up at the building right above the archway, you would see where the cement has exploded, where the BRC is now exposed, the building is now in a perilous state of disrepair and it cannot be allowed to continue like that.

Madam President, I am not saying to spend \$11.8 million on it because that would not make sense unless there is a plan but some basic maintenance, some restoration to make the building or the premises safe must be done. It is now a hazard and if that building was not being used now as the Magistrates Court... Actually, Madam, not even that building, if another building on the compound was not being used as the Magistrates Court, I daresay that building would be condemned. We cannot put the lives of Barbadians who do not chose to come to court, who are brought to court by the justice system or by the police, we cannot put the lives of these people in jeopardy because we do not want to spend a couple of cents, or a couple of million dollars improving or maintaining a building because it is one of our national treasures. Madam President, that building is a historic building and if the Government wants some idea or some justification as to what to do with it, then I say to turn it into a Bridgetown Heritage Museum and put a restaurant in there, put something else in there, do something that would make it pay for itself but at all costs, we have to do something with the building.

1.03 p.m.

It is now a danger. I use those Courts, Madam President, Senator De Peiza uses those Courts and the access to get to the Magistrates' Courts which are functioning are through the car park and under the same arch where a piece of the building dropped off.

Asides.

Senator A. A. ADAMS: Madam President, I am talking about saving somebody's life. I am talking about possibly not having a Barbadian crippled, maimed or killed. If it is a joke for the Senate, then let us all laugh, it is not a joke for me.

Madam President, although you did not ask me anything, the relevance of this is I started by saying it is about priorities. Senator Sandiford-Garner highlighted everything that was done inside that building but that is not relevant to the rental of the space for a car park but she said what she had to say. She said what the Government spent on improving the building.

Senator A. R. WORRELL: On a point of order, Madam President. Senator Abrahams is misleading the Chamber. What Senator Sandiford-Garner outlined in her presentation is indeed relevant to the leasing of the land because it shows how you would pay for the loan to which this Resolution refers. I would be grateful if the Honourable Senator would show something that is relevant to this Resolution.

Senator W. A. ABRAHAMS: The relevance, Ma'am, is stating that each Government has its priorities. Senator Sandiford-Garner spoke about the leasing of land down by University of the West Indies or the sale of the land at the Lazaretto where it could have been leased. It has no relevance to Two Mile Hill but it is about priorities.

Senator A. R. WORRELL: On a point of order, Madam President. Again, Senator Abrahams is misleading the Chamber. What Senator Sandiford-Garner was referring to speaks to the policy in the way how we lease property or when it comes to different agencies going into commercial loans or whatever the case might be so it is indeed relevant to this Resolution.

Senator W. A. ABRAHAMS: Madam President, that is wonderful because it exactly proves my point. It is about policies and priorities.

Madam President, I am going to conclude but I wish to say that it is disgraceful how we treat our heritage and our heritage buildings. It is disgraceful how this Government abandons buildings when it moves out with no regard to the upkeep and importance of those buildings ...

Senator Miss V. A. G. De PEIZA: On a point of order, Madam President. The goodly Senator is misleading the Senate. The old Supreme Court Building was abandoned by the last Barbados Labour Party Administration.

Senator W. A. ABRAHAMS: Madam President, the old Supreme Court Building was closed in 2008/2009 so for the last seven or so years it has fallen under the

responsibility of this particular Government. Ma'am, I am not even there. I do not care, Madam President, who moved out or when, the fact is the building has been allowed to deteriorate to the point where it is now a danger to people using the District "A" Magistrates' Court and that compound. Madam President, the veranda was propped up to prevent it from falling down. I ask that with the same haste something be done to at least, if only to the basic minimum, secure that building so that it is safe and the compound is safe for use for the people who have to be there. People do not choose to come to Court, the majority of time they are brought before the Court. I am asking, you know what, let us do our duty to the people who are using our judicial system and using that complex. I beg the powers that be to act quickly before ...

Asides.

Senator W. A. ABRAHAMS: Madam President, I beg that somebody takes it seriously and do what needs to be done to correct this perilous situation. This is not good enough. The people of Barbados and the users of the Court deserve more.

Madam President, I am obliged.

MADAM PRESIDENT: Senator Hunte, you have the Floor.

Senator R. A. HUNTE: Madam President, I rise to give my support to this Resolution and I wish to read it because it seems as though some of us do not seem to be clear on what we are debating. The Resolution calls for a passing to approve in accordance with Section 5(1)(c) of the Crown Lands (Vesting and Disposal) Act, Cap. 225 to lease to the Barbados Conference Services Limited a parcel of land together with the buildings thereon situated at Two Mill Hill in the parish of Saint Michael. Madam President, that is what is before us. I think the Honourable Senator who led off the debate outlined clearly what this matter is all about and to give to that whole area parcels of land and buildings what the priorities are and namely the Resolution called for such.

Madam President, I feel honoured to be involved in the debate in respect of that building and its surroundings. The building of that conference centre was the brainchild of the former Honourable Prime Minister of Barbados, Sir Lloyd Erskine Sandiford. By the same token, it was severely criticised and it was built in the time of a crisis in Barbados during the time that we had our challenges in the economy. A former Minister of the Barbados Labour Party is on record as calling the building or the structure of that building Sandiford's Museum of Madness. It was all kinds of elephants except one that could serve a purpose, yet elephants do serve a purpose.

Madam President, one of the things I do feel disheartened about all down through the years following the political scene in Barbados and now being a member of this Chamber is that we tend, for political purposes, to criticise things of relevant importance. All of the buildings that are built today whether by private sector or by public sector will one day become challenges as far as its occupancy is concerned. They are modern today and they will become old-fashion tomorrow. The Government Headquarters was built in the 50s and it looked very modern.

1.13 p.m.

Today, it need to be refashioned and renovated. Comberemere School that there is so many trouble and concern about today in Waterford, not the building itself because you cannot move a building, was once situated at Roebuck Street. I know when that building started to crack, and of course they moved then and built that building in Waterford that was opened in 1958 but today it is a source of problem, so this criticism that we have of Government structures. At the same time Government is usually criticised for neglecting its properties, so we wax warm when we choose to and we wax warm even when it is not relevant.

Madam President, I understand the relevance of this Resolution and I can stay here on my feet and say that I witnessed in this country that almost every single project that this Democratic Labour Party had put forward during its term in office has been criticised by the Barbados Labour Party. Nobody could have criticised the hospital. Rats were biting people in the old general hospital.

Asides.

Senator R. A. HUNTE: Even if the Democratic Labour Party criticised the building of the hospital, which they did not, that is nowhere on the record. I do not listen to asides but that Senator cannot produce any record to show that the Democratic Labour Party criticised the building of the hospital, in fact they paid for it. Do not talk about the port, they paid for that too because the Barbados Labour Party had no plan to pay for the port. That money to pay for the Bridgetown Port was raised on the London stock market while this country was still a colony.

Asides.

Senator R. A. HUNTE: Sorry, Madam President. Madam President, that conference centre today has shown its importance. We had the SIDS Conference there over 20 years ago, I think it was, in 1993-94 on that same spot. The last discussion they had with the forming of the Little 8 was held on that same spot.

Madam President, here it is that today this Government is going be charged for a building that is falling apart that was abandoned. Whose decision was it to reuse it, because it is your place of work? Madam President, we need to be more serious when we come to this Chamber. Madam President, because the Government is the Government, a lot of things are done without or before the necessary parliamentary approval is taken because it is the Government. This has happened all down the years, it is nothing new. You have heard the Senator outlined all of the possible areas that we will have to come to Parliament and make sure that the correct thing is done, so we will wait until all of the buildings fall apart without doing what is necessary. You could imagine that Government is paying millions of dollars when the year come in rent for different offices all over Barbados. For example, a new building for the Barbados Water Authority was built. I heard that building should not have been built when there is a water shortage, so what the Government should have taken that money and do was to look up in the air ask God to send some rain or to create rain if I may say that. It is only now that it is accepted that we have a problem and a serious problem in terms of a drought. Bakino Faso has just taken steps to try, not necessarily to stop but at least to try to keep everybody happy by putting restrictions as far as the usage of their water is concerned.

I have told Senator Abrahams already and I want to remind him because he is not a fool, I think he is a very intelligent guy but sometimes he is so partisan and biased in his pursuit to gain a seat in the Parliament that he does not really sometimes use good judgement and commonsense. This is one right now, Madam President.

Senator W. A. ABRAHAMS: On a point of order. Madam President, I rise on a on a point of order. I do not want to actually get to the Standing Orders but I am sure that there is something that speaks to insulting and demeaning other Members in the Senate. I can actually pull the exact thing. Madam President, if Senator Hunte wants to open that door and it is to be allowed, then Ma'am, I look forward to speaking again.

MADAM PRESIDENT: With reference to the point raised by Senator Abrahams, I do not consider the language to have been demeaning. Senator Hunte was not being insulting, he was merely questioning a matter of judgement which in his judgement does not agree. I cannot rule on person's individual judgements, however Senator Hunte if you will continue and not pursue that particular trend, you can proceed. Thank you.

Senator R. A. HUNTE: Thank you very much, Madam President. The importance of what has been outlined here today is relevant, it is a priority, it is a building that does fit into the calendar of events in this country and the importance of which discussions take

place, and that is very, very important. This is money that needs to be spent. It is money of importance. Everything about this resolution, Ma'am, is important. It is a multipurpose building.

1.23 p.m.

The only regret of that structure is what we would have like to see is the stage coming out of the floor with any orchestra or whatever band or performers would have been taking place. I have seen it only once in my life and was in Peru. He told me, when we had the Independence Service, that he still regret it up to today, but that is how things are. The plan continued when the Government changed in 1994 it might have been alright, but things have changed. We need space. We cannot have buildings and do not have places now -- in fact it has become such a modern thing in Barbados now that you are constructing buildings and only the employees are being able to park. The customers and the clients have nowhere to park. We are not in the bicycle and donkey cart days.

Madam, for a small country with limited land space, you will always find that there will be challenges. I know that it is very challenging time in this country. Any Government to maintain the heritage lounge will be very challenging because (1) we do not have the land space, (2) a lot of our structures are very old and it would probably just as money to recondition them as you will probably take to build them. It is a challenge. We do not face up to these thing. We are just being critical of a Government because we wish to be critical of a Government. You are batting on the same wicket. I think really and truly we have to throw this second class politics through the window. Honestly I think we have to do it, because some of what I am hearing now is what I have been hearing 50 and 55 years ago, some of the same things.

Whenever there is a change there is hardly any difference at all, unless, of course, in some people's pockets.

Madam President, I do not wish to continue on this matter because I think the point has been made and has been outlined by the mover of the Resolution, and, of course, we all look forward to admiring or enjoying the renovation, the whole restructuring that has to take place and will take place in the future. I look forward as a Barbadian, I look forward too to all these matters that need to Parliament do come Parliament, because we never can tell what may happen down the line, but because Government is Government, some of these matter were put on the back burner for quite some time.

Madam President, with those few words, though interrupted, I am grateful to you. Thank you very much.

Senator M.P.O MCcLEAN: Madam President, I beg to move that this Sitting be suspended for lunch until 2.45 p.m.

The question that the Sitting be suspended until 2.45 p.m. today was put to the Senate and agreed to. Madam President suspended the Sitting accordingly.

RESUMPTION

MADAM PRESIDENT: The Sittings is resumed. Senator Fraser you have the Floor.

Sen. Pro. Sir H. Fraser: Thank you, Madam President. I rise to support this Resolution in relation to the issue of the Sir Erskine Lloyd Sandiford Conference Centre and also, Madam President, very briefly, for providing us with clarity on some of the issues relating to our Government buildings, our public buildings, our derelict buildings and our historic buildings, because it is important for us to recognise that currently Government pays approximately \$65 million in annual rent for a variety of office spaces around Bridgetown and its environments. We have got some accurate quantity survey estimates on some of those derelict buildings and some ballpark figures on others. I think it is important given the way the discussion has gone, while we absolutely approve the improvements and the expansion of the Sir Lloyd Sandiford Conference Centre, which plays a hugely important role, I have organized many conferences there and, of course, attending things like BIMEX, the upcoming BIMEX this weekend, so the Conference Centre plays a huge role. So it is very important that we maximize its potential and that we maintain, because one of the tragedies of Barbados, like other Caribbean countries, is failure to maintain our buildings and that has been an illness of governance of Barbados for the last forty something years since the first oil crisis of 1973, when I understand from my friend, Sir Frank Blackman, that maintenance was taken out of Government budgets. This has led to the dereliction of many, many buildings from the famous Marine Hotel all the way back down to the building which the Preservation Task Force and the Preservation Trust, as a result of the Cabinet efforts, is now attempting to restore buildings like the Carnegie Library.

Several points have been made and there are two issues I would like to address in relation to the priorities of Government's spending. I like Senator Watson have been accused of hammering a particular topic repeatedly. He always talk about craft and entrepreneurship and Pelican Village, and I always talk about the importance of our heritage in Barbados because our National Anthem with those magnificent words does end with "Strict guardians of our heritage, firm craftsmen of our fate." I make the repeated point that these lines have a dual purpose, both to inspire and instill pride in ourselves and our heritage, but

they can often be used to huge economic and particularly touristic advantage. I am sorry that Senator Irene Sandiford-Garner is not here at this particular moment because I know we share the same view on the issue of heritage and its huge tourism potential.

The points I want to make, the two specific points relate (a) to the Supreme Court and (b) to the issue of restoration. When the last Chief Justice was about to retire, almost a decade ago, he called a meeting which was held in a Chamber in the Supreme Court to discuss the possible future role of the old Supreme Court. I was present as representative of the Barbados National Trust, along with our General Manager, and we made the point that the Supreme Court was a very small potential courtyard area used for parking from the Carnegie Library opened on January 26, 1906, as a result of a gift of the greatest benefactor that the world has known, Mr. Andrew Carnegie. We made the point that the Carnegie Library needed to expand because the National Library Service has some of its function distributed across several parts of St. Michael, and it not only would be hugely beneficial if it could bring some of those together on the same site, but that a modern library had requirements from more than just bound volumes, but for computer labs, digital learning, digital files, entertainment, exhibition space, all kinds of meeting places and so on. We made the point, therefore, to Sir David Simmons, that the old Supreme Court Building should be a part of the Carnegie Library Complex and brought together and both buildings brought up to mark as modern state-of-the-art library services. That was, I believe, 2008. It might have been 2007. I speak under correction.

Madam President, the Cabinet of Barbados, as you know, created a Preservation Task Force. The Preservation Task Force in turn with the assistance of Chancery Chambers, who provided their services pro bono to the Ministry of Culture, and the Task Force created a Preservation Trust. Our mandate from Cabinet was to go out and raise money from potential philanthropists in order to restore the historic treasures of Bridgetown particularly, that is to say the treasurers of the UNESCO work site and its Garrison, which had been neglected for some 50 plus years, starting with the Empire Theatre that when it closed in 1975. The Task Force having understood that Cabinet had provided a contract with the restoration of the Empire Theatre and an understanding about Queens Park, the Task Force then took the third historic building on its list which would be Carnegie Library, followed by the Supreme Court and we developed a proposal for the restoration of the Carnegie Library as Phase 1 and the Supreme Court as Phase 2, and the Ministry of Culture had agreed to set out a Cabinet Paper for the agreement that the old Supreme Court, abandoned 8 years ago and not in use, and in danger of further deterioration should be amalgamated with the Carnegie Library.

I wish to put that in context, Madam President, that the Preservation Trust is working hard and diligently. A meeting is even going on today about fund raising. Members of the Senate have received the Anniversary Calendar which was produced. Members of the Senate having made aware of the Mercedes SUV, this is a raffle to raise money for the preservation of the Carnegie Library. We have briefed the Press many times. We have had many Press Releases. We have had some generous donors come forward, but nothing like what it will require to restore the Carnegie Library.

Madam President, as an aside, I would not wish to importune our colleagues in the Senate, but anyone may either write their cheque and pass it to me, or address it to the Preservation Trust Offices sited at Tyrol Cot, because every single widow's might as well as millionaire's millions will be required.

To conclude this first comment, Madam President, the Carnegie Library needs approximately \$4 million to bring it back to a state-of-the-art with elevators, modern restrooms, airconditioning, security and all the facilities of a modern state-of-the-art library. Madam President, as an aside, the magnificent modern libraries which are going up all around the world including in our region, places like French Guyana, because a modern library in this digital age is even more important than it was in the hard copy age.

The second point I want to make, Madam President, is the issue in relation to priorities and new buildings versus old. I have shared in the past the paper, and I am happy to share it again, make it on another occasion or in between Senate meetings a document of the House, a paper on the comparative cost of restoration versus new buildings. I frequently give an example of a Government building and the magnificent work done by our own Government Ministry of Public Works and Transport. At a place call Varona, in Bank Hall. Varona was a two-hundred-year-old residence on the Bank Hall main road. It was built by a Mr. Murphy a long time ago. It's a magnificent Victorian-style residence. It was extended in the 1930s to become Barbados Maternity Hospital and many prominent Barbadians were born there in the 1930s and the 1940s. It served in that role for a little over 20 years and then it became the Labour Office in the late 1950s. It was abandoned some 15 to 20 years ago and at the point where the Ministry of Transport and Works took it over and decided to restore it, there were large trees growing out of this building, much of it was in shambles and it was a jungle at the back of the building.

Madam President, the Ministry of Transport and Works restored that building as the Headquarters of the Electrical Department of that Ministry, at a cost of just over \$200 a square foot, which included best possible security measures, back-up generator, complete air-conditioning, all

coming in at a total of \$216, including the costing of the labour and their salaries. Madam President, this is about 2/3rd the cost of a simple concrete block three-bedroomed home with possibly some nice kitchens and two bathroom.

Madam President, there is a myth in Barbados that restoration is excessively costly and the Paper I will make a document of this Honourable House indicates that of the more than six to eight to ten buildings that we have studied there is only one building of that many number which came in at greater than the cost of a simple three-bedroomed house. Madam President, restoration cost, unless huge trees are occupying the whole site and the roof and the floor and/or the wood is gone, restoration cost is approximately two-thirds the cost of new building in almost every example that we have had across Barbados and Bridgetown in recent times. Therefore I make this point that the \$65 million that we spend in annual rents by the Government of Barbados would restore all of the dirty derelict dozens of buildings in Bridgetown and there would have some money left over.

Madam President, therefore, we come back to the issue that was made about priorities, our priorities are not being correctly adjusted because we will not only save an enormous amount of money in rent and there are financial ways in which this can perhaps be handled to the advantage of the Government to make the restoration possible and practical, but we will of course revitalise Bridgetown. We will bring new life into Bridgetown, we will make the Historic UNESCO-world brand of Bridgetown and Its Garrison worthwhile and avoid the risk of losing that branding which has to us enormous value as a tourism destination.

Madam President, with those few words, I want to make the point that the issue of the Supreme Court is one that has been under discussion from back in 2008, it is one that I hope that Cabinet Paper is going forward very soon so that the Old Supreme Court can become a part of the restored Carnegie Library, to which I am sure all of us as Honourable Senators would want to make an additional contribution and secondly, that our priorities must recognise that we would not only save a small fortune if we restored the multiple buildings around Bridgetown which can be used as Government offices and other facilities but we will dramatically justify the Historic Bridgetown and Its Garrison branding as a UNESCO-World Heritage Site of huge global importance.

Madam President, I thank you for the opportunity to speak on this Bill in relation to the excellent improvements and expansion of the Sir Lloyd Sandiford Conference Centre. There are many aspects of that Centre that could be discussed but this is not really the time. I would want to emphasise the importance, as Senator Sandiford-Garner said, of getting our priorities right so that Bridgetown once

again can become the star of the English-speaking Caribbean. I thank you, Madam President.

MADAM PRESIDENT: Senator Ince, you have the Floor.

Senator J. INCE: Madam President, I rise to support this Resolution that is before this Honourable Chamber, the Resolution that seeks the vesting and disposal of Crown's lands in the form of a lease to the Barbados Conference Services Limited. We are aware that the Barbados Conference Services Limited, what we call the Lloyd Erskine Conference Centre, is critical to the tourism activities of Barbados if we said that we were going to... Madam President, this identifies part of Government's strategy when we speak to the whole idea of restructuring and diversifying the economy.

Madam President, as I have stated before time and time again, you cannot speak to the issues of restructuring and diversifying an economy without dealing with some of these issues, whether they are legislative or social issues because it forms part of that overall development. If we going to have more airlifts coming into Barbados, if we are talking about expanding our International Business Sector, if we are talking about expanding our cruise tourism industry, if we are speaking of what we would term a Barbados that is world heritage, then you must have the infrastructure and those facilities that are going to attract business. Therefore, we cannot be part of a global economy and then have facilities that are not up to par. We are aware that sometimes companies do come to Barbados to have Board of Directors meetings or to have large conferences. We know that the former President of the United States of America made a comment about the world-class facility that we have here in Barbados, when Bill Clinton came here for those couple of hours. He looked at the facility and said that it was world-class, that it was comparable to anything else that he would have seen in his tour of duty as President.

Madam President, we know that we have a facility. We know that we have something to offer. I have always said that it makes no sense that at times yes, we criticise but there are times when you must have constructive criticism. When we look at what is happening, when we look at what this Government has set out to do, we have set out to create, to diversify, to restructure, and at the same time to ensure that we have a quality product in Barbados.

Madam President, people come to Barbados because of our political stability; people come to Barbados because of what we have as far as Barbados financial services are concerned. We are seeing changes in Europe and in South America and I have said before, let us market and develop Barbados as a place where people would want to come; where international businesses would want to come; where

the Fortune500 Companies would want to come and have their seminars; where football clubs like Manchester United and Chelsea Football Club would want to come. Madam President, all of this is part of the fact that they would want to come to Barbados because we have the facilities where they can do business, while at the same time enjoy Barbados for what it is.

Madam President, we do have something to offer. Therefore, Government is saying that we do not just look at the Gross Domestic Product and the fiscal deficit, we say to the people of Barbados that Barbados is not just an economy but that it is also an economy.

Madam President, in the next few days we are going to have a world-class show called BIMEX. I have said to people that BIMEX is a world-class show, there is no guessing about it, we have talent. Madam President, I say that against the background of those you who would have visited the Jacob Javits Convention Centre in New York City to see exhibitions, among other things. I had the opportunity to speak at one of the seminars and exhibitions and when we look at what we have at Sir Lloyd Erskine Sandiford Centre, it is comparable to Jacob Javits Conference Centre, there is no doubt about that. Madam President, here we have a facility that we can broadcast to the world that if they want to have a conference, then come to Barbados because we have what it takes to offer you.

Madam President, let me say something, when you speak to people coming to Barbados... I ran into a group of persons at the Grantley Adams International Airport and they were on the lawn. Normally when I see groups I ask if they are having a good time. This group said to me yes they are having a good time, that they were awaiting a flight, that they had arrived on a cruise ship, and that they were from Russia. They told me that the couple of hours they were here they were going to come back because of the peace and tranquility.

Madam President, they did not talk about prices, they did not talk about the price of the beers or the price of the food.

3.25 p.m.

I introduced myself and when I told him that I was a Senator, they all stood up because as far as they were concerned, a senator is... They said to me, "Sir, we are going to be back. It is so quiet." Can you imagine we are in traffic and the guy says to me, "it is so quiet"? He said we should keep it that way, because they are accustomed to a fire truck passing every ten minutes, police sirens, ambulances, and noises from guns all over the place. They were saying to me, "It is so quiet and so lovely." They did not get the opportunity to tour Barbados. They went from

the seaport to the airport, and they were saying this is the type of country that they liked.

Madam President, with this facility there is no doubt that Government is going in the right direction. South America is opening the doors to business. If we are going to attract business from South America, then you have to have the facility to complement those types of businesses. We just amended an Act and spoke about establishing an arbitration court in Barbados. We must have the conference facilities if we are going to establish such a court, so as to complement that. If we are going to expand our hotel rooms or diversify into solar energy, and we are going to attract direct foreign investment, then you cannot attract these things without having the facilities in place. I clearly understand sometimes what I call "the joys" of the Opposition when they criticise or when they say, "we agree but..." Madam President, they must be reminded that there was a place called Dover Convention Centre, a world-rated facility that was bulldozed in the name of progress for condominiums. We heard that it was going to be rebuilt, and nothing happened.

After Dover Convention Centre was bulldozed, it literally put a spin on tourism and slowed conference services into a tailspin, so the Democratic Labour Party, as usual, had to come to the rescue of Barbados and the tourism sector as well as the conference services sector, and build the Lloyd Erskine Sandiford Conference Centre. Coming out of that and despite all of the criticism, I smiled when I heard Senator Hunte make reference to the statement by a representative who described it as Sandiford's "museum of madness". I will never forget that. Yet, Madam President, that individual occupied the first office in the "museum of madness". Things like that happen, and we allow that to go ahead because we are about developing a country. We are about understanding what Barbadians want, and this is what the Democratic Labour Party is all about. We are about putting Barbados right and looking after the needs of Barbados, but at the same time we are also recognising that Barbados is part of a global market. When you are part of a global market, you have persons who represent the interests of Barbados. When you have our Minister of Foreign Affairs leaving this country to represent Barbados, she must have, as I called it, a flagship so that when our Ministers of Foreign Affairs, International Business and Tourism sit down in meetings, they should be proud of our flagship. If this means that we need to spend money to develop a flagship so that our Ministers, when they sit abroad, can say "this is what we have to offer", then that is what we are prepared to do.

Madam President, I support this Resolution, and with those few words, I am obliged.

MADAM PRESIDENT: Senator Todd, you have the Floor.

Senator Hon. P.M.T. TODD: Thank you very much, Madam President. I rise to support the passage of this Resolution which supports the lease of Crown lands at Sherbourne, which is called the Lloyd Erskine Sandiford Centre via our interests there in terms of Barbados Conference Services Limited. I would wish to congratulate this Democratic Labour Party Administration for continuing the vision of Sir Lloyd Erskine Sandiford, as others mentioned. When Sir Lloyd Erskine Sandiford had the vision to press ahead and commit the Government of the day to the construction of the then Sherbourne Conference Centre, the Barbados Labour Party and other critics tried to ridicule that initiative, as if it was not feasible or would be a drain on the public purse. Yet, as others mentioned, his vision has seen tremendous utilisation of this conference centre, which is more than a conference centre because, as you know, Madam President, on some occasion you have as many as two calypso tents in the Crop Over season operating at that same venue in two different conference rooms. That is how expansive that conference centre is, and one could not imagine Barbados operating efficiently without such a centre; hosting from queen shows to business conferences, locally and internationally organised events, BMEX, the Home Show, church events, among others. It is a very important venue which ensures that the economic development and social structure of our country is optimised and not compromised in any way.

Madam President, as Senator Sandiford-Garner mentioned, when the Barbados Labour Party was in office for 14 long years, they just deliberately left that Sherbourne Conference Centre unfinished. Jokes were often passed about the backside of Sherbourne being left exposed and all of the steel rusting. In the same way, the Barbados Labour Party, after 14 years in office, did not complete the St. John Polyclinic, and it took this Democratic Labour Party Administration, after assuming office in 2008, to complete it. I am saying that Government is a continuum, and it is a crying shame that the Barbados Labour Party was so partisan that they compromised the national development by neglecting these projects just because they were Democratic Labour Party initiatives. Madam President, we must rise above this in the interest of the nation of Barbados as we celebrate the 50th anniversary of our Independence.

I am therefore very happy that the Democratic Labour Party is in office to continue this very important work here, and I am happy to see that we are replacing the carpeting which, having been utilised so heavily, would have needed replacing, as well as the air-conditioning system.

3.26 p.m.

By upgrading this air-conditioning system, we would not have the embarrassment of events occurring and the air-conditioning not working well enough to keep the air cool, especially when sometimes you have as much as a 1 000 people in the larger conference rooms. Madam, this definitely would insure that the reputation of the Lloyd Erskine Sandiford Centre, locally and internationally is not injured by not having properly maintained air-conditioning systems. Madam, this is pro-active responsible Government that is ensuring that the millions invested in this project do not go to waste but that we can maximise the rewards to be gained by having an efficiently run conference centre. Madam, these repairs are very timely and much appreciated by the thousands of Barbadians and visitors alike who utilise these conference facilities on a weekly basis. I am very happy to see as well in recent months as one attends events at that venue, we notice that it is a standard procedure now that before the event commences, a well-known celebrity in the media, a recording of his voice is played to the audience indicating the safety procedures and the protocols set in place in terms of the event of a natural disaster such as an earthquake or other emergency, the drill in terms of the exit points, the assembly points and so on, so this is very much appreciated to ensure that best practices obtain in terms of international best practices that are practised around the world in these public arenas. I have noticed that the Gymnasium as well, they have instituted this procedure, especially when we would have had the earthquakes and earth tremors in recent months. Madam, this must be lauded and I take the opportunity to encourage our venues used by the public, not just operated by the Government but even the private sector be they hotel conference rooms and so on that these basis best practices be adopted as a norm to make sure that the safety of members of the public, local and visitors alike is not compromise.

Madam President, I am also happy to learn that solar lighting is being considered. This is very efficient in terms of reduction in the amount fossil fuels that would be utilised in terms of powering street lights and for example, in the new Barbados Water Authority building, if you pass that stretch of the ABC Highway in the Pine, one would notice that there are dozens of stand alone solar powered street lights erected in the carpark of the new Barbados Water Authority building. There are very tall so that the solar panels are not easily accessible in terms of being susceptible to malice damage in terms of vandalism because I have seen other solar lights that are a bit too close to the ground, so these are high off the ground therefore, reducing the likelihood of damage due to vandalism. In fact, I have seen also on another stretch of the ABC Highway a solar powered street lights that apart from having a solar panel also has in addition a small windmill so that wind energy would augment the solar energy in the event of overcast conditions. Madam, these are all realistic possibilities and I really look forward to more

widespread usage of solar powered street lights. For example, there are two very powerful street lights powered by solar in the eastern carpark of the Central Bank of Barbados just east of the Frank Collymore Hall, which has been operating very well with high illumination for a number of years now and I congratulate the Central Bank of Barbados for being a pioneer in this very important venture. This is an example that must be followed by both the Government and the private sector even if we just start in the first instance with illuminating the car parks in the hotels and facilities in business places.

Madam President, I really am happy to take this opportunity now that we are dealing with this conference service Resolution to really support the call for public buy-in in terms of supporting the expansion of our conference services in terms of attracting conference tourism. Madam President, I remember a number of years ago attending a private conference in the Orlando, United States of America area and this conference was held at one of the Disney Resort Hotels and I was amazed that within that conference hotel there was a corridor of at least 50 metres in length and on either side of that corridor you had at least one dozen conference rooms. Madam, my conference accommodate at least over 2 500 participants with a big stage, banquet facilities were provided and in that conference facility the vast majority of those dozen of conference services were utilised at a given time with hundreds of conference going on from the United States of America and around the world. Madam President, what I am saying is that this is big business. It is not a hard sell to promote a conference being held in Barbados, a tropical paradise for Governments and international agencies holding conference in Barbados.

Madam President, what happens is that some might come to a conference here for a few days and, of course, they will spend some money in terms of patronizing the restaurants, places of entertainment, shopping facilities in terms of souvenirs for sure and then, of course, this short experience would wet their appetite and that is how they end up returning on subsequent occasions with their families perhaps to spend a week or two or even more. Madam, we see some of them repeating their visits annually for decades but they needed that initial introduction and the conference would provide that opportunity as cruise tourism similarly provides that opportunity to get that initial experience of the paradise on earth that we call Barbados.

Madam President, I am very excited for Bridgetown because I remember attending the annual meeting of the Board of Governors of the Inter American Development Bank, one of the subsidiary meetings held in Calvary, Alberto a few years ago. Madam, this Inter American Development Bank conference involved hundreds of delegates from around the world. Madam, as I have said, I

was not attending the main conference but one specifically for mayors and equivalent from Inter American Development Bank member countries as we launched the sustainable city's initiative at the Chamber of Commerce in Calvary, the brainchild of the President of the Inter American Development Bank and we are able to fight to ensure that it was actually made available to Barbados and now we stand to gain over \$1 million in grant funds in this sustainable city's initiative.

Madam President, the point I making here specifically is that Calvary came alive. They had to have the infrastructure in terms of hotel plant and the road network and indeed, the transportation arrangements in terms of buses, taxis, minibuses and so on to ferry the delegates from the dozens of hotels in that city centre area in Calgary, Alberta. In fact, the main conference facilities where these IADB conferences were held was a massive complex and a number of hotels including international brands were actually located adjacent to the main conference centre to such an extent that one did not even have to go into the road to go from your hotel to the conference facilities. There were overpasses and underpasses that you walked directly from one building into the other without actually having to go out into the open because Calgary even in April at the time was snowing.

Madam President, I am very excited about the fact that we could have the Hyatt Hotel constructed in Bridgetown shortly, subject to Town Planning permission, of course, and the whole stretch from Needham's Point right down to Brandons, including the whole of Carlisle Bay, is prime real estate for tourism development. Of course, Madam President, we must be sensitive to the ecological balance that has to be maintained to ensure, for example, that we have sufficient windows to the sea.

I remember when I was in the Other Place making the suggesting that an open area that is a prime location for hotel development would be the spot to the west of the Bay Mansion on Bay Street and being criticised by a Talk Show Host, but I make no apology and I stand on this point because I am old enough, Madam President, just barely, to remember as a young lad that same spot was actually the location of an old brick building, I think at the time a paint factory was located there and that has subsequently demolished so that spot I remember was for sale for a number of years. I do not see the "For Sale" sign anymore but that is right on the water's edge of Carlisle Bay among the top beaches around the world I am saying we have the window to the sea just to the south of this well-maintained by the National Conservation Commission (NCC). At the May Day Celebrations we all converged there to support the excellent work of the Barbados Workers' Union and their annual May Day Parade. You have the beach facility there available, a car park for persons who may wish to use

the beach, you have the picnic table and beaches washroom facilities including showers and changing rooms so there would be no blockage of the public access to beaches if a hotel were to be constructed just next door to the west of the Bay Mansion, Madam President. We have to be frank and tourism is the major earner of foreign exchange in our country and when we build capacity in terms of increasing the room stock, other competitors in the region are increasing their room stock. We cannot be stagnant, we have to have an increase in room stock so that when we have increase airlift with more tourists coming, that we would not have the bottleneck in terms of not having enough hotel rooms to accommodate these tourists. We saw that in the case of the preparations for Cricket World Cup where the last Government took this decision to rent a cruise ship and this Administration had to pay for that fiasco when we assumed office. I am saying that if we are forward looking and build capacity to facilitate and be a catalyst for public and private sector investment in terms of increase construction of tourists accommodation be they hotels, large, small, intimate hotels, villas and so on, a combination that we could see a massive increase in the arrivals of tourists and the accommodation of these tourists hotels because that obviously will give rise to increase employment.

We talk about the revitalisation of Bridgetown and I am saying, Madam President, that most cities around the world have urban hotels. It is very important that we can boast of having a few significant hotels in the nation's capital because we would have persons in the city and surrounding areas and indeed throughout Barbados being able to gain employment in terms of the construction of the hotel and then in terms of the operation of the hotel, be they in the reception area, housekeeping, food and beverage, security, accounting, management and, of course, maintenance, taxi operators would be able to get work. These tourists would then go next door into the highways and byways of Bridgetown to purchase souvenirs, food and beverage and to patronise places of entertainment and thousands of Barbadians would be able to earn a decent living as a result of the increased number of tourists in our nation and, in particular, our nation's capital.

Bridgetown and indeed Barbados is very densely populated and we have limited land space available for such development, but I can identify a few more possible location. I had the honour to act as Minister of the Environment when my learned colleague Senator Dr. Esther Byer-Suckoo held that portfolio at that time the Minister's Office was located in rental facilities at the mouth of the Constitution River just to the west of where we are now. I remember sitting in the Minister's Office and looking through the window at a breath-taking sight to behold where you could look out and see the waters of the Caribbean sea mixing with the freshwater coming out of the Constitution River, a very, very beautiful. In fact, when

the late Prime Minister, David Thompson, was with us he used to take the Cabinet from time-to-time to tours of important areas of our work throughout the island and on one such occasion we actually ended up on the top deck of the Barbados Tourism Investment Inc. Car Park on the Princess Alice Highway. It amazing, Madam President, when we traverse these streets at ground level we could take the scenery for granted but there we were about three of four storeys up on the top deck of the Barbados Tourism Investment Inc. Car Park and we had a panoramic view of Bridgetown and its suburbs, breath-taking, Madam President. Furthermore, I remember being given the opportunity as part of the social Partnership we were hosted by the Central Bank Governor. Minister Byer-Suckoo was there with us at the time and that was the first time I was actually in that Tom Adams Complex at the Central Bank of Barbados at the highest level about 10 storeys up and when we looked down at beautiful Bridgetown, Madam President, a sight to behold we saw the Constitution River meandering along the way, you saw the churches, the public buildings, the private buildings, which were breath-taking. I am saying, Madam President, can you could imagine the top floor of a six or seven storey hotel in the nation's capital, breath-taking, those tourists will be thinking they are in heaven on earth and they would want to return to beautiful Barbados after such an experience. As I said, this is commonplace throughout the world even throughout the region.

I remember staying many years ago at the Oceana Hotel in downtown Kingston, the heart of Kingston and a simple boutique hotel but it was right next to the Jamaica Conference Centre so I attended a conference there and the convenience of walking from the hotel over to the Conference Centre reducing the challenges of having to be bussed from one location miles away so these are realistic logistical issues that increase tourism room stock would address to make Barbados even more attractive in terms of a tourism destination for conferences.

3.46 p.m.

Madam President, I would not wish to go on for much longer but I would really wish to respond quickly to the statements of the Opposition Spokesman in terms of the issues of neglected buildings and remind Senator Abrahams that it is this Democratic Labour Party Administration since assuming office in 2008 that would have put a serious dent into the poor accommodation of Government offices for Government workers. It is this Democratic Labour Party administration that constructed two new high-rise Government office complexes at Warrens, the Baobab Towers and the Warrens Towers, so that we were able to relocate a number of public officers. Remember the old NIS Building with the environmental issues that the unions had to take industrial action on, and it is this Democratic Labour Party by building those new

office complexes at Warrens that we were able to relocate the staff of the Electoral Office over to Warrens, and we were able to relocate, I believe, the Unemployment Bureau as well to more spacious accommodation elsewhere and the list goes on. The Vector Control Unit was moved from the old General Hospital which the Barbados Labour Party abandoned to a great extent and left the complex dilapidated. In fact, the Ministry of Health, the Minister's office as I mentioned before, was filled with a lot of paint peeling from the moisture coming in from outside and we relocated the Minister's office and the ministry to a large measure to better accommodation elsewhere, Madam President.

Just recently, Madam President, this Democratic Labour Party has been able to roll out a multimillion dollar citizens security initiative which is seeing the construction of a number of police stations and of course the construction of a new police high command in the Wildey area. I remember visiting the Jamaica, and the police high command is a complex which stand-alone with a parameter fence and enhanced security. I remember seeing a sentry with a helmet, well-armed with an M-16 assault rifle. Under the Barbados Labour Party the high command of the Royal Barbados Police Force had to move from pillar to post at less secured locations, but tis Democratic Labour Party Administration is taking security seriously and that is why we are going to have a police high command complex at Wildey which is going to be built in such an expansive way that it is factoring in the fact that there would be future expansion of its work there and therefore any additional space required would be factored in in terms of the construction of that site at Wildey.

Furthermore, Madam President, the western barracks of the Central Police Station as part of this multimillion dollar citizen security initiative of this Democratic Labour Party Administration will undergo a multimillion dollar refurbishment. In fact, it has actually started. You can see the hoarding up and workmen are already on site doing the proprietary work. When you travel along Tudor Street under the Barbados Labour Party when they were in office for 14 years - that is how important they saw the Royal Barbados Police Force -- at that barrack you would have seen all of the metal shutters rusting and the soft stone walls filled with mildew, but all of that would be a thing of the past in this multimillion dollar upgrade thanks to the initiative of the Democratic Labour Party Administration. Madam President, the Barbados Labour Party should not have the audacity to talk about the accommodation of Government workers and the upkeep of Government buildings because they had 14 years to do something about it and they were found wanting.

I remember that under the Barbados Labour Party Administration if one wanted to go and get a Police Certificate of Character at Central Police Station, you had

to go into a dilapidated building in the middle of Central Police Station with all of the fingerprint ink all over the wall and the wood rotting to pieces, and that building had to be actually demolished. Remember the Barbados Labour Party did not think that policemen were that special but this Democratic Labour Party realises that the brave men and women of the Royal Barbados Police Force are very important. They risk their lives daily, and at night when we are resting they are out there ensuring that the safety of Barbadians and visitors alike is not compromised and they must be given the necessary support to continue their mandate.

I would also in closing wish to indicate that this Democratic Labour Party is serious when we say that are going to relocate some offices to this Lloyd Erskine Sandiford Centre Complex even if temporary to ensure that the existing accommodation at Government Headquarters is refurbished. I know that the Government Information Service is located next door at the site of the old Bay Street Boy School which my father and the Right Excellent Sir Garfield Sobers attended. Again visiting that location, this Democratic Labour Party Administration inherited a poorly kept building to such an extent that again you saw the paint peeling off the wall with mildew because of the moisture coming into the soft stone rock and in fact the top floor, because it was a two-storey building, had to be propped up with metal support. The Government Information Service, I understand, is to be relocated as part of this relocation move. My office Madam President, is at the ground floor of the Government Headquarters and already consultants would have visited my office and other offices to take photographs and examine the layout of the offices so as to ensure there is a seamless transition to the Lloyd Erskine Sandiford Complex.

I know that members of the disabled community would have paid us a visit one Thursday morning and we can assure them that their concerns in terms of accessibility to these public buildings in terms of wheelchair access will be addressed in terms of the refurbishment of Government Headquarters. The proprietary work being done here at the Lloyd Erskine Sandiford Centre would facilitate that temporary location so that these issues at Government Headquarters which of course was constructed back in the 50s by, I think, Tomlin was associated with that, are being addressed by this Democratic Labour Party in a serious way.

In closing therefore, Madam President, I am very excited to report that the Barbados Tourism Investment Inc. which of course does a lot of the infrastructural development in terms of revitalising Bridgetown, the public buildings and other tourist initiatives... I was speaking to some of their principals recently and I was told that as part of the third phase of the Constitution Redevelopment which would improve the Constitution River from Queen's Park

to the Globe that those good people in Ellis Village in the City of Bridgetown to the east of Queen's Park will be provided with upgrades to their environment in terms of roads and housing so that this project is not just going to deal with the river and leave them as the Barbados Labour Party left them but this Democratic Labour Party is ensuring that those good people of Bridgetown will indeed see some alleviation of their living conditions in terms of upgrades in terms of the provision of water-borne toilets and bath facilities and road infrastructure. Madam President, this Democratic Labour Party is not just building buildings but we are also looking out for the good people of Bridgetown.

I thank you, Madam President.

4.56 p.m.

MADAM PRESIDENT: Senator Carmichael, you have the Floor.

Senator Dr. Sir Trevor CARMICHAEL: Madam President, thank you for allowing and indulging me in these brief postprandial remarks. I would like to make a point or two which is somewhat tangential to the remarks which have been made as this debate was opened. Madam President, I promised you that these remarks be very brief. They may not be as brief as the remarks which were made in this Honourable Chamber by Senator Lionel Ward when the tributes were being paid to the late Right Excellency Errol Walton Barrow.

Madam President, I know Senator Ward as a very sincere man, in those brief remarks he said that he could not speak for very long because he had not really met Mr. Barrow. He said he knew of him but he really did not know him and so he wanted to be brief and sincere. In the sincerity which was his hallmark, he gave some remarks which I think may go down as being the shortest ever made in this Honourable Chamber.

Madam President, I think I will exceed Senator Ward today but I assure you, Madam President, that I should not exceed him by a lot. What I would like to say is that this debate comes at a very opportune moment. It comes at a very opportune moment because it deals not only with the extension, if you will, of a conference facility, it deals and goes to the heart of our tourism product and really the destination, if you will - no pun intended - of that tourism product.

Madam President, many years ago or at least 20 years ago we in Barbados were very fortunate. I say fortunate because many people have forgotten. We tend to have short memories and we tend sometimes not to remember things that are very good. Madam President, many years ago we were able to negotiate a Tax

Information Exchange Agreement with the United States of America and at that time Tax Information Exchange Agreements were not, should we say, the flavour of the month, as indeed there are now and there are a lot of reasons for that but this is neither the time or place to go into that aspect of things.

Madam President, when we negotiated that Tax Information Exchange Agreement with the United States of America, it gave us three benefits, two of which are maybe not relevant today but I think one still is, it gave us access to what was then called the 936 Puerto Rico Fund, something which does not really exist now. It gave us also the ability to be the situs for foreign sales corporations and we did very well and benefited significantly from that provision but Foreign Sales Corporations no longer exist because of changes to the legislation in the United States of America, in the same way that there were earlier changes to the Domestic Sales Corporations. That Tax Information Exchange Agreements also gave us another benefit, it gave us the benefit of being the situs for United States' convention with great tax benefits to those persons who come from the United States of America on those conventions to Barbados.

Madam President, I submit that today Barbados remains, because nothing has changed as far as the legislation is concerned but a lot has changed in Barbados, in my humble submission, Madam President, a great venue, an appropriate venue and indeed a waiting venue for United States' generating and originating conventions.

Madam President, one of the great sources of these conventions as we know rests with the professional associations: the Bar Associations, the Dental Associations, the Medical Associations, the Engineering Associations, Nursing Association, the whole gamut. Madam President, I suggest that Barbados has an advantage as far as these particular sources of business are concerned. I go further, I suggest that when we think of these associations we do not think of a convention necessarily of the whole association. Indeed, the associations are so large that a convention of just a section of the association is a large number. As a matter of fact, I dare say, we would not be able to accommodate, in most cases, a convention of the whole association.

Madam President, I remember very well about 20 or 25 years ago Barbados hosted what is still called the Mid-Winter Bar Meeting of the Canadian Bar Association. Madam President, when I travel in Canada today, as indeed I was there for one day on Monday, but when I travel to Canada and speak to some of my colleagues in that area, those who are still alive still remember that mid-winter conference which the Canadian Bar held. That was the first and only time that it was held in Barbados and they still talk about it. We have not been able to attract it, they came

without the convention tax benefits of the United States of America but they came because of the special relationship which we enjoy with Canada.

Madam President, I suggest that with the additional hotel plant that we have, with the additional convention centre such as the Lloyd Erskine Sandiford Centre that we have, we are making ourselves even more right, if you will, for this type of business. I suggest, Madam President, that the presence of this tax advantage within the United States of America gives us a special place which we must ensure that we enjoy and from which we benefit.

Madam President, I also suggest that the additional airlift which we now enjoy, airlift which we enjoy directly out of Fort Lauderdale, airlift which we enjoy now directly out of Boston, adding obviously to the gateways of Miami, New York and Atlanta, with these direct ports into Barbados from the United States of America, I suggest, Madam President, that this particular benefit is one that we should seek to attract even more.

Madam President, I say there are many of us in the private sector who have connections in the various associations. Indeed, many of us are members of them. I myself am an Associate Member of the Canadian Bar Association. I am also a member of the Inter-America Bar Association, so at least I go to those meetings. I have done so for close to 30 years, so we have opportunities whereby we could encourage our colleagues there to come here and enjoy the benefits. Madam President, we are heartened by the fact that we can do so more comfortably now because we have the additional airlift and we have the additional hotel plant and the additional conference facilities which will allow for that.

Madam President, as they say, there is the old expression which is kind of tautological and maybe a little hackneyed which says nothing before its come, but I will repeat it in spite of what I said, so maybe this is the time for it, this is the time that we can enjoy those benefits which are here before us. There are here before us in a legislative framework, they are now here before us in terms of a product framework and I suggest, Madam President, that we should use our best efforts to avail ourselves of those prevailing opportunities and those challenges which lie before us.

Madam President, I said I would be brief. I think I exceeded my good friend who in some respects was a mentor to me. I have exceeded his brief tribute in terms of time but I will close by thanking you for allow me to make these very brief remarks as I support this Resolution that is before us today. I thank you very much.

4.09 p.m.

Senator Dr. Sir T.A. CARMICHAEL: ... I will close by thanking you for allowing me these very brief remarks as I support this Resolution which is before us here today. Thank you very much.

MADAM PRESIDENT: Senator Watson, you have the Floor.

Senator J. A. WATSON: Thank you, Madam President. I believe, as I probably have said before, that every time we debate a Bill or a Resolution in this Senate or rather in this Parliament as a whole, those Bills and Resolutions are put forward so that some positive impact can be made on the citizens of Barbados, either socially, economically or both. I believe that we always do that, of course, in the context of the present situation that exists in Barbados, especially the economic situation. Therefore, when this Resolution is brought here, I am sure it is brought for the benefit of Barbados, both socially and economically. Madam President, I believe that even in terms of the building of the convention centre, it was done in such a way that it probably had cost much less than it would have cost if we had built it differently. I say that, Madam President, because the convention centre was built with steel; and by steel I mean steel frames, in situ concrete. It was not built with large, precast concrete members which are very costly and, in fact, costly in other ways because when you have to transport them, they damage our roads. From that point of view, I believe that the convention centre started off as a viable project.

I know that for some time the centre was left unfinished for whatever reason. I know that the original concept was changed for whatever reason. However, the fact is that it still is an asset of Barbados which is very worthwhile and productive. Madam President, the Lloyd Erskine Sandiford Centre provides services not only in terms of culture. I believe that some of our calypso tents house themselves there; NIFCA is usually held there; and there are many shows hosted there. BMEX was mentioned as well. The convention centre plays a major role, even in our local development, and I think that when you look at what is happening there now, I would hope that there probably will come a time when more people would be able to use it, because some costs might be reduced.

Madam President, the convention centre has to go a little bit further. Now that it will be managing its own property, I believe it may want to look at the surrounding areas and see which areas can be purchased, so that we can have a Lloyd Erskine Sandiford Hotel to complement the convention centre. Madam President, I say that because, as you and some of us who would have attended conferences would know, it is always better to have the conference next to or in your hotel. Therefore, I think that one of the next goals of the convention centre would be to find a way of building a hotel in the immediate environs of the Lloyd

Erskine Sandiford Centre. I do not believe we want to get rid of Ilaro Court but I believe that sometimes progress causes certain things to happen, and relocations are not unusual; so that is a clear possibility.

Madam President, one of the other things I want to mention is what Senator Carmichael mentioned just now. I was searching but I did not really find it, but I found enough in the Estimates which would have mentioned what that allocation to the convention centre is for. It says it provides a grant to the Barbados Conference Services Limited, “whose objective is to solicit, plan, coordinate and manage conferences and meetings”. Madam President, I say that to agree very much with what Senator Carmichael said earlier about seeking out conferences to come to Barbados. I think the management at the conference centre must go past the idea of just managing a facility, but must get to the point now where they are actually going out and finding conferences for the convention centre. I believe that they usually form part of the tourism promotion teams which go out, but I have a feeling that they have to be more aggressive in finding conferences so that they themselves can become viable without any grants from Government. I notice also in the Estimates that the 2017-2018 allocation was reduced. I believe that might be as a result of this same effort of the convention centre to earn much more than it presently does.

Madam President, with that in mind I remembered mentioning here recently that one of the things we have to do in Barbados is to pay attention to productivity. I think that is something that we all know and talk about, and I believe that one of the ways of doing things like that is by setting targets. I really believe that if the convention centre has a certain amount of capacity, then it should be given the mandate of making at least 70 or 80 per cent of that capacity work. Therefore, that would encourage them to go out and look for conferences. I know, as was said, that people usually have very large conferences, but there are also very small conferences. I think that we have a unique position in Barbados. We are small and beautiful, and therefore we can look at unique conferences to bring to Barbados. That is the sort of mandate that I think the management of the Lloyd Erskine Sandiford Conference Centre should have.

Madam President, one of the concerns about Government buildings in Barbados is maintenance, and I have mentioned before, and I mention it again, maintenance of buildings must be a priority. I am not sure whether there is such a department within Government that looks after all of Government’s buildings and their maintenance, costs, construction, and that type of thing. If there is not such a department, maybe we need to have it; and if there is, then we need to make it a little more efficient because it really is not working as well as it can.

4.15 p.m.

Madam President, I get the impression that there is a department in Government, I think that it is the Attorney-General office that is a project office that looks after several of the buildings in Government and I believe that the National Housing Corporation might be another department that does that but I think that there has to be more concerted effort in maintaining buildings in Barbados. Madam, I say this because in asking a few questions about the new Barbados Water Authority building, and why I ask the questions about the new Barbados Water Authority building is because there is still a lot of criticisms about the construction of that building but I pass that area very often on my way home when I am not coming the other road and when I going the other way sometimes I pass it and I was quite impressed with the way that building was constructed from the ground up. I saw from the beginning when they cleared the site until it was completely finished the lights were turned on, only from a distance, I did not go into the building but in asking the questions what I discovered is that building has a maintenance contract which I was amazed at because I did not think Barbadians had reached that stage yet and to have a maintenance contract for a new building is extremely important so long as it is well negotiated, of course, because one of the important things about keeping your cost contained is by maintaining your building properly. I do not know the details of it but I am sure that there should be checked out and see how it could be put across all the Government buildings.

Madam President, that brings me to what I consider to be the new way of managing nowadays. I mentioned very early when I came here about how we should do procurements and that we should have a procurement officer. Madam, recently I mentioned that we should have productivity officers within Government. Madam President, I want to suggest that one of the areas of management that we should concern ourselves with in Government is facilities management. It is something that is very necessary because it saves thousands and thousands of dollars. I suppose there are several ways of describing what facilitates management is. I want to put it simply by saying that it is something that does everything in a building to make sure that the building is running well, that it is doing what it is supposed to do and that everything in the building works as it should. I do not think I could put it simpler than that and I think that those are the sorts of things we need to do with all our buildings in Barbados, especially the new ones. I think that Senator Todd mentioned the new buildings at Warrens and I trust we do not have to end up with those buildings in the way that Senator Abrahams had to talk about the old Supreme Court Buildings.

Madam President, if we install facilitates management at this time, for sure you will save money. Madam, the buildings would probably last much longer and the \$65 million in rent that was mentioned by Senator Fraser might be contained for as long as possible because we would not have to go out looking for new buildings to rent.

Madam President, in facilitates management you get a lot of problems when you do not install that kind of management. Madam, sometimes you call at a business and you get the phones not working, the switch board is down, you get air-conditioning not working and you get the sorts of complaints we have been hearing recently very often with environmental problems and all these things again lead to low productivity, so that even though you might spend a little more in installing a good facilities management programme and hiring the white people in the long run you are bound to gain because it is saving a lot of down time that otherwise you would have if you have those breakdowns.

Madam President, I listen to a senior civil servant being interviewed and one of the questions asked by a retired civil servant is what is it that could improve the performance of public workers. Madam, his answer was so simple that it unbelievable but when you think about it is a fact. He said that all you have to do is to make the staff happy. If you make public workers happy you would improve productivity, and that is all you need to do.

Madam President, if we install proper facilitates management, I am positive but, again I do not know. I am sure if we went through the Barbados Water Authority building, I am sure people who were grumpy, upset and so on before might have changed their activity simply because of the surroundings in which they are in. I believe that we need to reach the stage where we not only make the public workers happy but we make all Barbadians happy. We have to do that through providing an environment that is conducive, an environment that people feel comfortable in and in which people feel good about themselves. Madam, Senator Todd talked about the top of the Central Bank of Barbados looking out over the sea and those things are important to a society because when we keep Barbados beautiful as it is, we will improve the feelings of people and once the feelings of people are improved, we will improve our productivity.

Madam President, I have no problem in supporting this Resolution at all. My advice only, as I have said before is to make sure that the mandate given to the staff of the conference centre be one where they go out and find conventions. I believe that conference centre should be overbooked. I believe that we should be operating at 100 per cent all the time there. It is a good facility and I believe that we could look for building a hotel there. It is ideally

located because it is just off the highway coming from the south and just off the highway coming from the north so there is potential for that facility to be expanded and since it is being given over to the conference centre by lease, I think that there should aggressive in making it the viable business it can be.

Madam President, with those few words, I am obliged.

MADAM PRESIDENT: Senator McClean, you have the Floor.

Senator Hon. M.P.O MCCLEAN: Madam President, thank you very much. I rise to wrap-up the debate on this Resolution to lease to the Barbados Conference Services Limited a parcel of land together with buildings at Two Mile Hill in St. Michael, as we know, what used to be the Sherbourne Conference Centre now the Lloyd Erskine Sandiford Centre.

4.25 p.m.

I want to start by thanking Senator Sandiford-Garner who led the debate in a very comprehensive clear manner the rationale for the leasing of the lands by the Crown to the Barbados Conference Services Limited. I think she was very clear in articulating the importance of that but she also went on to speak to the importance of the facility within the context of our conference and tourism facilities, conference being both local and internationally. I also would want to thank all of the other speakers. Of course, in the debate a number of issues were raised leading to the question of preventative maintenance, prioritising, expenditure, reference to the old Supreme Court, et cetera. Madam President, I would want to quickly say that is an important one but at the same time what we have to recognise is that where there are some constraints there has to be some prioritisation, I think that was the word used and I do not know that it is an either/or situation and that it is necessary to make those kinds of comparison. I know certainly the importance of that complex. As a school girl I spent a lot of time at the Carnegie Library preparing for A' Levels therefore would have walked through as a short cut sometimes to the get to the bus terminal based on the then configuration of where you could catch buses home to Black Rock. I would have seen that building, I know of the challenges and I trust that they would be maintained.

Madam President, before I get in to speaking on that I would want to respond a little bit to some of what I heard. Reference was made to the annual rental bill of Government of about \$65 million and that, to my mind, is something that is extremely high. I certainly am in support of restoration but I do not know that we are at all-fours in terms of the needs for office space for Government because that is what we rent. In this case, we being Government but

it is successive Governments and we rent \$65 million worth of building space for office space. There are a number of things that as we talk about renovation because it is not automatic. I know of Verona House because my two older sisters because I have three sisters would have worked at some point in time with the Chief Electoral Office which used to be housed in Verona House in Bank Hall - I was a youngster then in late primary and perhaps early secondary school when they would have been working there -- and that is a pretty small building and can only house perhaps a small space. The point I am making is that as we look to develop a strategy of renovation if we are focusing on Government because at the end of the day we have to think in terms of restoration or renovation from the perspective of the role of Government and the role of the private sector because this, within the context of what is it we lease, why do we lease it and who leases it and so on, and how does that fit into a strategy of restoration. A critical question then would be what are the profiles of buildings to be restored? What are the typical office space sizes of spaces rented by Government or needed by Government? I think as we look at this we need to balance the passion, which I like, with the practical realities of the needs of Government on the one hand. In looking at that, to what extent should Government take the lead, because all of the building you see are not necessarily Government owned a lot of them may be and to what extent does Government get involved there is a function as to how they would use those buildings. I have some general figures given for renovations but I do not know that there is a homogenous kind of situation. We are dealing with a diverse mixed of buildings and the circumstances of those buildings. I think we have to look at how does Government prioritise restorations in a manner that would allow Government to substitute rental space for what I would describe renovated space. There is no universal response that say that we could do this and eliminate that, so I think it is important we look at that.

I also want to stress, Madam President, before I get into some of what I want to say from perspective is that there has also to be a role for the private sector. I, of course, would have shared my thoughts in relation to the Carnegie Library with Senator Fraser. I believe I was one of thousands of Barbadians who would have utilised that library therefore can attribute some of our academic and professional success to the fact that we had access to that library. I believe there were many persons in my circumstance where I would not have had the luxury of a personal library that I could have resorted to therefore I utilised that just like a lot of young professionals and a lot of young lawyers.

I recall hearing the Honourable Prime Minister referring to going to library to read international newspapers as a young lawyer and probably as a young student of law. I am saying that we have to think in terms

of how do we ensure that we sell to Barbadian, on a very personal basis, the need to give back. I know it is not an easy task having served in a capacity ... In fact, I got a lovely letter this morning from the new principal of the Cave Hill Campus and they have a scheme but as much as I like her as a personal friend I have to tell her I cannot afford \$15 000 I would love to be able to give the university \$15 000 or \$10 000 but when I get it I would. What I can say is that I was very much involved in the setting up of the Alumni circle but I have a suggestion for her, while I may not be able to give \$15 000, I might be able to convince my nieces, nephews, brothers, and a sister, who went to Cave Hill, because only one of my sisters went to Cave Hill, the other two did not go to Cave Hill, that we as a family can perhaps contribute collectively so that I would contribute a portion of that so I think that is one of the strategies I would raise. The point I am making is the whole notion of philanthropy is something that we have to explore so in looking in that the key point I am making is that there is a critical role for Government in terms of these restorations which are absolutely important but there is also a critical role for the private sector particularly where some of the restorations offer significant commercial potential, so enough said on that.

Madam President, I think that as I listened to the contributions made to this debate and I want to say very quickly, you know there is an expression great minds think alike and fools seldom differ. Having listened to Senator Carmichael, he is not fool, so I want to say that and I have it here in red in case he thinks that I was plagiarising, I was scribbling before he spoke, and I was very happy to hear Senator Carmichael as well as Senator Watson and others talk about the importance of the Lloyd Erskine Sandiford Centre previously the Sherbourne Conference Centre. In listening to that and the importance of utilising that facility and perhaps creating some others which can support that one it took me back to the 1994 Small Islands Developing States Conference which to my mind has etched the name of Sherbourne Centre now the Lloyd Erskine Sandiford Centre and has also stamped Barbados and the outcomes of that conference in the minds of processes re a number of critical international or I would want to specify multilateral issues, sustainable development, climate change, the agenda of small island developing states, the SIDS Agenda as we hear, all of these things are very topical as we deal internationally with issues in terms of development. Recently the Honourable Prime Minister would have travelled to the United Nations to join over 160 Heads of States and representatives of Government to sign off on a conference agreement that was reached in Paris last year. A lot of that discussion started right here in Barbados at that centre therefore I think that we have as part of a rich legacy of concern. In fact, it was at that conference that the issues, the vulnerabilities, the special needs of small island developing states would have been brought to the fore and we are working assiduously now to keep that in the mind of

people so I think one of the things we need to do, Madam President, is to explore what I consider a special niche or segment of the conference market and that is what I call the multilateral negotiations or multilateral market and I will give you an example.

Madam President, I was unfortunate to have missed the tributes to the list of Prime Ministers of Barbados last week but it was not because I did not want to be here but I was required to be elsewhere. I happened to have gone to two meetings of the ACP foreign Ministers as well as a joint meeting of the ACP and the European Union. We were in Senegal but we were talking about the issues that we have to carry forward as two groups of countries which would have entered into some agreements some years ago.

Some of you would have heard of the Cotonou Agreement where we have development support arrangements and so on with the European Union as former colonies, et cetera which will come to an end in 2020. The discussion is what happens after 2020 and also what happens as a group of countries that have been working together since the 70s and so on in this particular format to look at the very questions that we started to discuss right here in Barbados, and we looked at that. We were also reminded of a meeting coming up, and I would want to link an example of Nairobi where the world goes several times a year at different meetings to address issues of the environment. When you talk about the United Nations Environmental Programme it is headquartered in Nairobi and the world treks there to discuss issues. The point I am making is that that is now a jurisdiction that is known to be the meeting place for a particular issue.

I believe that having started that dialogue on Small Islands Developing States we should take ownership of it. In fact, one of the things that I am happy to say that I did last time was to look at this whole issue because as we discussed the future of the ACP, African Caribbean and Pacific countries, and our relations with the European Union one of the issues that came up was how do we work together in terms of ensuring that we can deliver on what we call the 2030 Agenda. Madam President, the 2030 Agenda is an Agenda which says that the world has to work simultaneously to achieve certain sustainable development goals. They have been articulated in the same way that we had the Millennium Development Goals where we addressed things like poverty, child mortality and a whole set of things and so on. We are saying that we now have to build on that and look at how do we ensure that we are able to sustain or develop our respective countries in a way that is sustainable, et cetera.

One of the issues that I put on the table, which I have spoken about here often, is entrepreneurship. I must say that in discussing it and putting it on the table, I was happy to see that the Secretary General of the ACP brought

a paper to the second set of meetings where we identified youth entrepreneurship as a strategy to address sustainable development of our respective countries and as a strategy of addressing the same SDGs, (Sustainable Development Goals) or the 2030 Agenda. In fact, I was discussing this with an official last night not knowing that I was going to be talking about this morning and my argument is to say that my intention is that I am not going to let the Secretary General settle in his office for a whole week because I intend to write to say look we cannot only talk about youth entrepreneurship but we have to immediately start to put a programme in place.

The question you may be asking, Madam President, is what has this got to do with the Resolution before us. We would have heard about the rationale for the leasing of additional lands and buildings to conference services et cetera, and that that is intended in essence to do is to ensure the rights of the landlord, that is the Crown, and the obligations of the tenant, the Barbados Conference Services Limited. What is that to do with what I said? This would allow the Lloyd Erskine Sandiford Centre to properly manage and operate the facility. In other words, because you have a proper arrangement, and I do not need to go into some of the explanations given by Senator Sandiford-Garner in terms of the benefits of a leasing arrangement, from my perspective it ensures that we can market ourselves and that facility as an appropriate location for conferences.

It is with such, Madam President, that I as I said I propose to follow up immediately in recommending Barbados and more specifically that historic former Sherbourne Centre now the Lloyd Erskine Sandiford Centre to the Secretary General of the ACP as well as the officials of the European Union to say look if we are serious about youth entrepreneurship as a strategy, et cetera, let us create a mechanism that would allow us to get together in Barbados, not anywhere else, and there is a clear rationale for that, and develop programmes and address the issue.

The point I am making is that the recommendation is that Barbados should become the focal point. In doing so, what we are creating is conference calendar. We are creating a clear link between the issues and a mechanism by which we can get together to develop strategies and to review strategies, which is what has been happening over the years. In the same way that we have moved from Barbados to Mauritius and then on to Samoa, some people continue to go back to Nairobi, we are saying we have a history, the capacity and a number of resources and that in fact we are central in a lot of respects, so what I am saying is that we know that we have brought the world's attention to the particular vulnerabilities of SIDS that was in 1994, we have brought people back here but we now want to bring their attention to a strategy to reduce those

vulnerabilities. To my mind if we can do that Barbados would have moved from its position of advocacy as an early leader in advocating the needs of SIDS to one in which we are converting that advocacy to a serious business opportunity as we maintain the focus on ensuring that the SIDS agenda not only stays alive but it is operationalised in a way that allows us to address the needs of our young people, as I said, across the ACP, most specifically in Barbados and that we would have become what I would describe as the conference or consultation hub of youth entrepreneurship in Small Island Developing States with the Lloyd Erskine Sandiford Centre being the home conference centre.

I hope, Madam President, by looking at that example in addition to all that was suggested, I think that in listening to Senator Carmichael he also spoke of building of legacy where we negotiated previously a number of critical agreements with the United States of America in terms of that bilateral arrangement. We also have been very much part of a multilateral set of negotiations which would allow us to create a special place for the Lloyd Erskine Sandiford Centre which can move our tourism offerings in a direction that we have gone somewhat before and in which we can again go, that is to look at the whole question of conferences and conferences which would allow us to bring the world or some of our bilateral partners to Barbados in a very significant way.

I believe, Madam President, that in listening to all that was said about this Resolution, it is not simply about leasing land from the Crown to a company owned by Government which exists to operate a critical facility but it allows us also to recognise that this can be part of a much bigger strategy intended to utilise that facility in a way that can maximise opportunities. We have heard about the several domestic kinds of opportunities. BIMEX is coming up soon. We have all kinds of religious and secular arrangements. People use it for private functions, et cetera but I think that at the end of the day we have to agree that this facility is better served by this leasing arrangement but this facility also is a very critical anchor and should continue to be a critical anchor in our conference facilities.

With those words, Madam President, I beg to move that this Resolution do now pass.

The question that the Resolution do now pass was put to the Senate and resolved in the affirmative without division.

SUSPENSION

Senator the Hon. Miss M. P. O. McCLEAN: Madam President, I beg to move that this Sitting be suspended until 5.00 p.m. today.

The question that the Sitting do now suspend until 5.00 p.m. was put and resolved in the affirmative without division and MADAM PRESIDENT suspended the Sitting accordingly.

5.46 p.m.

RESUMPTION

MADAM PRESIDENT: This Senate is resumed.

ORDER NO. 3

RESOLUTION TO APPROVE IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION (5) OF THE LAND ACQUISITION ACT, CAP. 228 THE COMPUSORY ACQUISITION BY THE CROWN OF THE PARCEL OF LAND THE PROPERTY OF BRIGHTON PLANTATION LIMITED, SITUATE AT BRIGHTON IN THE PARISH OF ST. GEORGE IN THIS ISLAND FOR THE PUBLIC PURPOSE OF PROVIDING CAR PARKING FACILITIES FOR THE Barbados VOCATIONAL TRAINING BOARD, ST. LUKES'S TRAINING CENTRE AND FOR AFTER-HOURS RECREATIONAL USE

MADAM PRESIDENT: Senator Byer-Suckoo, you have the Floor.

Senator Dr. the Hon. E. R. BYER-SUCKOO: Madam President, I rise to open the discussion on this Resolution for the acquisition of land at Brighton Plantation. This acquisition is for the Barbados Vocational Training Board, the Center at St. Luke's. It is a parcel of 1 100 square metres, over 11 000 square feet or over a quarter of an acre of land. This land is dual-purposed, the idea that in St. Luke's/Brighton we have the St. Luke's training facility which has very little parking space. I think outside you probably have about six or seven designated parking areas, while a lot of the parking occurs at the side of the road, so that when buses pass there are always challenges because of the congestion there. When that facility was the Old St. Luke's Girls' School this land was actually the playing field for that school. The idea is that this land will now be acquired, so that by day it would be parking for the facility, the idea also is to prepare it in such a way that in the afternoon it becomes a recreational facility and would provide for the community and perhaps for the students who would stay around, but it is especially intended to provide for a large community recreational facilities like volleyball court, netball and basketball.

Madam President, as I discuss this, though, I would like to use the opportunity to do two things, I want first to give you an update on the Barbados Vocational Training Board, an update on where they are now 36 years on. The Occupational Training Act was passed in 1979 but it was

not until 1980 that the then National Training Board came into existence. That has since become the Barbados Vocational Training Board so that we are now 36 years on. Madam President, the Barbados Vocational Training Board has expanded its role, its mandate still remains, Madam President, the provision of training, providing an adequate supply of trained manpower in occupations in all branches of economic activity in Barbados, also supervising apprentices, training programmes and certification of trainees and apprentices.

They have taken on an expanded role, certainly now with our Human Resource Development Strategy a project that along with Government counterpart funding has the injection of \$50 million Euros by the European Union and that Human Resource Development Strategy is of course aimed at maximising our human potential through training, counselling, and certification and so on. In there the Barbados Vocational Training Board has a role, as indeed do all of our training institutions, especially our post-secondary training institutions. Madam President, for example, one of the things in the Human Resource Development Strategy is an improved internationally recognised National Qualifications framework that would ensure better access and reentry into the education and training system; and competency-based education and training to ensure that the skills that are acquired are relevant with the needs of the workforce.

Madam President, one of the things I realised when I took responsibility for the Ministry of Labour and then for the Human Resource Development Strategy is that our employers often complain that people come out of the institutions saying that they have skills but when you put them in the workplace the skills do not match up with their needs, so that we have been trying to have that conversation with employers to find out exactly what skills they need, so that we can train them to industry standards and indeed to have the opportunity for our students to go into the workplace and even do an apprenticeship program or some sort of rotation through industry so that when they come out properly certified, because we are certifying those workers to standards...

Madam President, it is not just a piece of paper you would get saying that you have completed a course but we have actually developed occupational standards for a number of the training programmes in collaboration with the TVET Council, so that persons who have received a certificate... We are actually trying to give National Vocational Qualifications and Caribbean Vocational Qualifications that are recognised by employers locally, as well as externally, certainly across the region.

The Barbados Vocational Training Board also does City and Guilds certification in some areas as well, a certification that is recognised. We are now in discussion

with our Canadian counterparts to arrange for 'Red Seal' certification because in Canada the certification that they do recognise, while they do know city and Guilds qualification, they use a 'Red Seal' certificate. We are now comparing their syllabus with ours, their standards with ours, so that we can have workers certified with the 'Red Seal'.

Madam President, I may have said it before in this Honourable Chamber, but why that is important is that many of you may be aware that the Canadian Government has changed the criteria for the Farm Labour Programme where our labourers go to Canada to work on farms, which is going to be 50 years old next year for Barbados, while it is 50 years old this year for Jamaica. We also had a programme called the low-skilled programme, an unfortunate nomenclature which suggested that these persons did not have significant skills but indeed they took persons from our Hospitality Institute and other institutions who went to work in hotels, restaurants and fast-food chains.

Madam President, the requirement of the Canadian Government has changed though we have been lobbying to try to get them to open it up again but they are saying because of their unemployment situation in Canada they are making it extremely difficult for us to get in, employers would have to pay a lot of money for each application. At one point we were talking about \$1 000 Canadian which is quite prohibitive, it is a nonrefundable application fee and so you would be asking an employer to put up \$1 000 to apply for a worker from Barbados to come but you may or may not be successful with the application. Essentially what we have seen is a shutdown of the low-skills programme because employers do not have that kind of money to put up, the idea of course is to encourage employers to hire locally.

Madam President, what they have said to us is that we have good training institutions, why not put more emphasis on the high-skilled programme. At this time they have no such limitation on the high-skills programme in Canada. Ma'am, that means that persons who are welders, carpenters, masons, mechanics, et cetera, who are certified can qualify as skilled persons, they can then find access to work there. Of course, the Ministry of Labour is responsible, among other things, for ensuring that our workers find work, whether locally or overseas and that we train our workers to be able to have access to that work.

5.33 p.m.

As such, the Vocational Training Board not only comes under our purview but works in tandem with us in delivering that kind of training. The Barbados Vocational Training Board is also responsible for delivering some of the training under the Retraining Fund. You may remember

that \$10 million of the National Insurance money has been allocated to a retraining fund for persons, who are unemployed and who would qualify for unemployment benefit, to be reskilled or retooled. One of the training agencies in that programme is the Vocational Training Board, so in addition to their usual catchment, they are now working with the Retraining Fund. As I said, they are working under the Human Resource Development Strategy. They are also working under the Skills for the Future programme, which is an Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) project through the Ministry of Education. It is known as the “A Ganar” programme. Students are, again, learning a number of disciplines but they are also acquiring skills, and one of the training institutions in this “A Ganar” programme under Skills for the Future is the Barbados Vocational Training Board.

Madam President, we are therefore doing NVQs (National Vocational Qualifications), CVQs (Caribbean Vocational Qualifications) and City & Guilds, and we are in discussions with Canada for the Red Seal certification. They are also working on the Retraining Fund, the Human Resource Development Strategy, the Skills for the Future programme, and then I mentioned a national qualifications framework which we have just launched. The national qualifications framework goes hand-in-hand with our accreditation and certification, and what our framework does -- I know I mentioned it in here before, Madam President -- is align or parallel the vocational skills with the academic qualifications. It means that a person who has prior learning and experience can be certified to whatever level is appropriate, and then with that certification, find themselves somewhere on the framework and find entry into academia because their vocational certification will count for something. For instance, someone who may have been working for 20 years in industry would not find themselves at the bottom of the rung academically. Their qualifications and experience can count for something once properly certified.

Madam President, we are moving to certify. We have done scores of certifications, the criteria for certification, through the TVET (Technical and Vocational Education and Training) Council, and I mentioned prior learning and recognition as well as having centres set up, so that persons who have these skills can come and be assessed and get a certificate. All of this is happening at the Barbados Vocational Training Board. Of course, the Barbados Vocational Training Board is a participant in the World Skills Barbados competition. This is our first local World Skills competition. We have competed in World Skills Americas, and the Barbados Vocational Training Board has won silver and bronze in, I know for sure, hairdressing, and one other category. The successful Barbados Vocational Training Board entrants went onto the World Skills Americas and medalled there. It is telling us that the work we are doing and the training we are giving

can be compared to anything that is being given across the Americas, and it stands up and compares favourably.

It is important that we applaud that because we tend to speak of the Barbados Vocational Training Board as skills training, which is the name we use for it, and some folks essentially think of it as a dump, where you put students who are not accomplishing anything else. Some people think you just push students over there and see what becomes of them, but our Vocational Training Board has taken on a massive mandate in ensuring the employability of our students, our young people in particular. Mind you, there are evening classes which take on all ages of persons, so it is not only for the young people. They have a day programme, an evening programme, an in-plant programme where they train persons who are already in industry, and then they have an apprenticeship programme where the students they train can be attached to industry as well but can still return and do some classroom sessions.

It is a lot which they have going on there, and as I said, they are validated through the World Skills competition. We are seeing that they measure up certainly in what they are doing in cosmetology and hairdressing. I mention it here because this year, the local World Skills competition is going to be part of the BMEX event next weekend; so when you go to BMEX, you will be seeing all of our local exhibitors but you will also be seeing our students, some of whom, as I said, are from the Vocational Training Board, but I know the Polytechnic and Community College will also be a part of that. The skills of auto body repair, cosmetology, hairdressing and so on are in there, so look out for our students who will be competing live. You will see this competition unfolding at BMEX, and it promises to be very exciting.

Of course, we are linking technical and vocational education to opportunities not only for employment, but to opportunities for entrepreneurship. We all know our unemployment is now in double digits, and we want to see that come down, but we know that our market is not yet ready to absorb enough people for us to see any significant dent in the unemployment figures. Therefore, we are saying that one of the avenues, a significant avenue, for unemployed persons and under-employed persons has to be entrepreneurship. What the Barbados Vocational Training Board is doing in technical and vocational education and training is ensuring that our young persons, especially, are not only skilled to get jobs but to create opportunities for themselves. We see it happening in cosmetology, hairdressing and a number of areas, and that is another reason why, through the Human Resource Development Strategy, we are putting emphasis as well on building capacity within that organisation. They are not only delivering some of the Human Resource Development Strategy's objectives, but they are also receiving institutional strengthening through that programme.

We have also produced in the Ministry of Labour our National Employment Policy. I am not sure if it was ever made a Document of the House, but we do have a Barbados National Employment Policy, and it has several pillars, one of which is enhancing our labour supply. It speaks to promoting the image of technical and vocational education and training. As I said, we can no longer afford to think of technical and vocational education and training as just something you do if you cannot do anything else. To improve the image, the Barbados Vocational Training Board is in a process of rebranding and increasing the provision and quality of technical and vocational education, thereby linking more with employers so that we know that what we are producing is what industry wants. There is also the certification which I referred to already.

The Barbados Vocational Training Board's 2014-2015 evening programme, for example, trained 1 474 people in agriculture, apparel, automotive repair, arts and craft, beauty and care, care of the elderly, heavy equipment operation, hospitality, information technology and metal trades. They were trained in the evening programme for one year, and in the day programme 560 students were trained, again in those same disciplines. We are therefore seeing more than 2 000 students coming through the Barbados Vocational Training Board, and they are then able to go on to make a way for themselves. They do have some challenges, one of which is that the Barbados Vocational Training Board now operates from seven facilities across Barbados, including Six Roads in St. Philip, All Saints in St. Peter, and Hothersal in St. John which has its own challenges with water and the bus route. There are many challenges. Madam President, the other thing is that none of the facilities were purpose-built for delivering this training. They are all old schools, essentially, and All Saints' and St. Luke's, for instance, are old schools that have been retrofitted. They want to get a campus that would allow them to deliver training more efficiently and effectively, so they are looking for 30 acres of land. That is one thing which we are doing right now, especially for agricultural programmes, we need some land to roll out our agricultural programme and we want to have a ship board simulator as well. They are opportunities on cruise ships and other ships but there is a need for us to have this preliminary training using the ship board simulator and that requires a piece of land as well, so that is in there in terms of what we are doing.

Madam President, I think I mentioned it just now but we are planning to do some rebranding as well, more than likely this year because we have to change the image and part of that is changing the name. It is in psyche, you change the name and in time, you change the image because we really do need to reposition technical vocational education and training and what the Barbados Vocational Training Board is doing. Madam President, that

is in a nutshell where the Barbados Vocational Training Board is.

Madam President, one other thing I want to mention. I have mentioned that they have their hands in a number of projects that are all significant to where we see our employment and our economy going and we develop new industries, the idea is that we can have the discussion with employers, so as we are looking for example, at renewal energy, the Barbados Vocational Training Board is developing programme in the photovoltaic industry and other renewal energy areas. Madam, offshore drilling, again, we want to have that discussion. We have already made the movements to have those discussions so that we can have persons trained because those opportunities should present employment opportunities as well. We do not want to see the rigs out there and persons from around the world getting jobs and a Barbadian is qualified to be able to take up a job in those fields or related areas, so we are having that discussion so that we can train for those jobs not only which exist now but those jobs that are on the horizon. Madam, in that regard, one of things we are doing is speaking to those employers and we are speaking to trade and foreign direct investment and so on, those agencies responsible for that, so we can have our fingers on what is coming up, so that we would know.

Madam President, I have mentioned renewal energy but we are looking at other green jobs and this becomes an issue for the Barbados Vocational Training Board. Indeed, we are looking at all our post secondary training institutions because as our economy goes green, and you see before you that we have our green economy scoping study as well and as our economy goes green, we expect some of our jobs and our economic activities will go green, so would be changing the way things are done, some things will no longer be done and new things will take its place and somethings like machinery and plant will change and you would need people to be able to operate in those areas, so these are other discussions that we are having. The ILO has been encouraging that we have those discussions and stay ahead of the game, so that where you expect to see movement in the green economy that you start to train people that they are familiar with these technologies and that we do not just have to put people out to pasture because they do not know this new equipment but that we would be able to offer them training.

Madam President, very quickly I want to say what the Barbados Vocational Training Board is and what it is doing right now and if I had the opportunity we could talk for much longer because we all know that unemployment is a challenge and we do have to create opportunities for employment and to improve the employability of our young people. Madam, we have a good secondary school system and we have a great university but there are a lot of students who do not go that route and need proper technical

and vocational education and training, not just proper but relevant to what is happening and so that they can find jobs and that they have the skills that industry needs and that is very important.

Madam President, as for the land itself, I did mention that the idea is that we take this quarter acre of land, which will be a carpark by day and we will have recreational facilities after hours. Madam, this land is at Upper Brighton by the St. Luke's Girls School but in this area, as I have mentioned, there are not recreational facilities. The catchment area here is Upper Brighton, Melverton, Frenches, Mount Tenantry and there is a new area the Meadows there as well and just directly across the street from there, the Government has acquired land through the Ministry of Housing for five dollar square foot lot, so we expect that at some time soon, we will be seeing more houses, more people in the area and more recreational facilities, so it is very important that we produce recreational facilities.

Madam President, our young people may have to walk down by St. Luke's Church to play on a very bumpy pasture when there is not a funeral because that is also the parking lot for St. Luke's Church, to be able to run around and kick a ball, but there are no other recreational facilities. Madam, this is a process that started back in 2010, when we actually opened the renovated St. Luke's Centre and when I became the Minister of Labour, at that time too I was the Member of Parliament for the area, so we started this process back in 2010. It has taken us six years but we are here and hopefully very soon, we will be able then to start our programmes on our new facility.

Madam President, the St. Luke's Centre as I mentioned has a large catchment area with no other community facilities as well, not just sporting outdoor facilities but there had no other indoor facilities as well, so since that centre has been opened, we see churches meet in there and it is a polling station for GB2 polling district. Madam, you also have political meetings, branch meetings and all kinds of socials also happen in that facility, so it is a much needed addition to the area. Madam, I could just bring it home for a little bit, if I may, Madam President. The truth is that St. George South as a constituency is growing very rapidly across the 10 000 mark and it is probably about the third largest constituency in Barbados. In fact, anybody who has been out of Barbados for 10 years, coming back into St. George would not recognise a lot of the communities in there and where there were canes and so on, in the last decade alone, we have Glen Acres, what was a cane ground from where I got cane. I did not actually break the cane but I used to lime with a lot of fellows so I did not actually had to break the cane. In fact, I did not even have to peel the cane myself. I was pampered, the cane was peeled and everything for me. Madam, I also remember running behind tractors and pulling out cane too

because I grew up in the Farm Road. Madam, that was long time ago and back then the tractor driver when he saw you would slow down so that you get a choice piece of cane. Madam, it was not only just me, I used to hang out with about 10 fellows and I was the only girl.

Madam President, I digress. In the last 10 years, Glen Acres is one area that has come up, Buckeley Meadows, Buckeley Heights, Rolling Hills, Orange Estates, the Farm and the Government has put houses in Greens. There are now 90 something houses going up in Glen Acres, so a whole lot of new developments have gone up in just the last 10 years but we have not seen alongside that is community facilities and recreational facilities. Madam, indeed, on CLICO land in Todds, the added a couple of dozen houses in Todds and then the Government acquired two pieces of land to put Government housing at which point as the Member of Parliament then I had to say, hold on, if you do that, you are taking up all the land where folks have been playing for decades, so what is going to happen. We then had to go back to Parliament and take out one of the pieces that was acquired for housing and change the designation for recreational facilities and then we were able to use that piece of land and we then had the private sector prepared it for a football field. Madam, that is another issue I would mention shortly.

Madam President, we have put the facility in Greens. Madam, Greens was acquired for sporting facilities many years ago but anybody in St. George South would tell you that at every election time, a bobcat or backhoe used to come and park on the land. They would move about a square foot of dirt and after elections, it would be moved. Anybody in here from Greens, and I know there are persons in this very room from Greens, would tell you that I am speaking the truth, that the backhoe was there just before the elections and right after the elections they removed it and nothing was ever built.

Fortunately, when we came to office in 2008, I was the Minister of Sports at the time and it was not, of course, on any agenda to be done but we put that and Gall Hill on the agenda so those two were done together, the Greens and Gall Hill facilities. We have that and that has been hugely successful in pulling communities like Drax Hall/Hope, Todds, Woodland, Prerogative, Harmony Cottage, Greens and all of these areas all come together now to have cricket and football matches, fetes after hours and all kinds of activities. This has really brought the community together so I encourage more of this kind of thing. In fact, I believe that where land is approved for housing indeed it should not be done unless there is some allocation for recreation as well. A lot of these facilities that we have seen in St. George, we have had the upper end housing, but a lot of them are starter homes. You have young couples coming in with children but then there are not facilities for the children to run around and to play.

As I have said, we have also done Todds but the challenge there is that when Government puts the facility in the community needs to be able to take it up and do things with it. The field is still there at Todds, but the community, the persons who are to drive that activity are no longer able to drive that activity so we are not seeing it. What I would also want to encourage at this time is more community participation. All of us have now gotten so involved in our individual professional pursuits but we do not have time to give back to the community, we do not have time to go outside and get to meet our neighbours, we do not have time to attend or even to arrange fun days and gatherings in our little communities even the gated communities, we do not have those kinds of interaction anymore so we do not recognise each other, we do not know each other and we do not have these opportunities anymore because everybody is so busy in their own little world trying to get their thing done and that is no way to build a society.

As we are at 50 years, we are looking at things that made Barbados successful and trying to identify what are some of the things that we have but lost along the way. I think that is one of the things we lost along the way that community involvement and engagement where we were or brother's keepers, where we knew what was going on next door, where we got involved and our children played together, those are things that we need to get back too. Government can provide the facilities but the community then needs to be able to take them up and to run with them. Because of that we are seeing our PTAs falling, certainly in St. George, the smaller, rural schools lack the PTA involvement, that parent involvement. I know of sports clubs that have been in existence for 10/20 years but in recent years have not been able to field a team at BCA or BCL because people are not as engaged and they are not as interested in these kinds of pursuits and so the community suffers. When a community cricket team cannot come together during the cricket season on Saturdays, that effects the community especially the BCL type cricket at the community level that binds our communities together and those kinds of activities we need to continue, but those are things that Government cannot really go in and do, individuals need to recommit to doing those things.

I have seen in St. George that our churches are getting people up and involved in activities. Recently, St. Luke's Church recently starting a programme of a walk once a month and I am out there with them. The Ellerton Wesleyan Holiness Church is doing one, DH4 in Drax Hall are always having some sort of activity and kudos to them, but we need to see more of this type of activity happening. As I make that point, Madam President, it allows me to make a very serious point which may be unrelated but this I believe provide a sedge way that of childhood obesity. Our children are not running around. Outside may not be a safe place. I think it is relevant because if you look at what is happening with childhood obesity ... The figures I saw

recently suggested that there are 32 per cent of our children who are overweight and another 14 per cent are obese that is 46 per cent nearly half of our children are overweight. That does not augur well for their long-term health, it does not augur well for our chronic non-communicable diseases statistics and treatment and our ability to provide care for our healthcare bill, the effect that would have on our GD P. We are seeing now that it is a challenge for some organisations to get medical insurance coverage, we are seeing it happening with BARP and the NUPW. Medical insurance coverage is difficult to come by and if the statistics for our chronic non-communicable diseases gets higher we are going to have a challenge in providing the healthcare for persons and it has to begin with our children and taking care of our children. None of us would allow our children near a bottle of bleach or near grand mom's medicine because we know those are dangerous but we would give a children coke to drink morning, noon and night and then chase it with corn curls and then you go to fast foods. We are poisoning our children and then we do not provide the facilities and we do not have the kinds of neighbourhoods that our children could be outside running around. Because you are not outside to look over them and they cannot be outside running around. Again that is because each of us has become disconnected so our communities are not safe places for the children to just run outside, play and carry their bicycles or their scooters or whatever is age appropriate for them to be outside getting that physical activity. We have to do something about the activity and about community participation and we have to get our children active again. We have to remove the sugar, the fats and the fast foods from their diet which as I said are toxics for our children. We do not let them near toxic chemicals but we expose them, some of them every day, to snacks, sweets, corn curls, and fast food. Every single day we are killing our children. Our children have a basic right to be protected, to be raised in an environment which will do them no harm. We talk about child abuse, we talk about molestation of children, we do not want to see physical and sexual abuse to our children but we are allowing their bodies to be abused by the very things that we have even in our own homes.

Madam President, thank you for allowing me a little leeway but I am talking about recreation and the value of recreation to our communities, our social lives and the health of our communities and ultimately the health of our nation, I had to use this opportunity to speak to the health of our children as well and to encourage their exercise. As I said the facilities are put down. I am glad to see how we could use the Boardwalk, for example. That Boardwalk was put down and now anything of day you can see people walking you can see people getting exercise on the Boardwalk but when you do it in our communities as well we need our folks to get involved.

Madam President, I thank you for the opportunity then to bring this Resolution for debate. As I said, it came through my ministry and to make the points that we have to rebrand our Vocational Training Board, it has been repositioned because it is central to the employability of our people and to the employment and the opportunities for entrepreneurship, all of the things we are talking about. It is not just Barbados, worldwide, as folks grapple with unemployment because it is not just a Barbadian phenomenon. I know sometimes we would want to think that it is only here and it is only under the Democratic Labour Party that we have unemployment but this is a global phenomenon and indeed they speak to youth employment. You can average that when you look at gross national employment figures you multiply that figure by 2.5 or 3 and you have the youth unemployment. In a country that has unemployment figures of 10 per cent you could estimate that youth unemployment is figure is between 25 and 30 per cent and a lot of countries have unemployment around there. Our unemployment is just under 12 so you know where we are looking at in terms of youth unemployment. What the Barbados Vocational Training Board is doing in providing skills especially to our people so that they can be employable.

5.48 p.m.

I am talking to employers so that the employers will embrace them. I will call here again, I know I made it from here before, to employers too... We have lost some of our employers in our apprenticeship programme, and I am calling the employers because it is an important part of our training of our young people. As employers if you want quality workers when they come out of our institutions, we are asking you to do two things for us: Talk to us and let us know what you need and then work with us so that these persons have opportunities for apprenticeship.

I know that under the Ministry of Education there is a programme under the Ministry of Youth called "Endless Possibilities" and other programmes that are seeking to position these persons in industry so that they can have this experience, so when you see Vocational Training Board I want you to rethink how you look at them and what they are doing. With our national qualifications framework lining up technical and vocational education alongside academia, they have taken on even greater significance. In the personal development of individuals, you can chart your career path. Even where you start with vocational training, you can start a career path all the way up to Degrees and Masters on that framework, so it has taken on increase significance.

The Ministry of Labour, Social Security and Human Resource Development and I as Minister are committed to supporting them and to working with them through the challenges that they face. As I said we are trying to find

land for them and some of the other issues and to helping them to be able to deliver on their mandate.

I want again to encourage the use of the Government's investments in community facilities. When you look across the Caribbean and other parts of the world we can safely say that Barbados per capita and Barbados per square mile have actually more recreational facilities and sporting facilities than any other country in the Caribbean because Government has invested. If you look across Barbados you can see a number of playing fields, hardcourts, play parks and those things. I even put a playpark in Ellerton when I was Member of Parliament for there, so we invested a lot in recreational facilities. Madam President, while I am still on my feet I need to encourage Barbadians to use the recreational facility for their health and for building stronger communities as they engage in those more pleasurable pursuits and of course as we prevent childhood obesity. We have to prevent childhood obesity as if the children's lives depend on it because in truth and in fact they actually do. Some of the parents are obese as well, and again it probably speaks to lifestyles and to what they are eating because very often if the children are eating fast food and sweet drinks, the parents are probably eating the same. The parents are not outside getting physical exercise so the children are not out there with them and I want to encourage parents to get outside and take a walk and take the children with you or go outside with a frisbee or a ball or something or with a dog and run around and get some activity. All it takes is 30 minutes a day. We cannot be so engaged in our personal pursuits that we cannot find 30 minutes a day.

Madam President, I actually have ten minutes left but I am going to wind up now. Madam President, with those words I want to move again this Resolution to acquire this land so that St. Luke's facility can have their car park, it can allow them to do some outdoor activities, their autobody and so on, they can actually be able to move some of those things outside for them to be able to put a canteen outside as well because they do not have canteen facilities but a hardcourt, a paved area, would allow them to be able to put a canteen there as well, and so as we do that for St. Luke's Training Centre also to be able to provide that massive community with the recreational facilities that it so sorely needs.

Madam President, I am obliged.

MADAM PRESIDENT: Senator Abrahams, you have the Floor.

Senator W. A. ABRAHAMS: Madam President, it is not often that I agree with everything that somebody has said particularly Senator Byer.

Asides.

Senator W. A. ABRAHAMS: Madam President, I rise to make my contribution to the Resolution to acquire the land for the purposes stated. Madam President, I listened with interest to the passion that the Honourable Senator displayed in presenting her arguments as to why the Resolution should go forward and I must say that I am in complete agreement. To be honest as the Honourable Senate ran down her last 20 minutes and I looked at her going through each of the things I wish to speak about I thought we are really on the same page. Madam President, for once there is no buts on the end of this.

Madam President, we as a country and we as a people need to have an imaginationship in how we perceive things like vocational training. For a long time vocational training or skills training was viewed as the backup profession, the backup stream. When you cannot reach it in academia you drift into skills training. It was not helped when in many instances in courts when young men found themselves in the court system having been found guilty of minor infractions that part of the sentence to earn your probation was that you had to go to skills training so skills training was even seen somewhat as a punishment by a lot of young people, so a resentment was had where the entire concept of skills training was tendered. For a parent to say their child was in skills training, people automatically assumed the child had done something wrong, that the child was sent there by the court, but this is not how it should be.

When I was at school some years ago along with our academic curriculum it was mandatory for every student, boys and girls... Well Harrison College had no Home Economics Room so everybody had to do woodwork and metal work. You did woodwork for half of the year and metal work for the other half of the year. I remember spending an entire half of year making a jewellery box which to me at the time was the best piece of carpentry ever, and my mother still have that jewellery box. I remember spending the other half of the year making a coat rack that was no bigger than this out of metal but it taught me how to use a drill, how to measure and how to appreciate doing something for myself. Madam President, even in our established school curriculum there is the recognition that it cannot simply be about the mental element it also has to be about the acquisition of some form of technical skills.

Madam President, a couple years ago I spoke to a lawyer I know who got a First Class Degree in England and she told me that she had just finished doing a plumbing course at the local vocational training in London and her theory was she had a slight plumbing issue with her flat and the amount that the plumber charged her to fix it she said never again so she would learn some form of basic plumbing. Two or three years ago my mother-in-law decided she was taking up tiling and she went and did a

tiling course and she tiled her own bathroom and I was quite surprised at how it looked. Madam President, the fact is that it need not even be a profession but all of us should do whatever we can to earn some degree of self-sufficiency. It is an assets to be able to do small things around your house for yourself. I now know how to do basic fixing on a toilet.

5.58 p.m.

How many people hire a plumber only to change a washer when that is perhaps the simplest thing possible, once it is explained? Everything is a mystery and everything is a difficulty until you know how it is done, so that even our Vocational Training Programme should be expanded slightly not just to provide a year-long or a certificate-long course but also there could be a one or two Saturday basic course in plumbing, in tiling, in gardening and in a lot of other basic areas.

Madam President, a friend of mine gave me two sour-sop plants and I am ashamed to tell you that one of them died, that one fell at the hands of the dog. When my friend asked me about the other one I told him it is not doing too well, that I am watering it all the time. My friend lambasted me because I did not put fertilizer to it. I went, made some arrangements and got the fertilizer and now the plant is thriving.

Madam President, I was happy to be able to tell my friend today across the Table that our plant is doing well. Madam President, the point is that there are lots of simple things that people do not even both to try because they assume it would be difficult to try; Ma'am, it is not that difficult to have a home garden; it is not that difficult to fix a tap; it is not that difficult to fix a basic machine part. A lot of things repeat themselves, people do not know how to use a wrench, so the concept of vocational or technical training should not be looked at with derision or ridicule, it should be looked at as a way of improving your skill set.

Ma'am, for young people coming up, everybody cannot be a doctor or a lawyer, everyone is not the same academically, in every grouping of people, people have different talents and different skills and we as Barbadians need to understand that the focus should not solely be on academics. A child who does not do well academically should not be made to feel less than they are because Picasso the famous painter was not a great academic, Michael Jordan was not the best in school, Sir Gary Sobers was not the best academically, but these people were geniuses in their own rights, they had talents that were then discovered. Madam President, the fact that your child is not getting straight A's should not be cause for you to write off the child because that child might be the next great plumber or the next great footballer.

Madam President, we place too much emphasis on academic achievement in Barbados. The reality is that it is easier for a plumber to find a job in Barbados than for it is for a lawyer. The Barbados Bar Association is 1000-strong and every year we are putting out a minimum of 50 lawyers. A lot of doctors in Barbados are coming out but they cannot find placements even to be able to complete their degree. Ma'am, the fact is that it makes no sense shepherding people in the direction of the saturated professions. If your child is a mediocre student academically and that child is operating at his or her maximum capacity, it makes no sense being frustrated with your child, you should accept that your child will not be an actuary and instead see what it is that your child is good at. Madam President, children often make it known because you would see children starting to build things with blocks, you would see a child drawing all the time, you would see a child who makes fantastic structure with plastic seen or play dough and that child is telling you something, that is how that child's mind is running, we need to pay more attention to our children. As I said, it requires a mind shift, that child who is otherwise gifted than in pure academia should not be made to feel like a failure, there is a place for everyone.

Madam President, I agree as well with what Senator Byer-Suckoo said. I went to St. Giles with the now Marshal of this Honourable Chamber, Wayne Jones. When my mother dropped me to school at about 7:30 on mornings there was a line of boys lining up to play table tennis or road tennis. We had a 15-minute first break and people would find themselves dashing to get to the table tennis board as soon as the bell rang, and again at lunch, and again after school. We probably had two or three fat children at St. Giles, because everybody played a sport. Nobody compelled you to, you were encouraged to get out there and do something constructive.

Madam President, when we drive around now we do not see people playing cricket in the road anymore, there is no cricket in the street. I cannot remember the last time I saw cricket being played on a beach in Barbados. Right now our children go from school, to lessons, to home on the computer, not enjoying a moment of sunshine. We are breeding our children for failure because a child who cannot play a sport does not develop skills that allow them to be in a team. Sports is not just about physical development and physical fitness, being in a team teaches the child lessons that will serve the child for life, it teaches some children how to be leaders, it teaches some how to be followers, it teaches some how to work, it teaches everybody how to compromise.

Madam President, my whole life I have played sports, I have played team sports, I have played individual sports, but what you take from playing sports and participating in extracurricular activities with other people

you learn to socialise, you learn to communicate, you build enduring friendships. One of my best friends in the whole world is somebody called Doctor Allan Smith, a cardiothoracic surgeon. I met Allan when I was seven years old playing table tennis against St. Gabriel's. We met all the time because St. Giles' and St. Gabriel's are the two best table tennis school teams in Barbados so that when Allan and I met again at Harrison College we were not starting from scratch, I kind of knew him. He was also one of the two best men at my wedding. We have had a friendship that is like...

Asides.

Senator W. A. ABRAHAMS: I am blessed with fantastic friendships, I am blessed with having two best men. Madam President, the point of this is that friendships can be forged through interaction, it actually does hurt our communities and societies that we do not have kids playing outside. I also believe that in a land scarce country like Barbados that we have to become creative. It no longer makes sense to have a dedicated parking lot, if you can have a parking lot and you can paint two road tennis courts, a netball court and a basketball court on the same thing, then we would have a multipurpose facility. It just makes sense, if you put it down people are going to find themselves on it. If it was not there before nobody had a reason to hang out. They say build it and people will come. Once you put down a hard court people will find themselves on it, people come from around, people come from other places and teams develop once the facility is there.

Madam President, I firmly support the Bill but even more than that I support the thinking that let us make everything as useful as it can be, let us stop looking at single-purpose facilities and let us start thinking each time when we acquire land what is the maximum use that can be made of this particular piece of land. If we have to do "X", let us look at how we could tweak it so that instead of only getting "X", that we get "Y", "Z" and "Q".

6.16 p.m.

Madam President, as I said, I completely support the initiative and I urge Barbadians to let us not write off as failures children whose talents we have not yet discovered. Let us pay attention to our children. We have a lot of young men on the block, on whom society has given up. When they did not make it in school, if there had been another avenue which they could have gone down or pursued with the respect of their peers, as a legitimate alternative to the CXC or the "A" Levels or the degree, then chances are they may not have been on the block. Let us give every opportunity to our young people to make something of themselves, even if it is not the way that we envision it to be. Barbados needs skilled labour. Barbados needs people

with vocational skills, and also, to be honest, I think if we expanded the vocational training facilities or programmes to include casual certificates in little things like clothes mending, plumbing or tiling, then we may be surprised at how many of the same people who we look up to as having achieved academically would be sitting in those courses with people who we look down on as being failures, Madam President. We would then be all looking across the table or across the programme at each other as equals. Madam President, I am much obliged.

MADAM PRESIDENT: Senator Fraser, you have the Floor.

Senator Professor Sir H.H.S. FRASER: Thank you, Madam President. I only need 60 seconds to make one terribly important point. I share the passion of Senator Byer-Suckoo about vocational training, but it is a no-brainer that vocational training can be carried out onsite in houses that need repair and restoration. This has been practised all over the world. I have read of numerous examples of it being carried out by the Young Men's Christian Associations (YMCA) and other social groups, where you take a building that is in desperate need of repair. It teaches people the skills of masonry, carpentry and woodwork, electrical installation and maintenance, plumbing maintenance, painting, management, communication, teamwork, even accounting. Onsite training. I have made this suggestion to every single Administration since I returned home in 1977. I first made it for a wonderful, old wooden house in the Ivy to Prime Minister Tom Adams. I suppose I should not call names but it was true; I was ignored.

Madam President, I would like to think that the passion of Senator Byer-Suckoo can translate into these dual purposes of training people in the skills that we so desperately need, and at the same time restore some of those decaying houses that so desperately need to be restored and put to good use as recreational centres, community centres, clubhouses and offices, or rented for income to Government in order to achieve even more of the same. Thank you, Madam President. 90 seconds.

MADAM PRESIDENT: Senator Husbands, you have the Floor.

Senator H.A. HUSBANDS: Thank you very much, Madam President. I rise in support of the acquiring of this land for the purposes as outlined in the documents before us. However, before I get into my speech I want to beg your indulgence to offer some congratulations, Madam President. The first one is to the Royal Barbados Police Force Band and to the various singers who appeared on the stage not far away from here, for the salute to the Prime Ministers in celebration of our 50th Anniversary. Most of all, I wish to congratulate the National Youth Symphony

Orchestra which did a fantastic job. If we do not spend some time in our various ways identifying and complimenting these young people for the tremendous work they did, we would not, I think, fully show our appreciation for what they did that evening. Also, Madam President, congratulations to the adults who spent hours training, assisting and bringing the symphony orchestra up to that level. To those people who are not participating for whatever reason in the 50th Anniversary of Independence and think that, by doing that, they are somehow showing some protest to the Government, they are missing, in these performances, tremendous skill and professionalism, even by those who construct the stages and who do the stage management, and so on. The emcee promised that the area would be cleared by morning so that business could be continued in Bridgetown, and by the next morning, amid the usual traffic, Bridgetown was open and ready. There is a tremendous amount of work, and it says something about the Barbadian personality; that special thing that makes us Barbadians which we have to pay tribute to. By not participating in these activities, you are missing an opportunity to see Barbados at its very best.

Madam President, I think we also ought to congratulate the Dean Emeritus. I do not know how Honourable Members could have spoken without congratulating the Dean.

Asides.

Senator Hon. H.A. HUSBANDS: I congratulated him because of his recent marriage. I noticed during the debate of the Appropriation Bill that the Dean had a pep in his step, the colours and style of his clothes had changed, and if you looked at his shoes they were all modern. At lunch, he was taking these little by-the-side calls on his cellphone and smiling, and as malicious as I am, I failed to recognise what was going on. I knew something was going on, and I was on his trail but I just could not pin it down. I want to congratulate him and wish him all the very best. I only hope that he will take Senator Todd under his wing and teach him something so that I may be able to stand here in the not-too-distant future and say the same thing about Senator Todd.

Asides.

Senator H.A. HUSBANDS: I joked today with Senator Lady Haynes to say that I expect that she is going to follow the Dean pretty quickly, and she ran away. However, to connect this issue of the National Youth Orchestra to what we are discussing about the Barbados Vocational Training Board, and to bring what Senator Byer-Suckoo alluded to, what the Ministry of Education and I have said here repeatedly; sometimes we say these things and have to repeat them.

6.18 p.m.

Madam, as much as you repeat them, you go on the street, or you see in the newspaper or you see someone on television saying that nothing is going on for the youth and that nothing is going on in education and so on. I constantly have to say that across the education spectrum whether at the Barbados Vocational Training Board, whether at the Barbados Community College or whether at the Samuel Jackman Prescod Polytechnic or whether it is in the schools with the CVCs, that tremendous change is taking place. We have bemoaned the fact that children are leaving school without certification and now we are at a stage of offering certification in a wide range of activities, not only the traditional academic areas or some little vocational areas that were offered when I was at school.

Madam, my point about the National Youth Symphony Orchestra is that last time I spoke in this Floor I said how the TVET Council is now writing the standard for musical performance and that these young people are prime candidates for certification. Madam, their teachers did not start out from the position that they were going to get a certificate out of this and so on and so forth but once a skill is known and a standard to be written, we have the expertise here in Barbados to do that, and there are people doing it every day. Madam, more standards have been written to this date than our ability to transfer those standards into activities in the schools. Madam, it is going on not only in the school but in a number of training institutions, where the Government is borrowing a tremendous amount of money from the European Union and various agencies, the Skills for the Future Programme and so on and so forth, the CBTF has been distributing tremendous amounts of money. Madam, one evening I noticed ssb at a ceremony handing out cheques to the tune of \$3 million to various training institutions to train people at the workplace. Madam, up to 3 000 people are being trained at the workplace and certified with a Caribbean Vocational Qualification in their activity and I had the pleasure of participating in the graduation of some of these people. Madam, there were little old ladies and little old men that clearly left school without any certification or qualification whatsoever were now being certified and the pride on the faces of these people I do not have the words to describe them to you.

Madam President, there is a tremendous amount of work being done by the Barbados Vocational Training Board by the TVET Council by the CBTF in the schools with the vocational qualifications. Madam, I look forward to seeing this summer again, a programme where a number of students from the secondary schools with an interest in agriculture do an intensive summer programme which leads to a qualification in amenities, horticulture or crop production. I was very pleased to participate in the programme last August and they even brought students

from Antigua and this year that programme is going to be extended. I have said on this Floor of the Chamber already that some of these young people had not left school yet, then they went back to school this year but they already jobs set aside for them and people were attempting them to lure them away from school to come and work, so there is a tremendous amount of work being done in this area.

Madam President, not only in the area of skills but there are tremendous challenges facing our youth. The Minister of Labour mentioned the Aganar Programme. I was party to a tremendous report presented on the activities of the Aganar Programme, where we have attempted to train using sporting activity and the organisational principles of sport to train what is nowadays referred to as at risk youth in the schools. They first began with a lot of challenges and a lot of young people dropped out after a while but as the programme developed, they are now reporting tremendous success in that area influencing these young people and their parents to participate in the programme and become certified and qualified in some skill area in connection with the CVQs and so on that are taking place.

Madam President, the Ministry also has its School Positive Behavioural Management Programme. Again, this is ran by a Committee of stakeholders including parents, the teachers unions and so on and so forth where in many of the schools particularly at the primary level we have started again to emphasise positive behaviours. Madam, these are things that are running. The Ministry has set up the New Horizons Academy. I have read in the newspaper people saying that there is a need for an institution to take children with problems out of the school system but New Horizons Academy has been set up almost two years. The opening was covered in the newspapers but still every day you read in the newspaper people saying that this needs to be done but, Madam, it has been done already. Madam, it has been the policy of the Ministry to keep those activities and keep that school out of the public glare as much as possible but maybe we have to rethink that now for public relations purposes. Madam, we do not want people, as people are wont to do, to point at the school and say it is the school where those children go, or to point to a child in a particular uniform and say that the child goes to the school where the bad behave children go, so we have pursued a deliberate policy of keeping the activities of the school out of the public domain.

Madam President, at the school the staff has been specially selected, persons with special skills. There are on hand community workers, social workers, psychologists and so on available and many students have passed through that institution and have returned to the school.

Asides.

Senator Hon. H.A. HUSBANDS: Yes, New Horizons Academy and the traditional activity of the Barbados Youth Service continues. They had some housing problems and so on in recent times but, again, I was party to a meeting recently which I think those have been resolves. Madam, there are several activities and there are several opportunities. I keep saying that with the kind assistance of the Myriah Holder Trust Fund, we have been able to put a number of social workers in the primary schools. I keep hearing people say we need to do that but we have done that. They are not in every school but we would like to be able to put them in every school but we have not yet been able to reach that point. Madam President, there is, in my view, an expanded notion now connecting of institution -- the Barbados Vocational Training Board. Madam, I had the pleasure late last year of travelling to work early one morning to hear one of the local radio stations, one of the morning DJ's talking about he had discovered during the week The tremendous work and the number of courses that the Barbados Vocational Training Board offered. He was listing them and saying over the radio to those people driving like myself that he did not know that there was an institution in Barbados offering this and offering that and he his position was that all of these boys sitting on the block, if they really wanted something to do they were offering so many courses that you must be able to find something to do. I think we are experiencing a broadening of the educational and training realm in Barbados the organisations are working closer together with the education and training of the TVET Council writing standards, the training institutions in the private sector have not been left out because many of them are getting financed from the CBTF in order to provide these training activities for people. If people do not know or if they have not heard it is our fault but the opportunities are there in the private sector and in the public sector. There are several private Barbados Vocational Training Boards providing training in a variety of activities with funds provided through the Skills for the Future Programme and the CBTF.

Madam President, I want with your indulgence to say a little about some of the current challenges in education. My background is, I say I am a primary school teacher, but I have some training and experience in industrial relations. I was the President and the General Secretary of the Barbados Union of Teachers, I was president of the Caribbean Union of Teachers, I was a Vice president of the Caribbean Employers Confederation, I was the Executive Director of the Barbados Employers Confederation, my advance degree is in Labour and Industrial Relations so if there are issues at some of these teachers unions and a lack of understanding of industrial relations I have to honestly accept part of the blame. I have seen these things going on, I have read the newspapers, I have seen teachers, but somebody is still to explain to me, articulate for me, what is the dispute? As far as I am

concerned, using my considerable experience, tell me what is the dispute?

The Barbados Union of Teachers and the Barbados Secondary Teachers Union in the last two months we, in the Ministry of Education, have met with them on more occasions than at any other time I was there. We met with the Barbados Union of Teachers about a month ago with an agenda that was three or four hours long. We discussed everything in the teaching profession. There were no issues, no disputes and no confrontation. They had some grievances on the list, I do not deal with grievances, the Minister does not deal with grievances, and they were supposed to get back to the people in the ministry who deal with individuals.

Shortly after that meeting at the beginning of the school term I met with both Teachers Unions to brief them on all that has been done at the schools with environmental issues and notice the President of the Barbados Secondary Teachers Union said that the schools were ready for work. That was as a result of the meeting that we had and the President of the BUT did the same. We have met with the Barbados Secondary Teachers Union on the issue of SBAs and we have also met with them on what other issues they have, all this has occurred in the last two months. There was never a dispute or contention.

Two weeks ago the Barbados Union of Teachers met with the Chief Education Officer to discuss the situation at ELLERSLIE Secondary School and they discussed the claim that a teacher at a primary school beat up an eight-year old boy. Those matters were settled as much as they could be settled at the level of the Ministry because the parents were involved in some and the police were involved in some. There was never any contention. The day after that meeting, the Barbados Union of Teachers announces that it was holding a meeting during school time. That was a little weird but as a result of that meeting a Friday, the Union delivers a letter to the Ministry on Monday which essentially says that if the Minister of Education does not meet with us by Wednesday, when I say us I mean all 2 500 teachers, we are going to go on strike Friday.

Madam President, in all fairness that is an offer that you got to refuse, you cannot agree to an offer like that. You deliver a letter a Monday demanding a meeting by Wednesday and saying that if you do not get a meeting with 2 500 teachers, you are going to go on strike the Friday. That is an offer on a condition that anybody who is worth their salt have to say well, do what you have to do. Since then this craziness has continued. As far as the Ministry of Education is concerned, there is no dispute between the Barbados Union of Teachers and the Ministry. I read in the newspaper that the President of the Barbados Secondary Teachers Union (BSTU) who spent May Day in Havana celebrating with the Cuban workers on her way to

catch the flight to celebrate May Day with the Cuban workers said that her members were not supporting that because she did not know what it was about. That is the situation we have. If I tell you that I spent a number of years as the President and the General Secretary of the Barbados Union of Teachers (BUT) it means that I did not plan succession properly that I probably did not assist in the training but there is one other thing. This thing about violence in schools, you know again I saw the President of the BST in the newspaper talking about violence in schools and how bad it is and the ministry.

Having been the President of the Caribbean Union of Teachers, I am shocked that in 2016 teachers' unions in Barbados are supportive of corporal punishment. I would expect that it would be the other way around, that the ministry would be supporting corporal punishment and that the teachers' unions would be against it. Can you imagine that in 2016 the solution to the challenges facing our young people that the teachers' unions are putting on the table is corporal punishment and the abuse of and attacking the multilateral institutions? What next? It sounds good to talk about corporal punishment and the ministry, but the problem with that, that I have always avoided even in my days in that capacity, is that when you do that what you are in effect doing is undermining the same profession that you are alleged to be serving because you are in the schools every day and one of your functions is to deal with discipline and you are telling the public that you are incapable of dealing with discipline, so while you think you are making a profound point, you are actually undermining the profession.

Madam President, I saw one academic talk about the hero teacher and petulant students. We have to face the reality. I was at a secondary school the other day and the Principal explained to me - I have stopped teaching for a while so some of these things... - that a number of students in her school have serious mental problems for which they are medicated and that many days they come to school without their medication. These are the challenges that the teachers have to face. It is not a simple matter of bad-behaved students.

Many of the students in our schools at the primary level are drug babies. I do not want to give the people the impression that the place is being overrun but these are challenges that exist. Their parents were on drugs before they were born and they come into the system with all kinds of challenges.

We have the most trained, the highest qualified and, one could say, the better trained teaching service ever in the history of the country. There is no time in the history of teaching that teachers are as well trained and have as many qualifications. They have more qualifications and more

training than most other people, so when we make these points and we make them publicly...

We have to be careful when we are dealing with issues with children. There are a lot of things that we could say every day about the treatment meted out to children by teachers. When you are dealing with children, the first principle is to avoid the media. I am not blaming the media but you do not want to put issues facing teenagers in the public domain and scar some of these children for the rest of their lives. I gave trouble at school.

Asides.

Senator H. A. HUSBANDS: If I did not had teachers like the Dean and so on who protected me, I would not be in this position that I happened to hold now. When you are dealing with youngsters, they are under age, you do not go into the media with everything and try to show how bad they are and so on and so forth.

I want to end by saying, Madam President, that I see an expanding education and training sector in Barbados that is responding to the needs first of all of the students and of the workplace but in a very dynamic way offering qualifications and certifications of relevance and meaning and taking into account many of the challenges and, as limited as support services that we have, providing support services nevertheless to help these young people confront many of the challenges that they face whether they are at the Barbados Vocational Training Board, in a secondary school, at the Samuel Jackman Prescod Polytechnic or at the Barbados Community College.

Madam President, there is much more if we had the resources that we could do but I am confident that we are on the right track and I give my full support to this Resolution.

I thank you.

MADAM PRESIDENT: Senator Todd, you have the Floor.

Senator the Hon. P. M. T. Todd: Thank you very much, Madam President, I promise to be brief in my contribution to support the passage of this Resolution and to congratulate the Minister of Labour, Social Security and Human Resource Development and her team at the ministry for leading the charge in terms of providing this vocational education through the Barbados Vocational Training Board to Barbadians in general and the youth in particular.

I remember, Madam President, that in the early days the whole genesis of the work of the Skills Training Programme was, as I understand it, to provide modular

training, compact short-term courses, to equip people with skills that in a short period of time as possible but of course effectively to ensure that those persons would be equipped with the skills necessary to gain a job either in the public or private sector or as the Minister mentioned even opening up a small business so that they would not be on the fringes of the society getting involved in negative anti-social behaviour, be it crime, prostitution or drug abuse, but can be fully integrated into mainstream society to earn an honest living to support themselves and their family, thus we had the specific courses, be they in tractor operation, bobcat operation, agricultural science, plumbing, masonry, carpentry, electrical installation and so.

Madam President, within the last few years met the current Head of the Barbados Vocational Training Board, a relatively young man who is very very enthusiastic, I must say and is really ensuring that enthusiasm pervades the entire structure of the Barbados Vocational Training Board. Madam President, I must say kudos to him and his team. I know that they are emphasizing best practices to ensure that the quality of the tutors is satisfactory so that the necessary training is provided so that the students would be provided with the current training in these various skills. As time goes on, there are innovations and new technologies and so it is important to have a cadre of resource persons who are sufficiently qualified so that the graduates of these programmes and properly equipped to meet the requirements of this modern day scenario.

6.48 p.m.

Madam President, I know that the internship programme is very important because oftentimes people would see advertisements in the newspaper or the other media in which apart from academic qualification some other kind of job experience is required, and then many of the persons now entering the job market feel that the system is unfair because of the fact that they would have not had any work experience and therefore would feel that they would be disqualified even from being considered for the job, so that this internship programme is an opportunity to provide those practical on-the-job skills for those persons so that they could indicate on the curriculums vitae that they would have had some, however short, work experience. Madam President, of course, I know that in this arrangement there is no encouragement of youth exploitation, in terms of being underpaid but there is a sort of win-win situation where the employers are able to participate in the training of youth, many of whom once their work ethic is correct, they can oftentimes be retained indeed on a full-time basis or in similar work places.

Ma'am, I remember taking part in the First-Year Associate Degree in Computer Studies at the Barbados Community College. The syllabus was conceptualised by an articulation agreement with the Canadian Community

College where a Faculty member actually came down to Barbados. One aspect of that Two-Year Associate Degree programme in Computer Studies, even to this day is a one-term internship where all students in order to graduate had to successfully go into either Government or private sector, whichever was available, and do on-the-job training. In fact, many of the employers were finding that the skills these students were able to garner made them even more attractive than some graduates of the University of the West Indies who would have just had the academic training but without that work experience. The course was designed in such a way that you had to learn applied subjects, be they psychology, economics, law, data base management, spreadsheet, et cetera. The course involved projects that relate to the realities of the world of work.

Madam President, this Skills Training Programme of the Barbados Vocational Training Board is very relevant and I am very happy to see that in terms of the qualification framework... I was Acting Minister of Labour a few week ago and we saw the assistance of some countries in the developing world, for example, Mauritius, who were able to send resource persons here to engage in a Workshop over a number of days to help us to articulate this National Qualifications framework, involving the Barbados Accreditation Council.

Madam President, what I like about this, as the Minister mentioned, we can then have a seamless transition from the vocational qualification, either the National Vocational Qualification or Caribbean Vocational Qualifications into the equivalence in terms of academia, in terms of Bachelor's or even Post-Graduate qualifications. It reminds me of what we used to call the Ordinary Technician Diploma conducted at the Barbados Community College in building and civil engineering and mechanical and electrical engineering which would be the equivalent of an Associate Degree. Many graduates in this programme then applied for a scholarship by the Government of Cyprus where they went on to do an additional two years in Cyprus where they would get the Higher National Certificate. Ma'am, when you put the two of them together, the Ordinary Technician Diploma, the City and Guilds and the Higher National Certificate in Cyprus that four-year programme would be equivalent to a Bachelor's Degree in Engineering. I think that would ensure that we do not have this stigma attached to vocational training where people think it is only for less academically inclined persons but that we can come up to scratch in terms of the international realities where vocational training can lead into very serious academic training in engineering and other STEM areas, so that people can stand tall with pride following a career path in the vocational areas which as others said can be even more lucrative than the traditional academic subjects.

Madam President, there are carpenters, steel benders, crane operators, bobcat operators, backhoe operators, among others, who make significantly higher amounts of money than a teacher or other persons, including politicians. Madam President, I remember many years ago when the late Right Honourable Prime Minister J.M.G.M. “Tom” Adams had a Cadillac Seville and there was a private citizen who had a similar one, a cousin of mine who lived in New York at the time, his skill was in auto body repair and he was flown into Barbados to fix that Cadillac Seville, because it was a specialised skill and not any and everybody could have touched a Cadillac Seville. Madam President, I am just showing you where these technical skills are very lucrative and unique.

Madam President, I would really congratulate those of the Barbados Vocational Training Board for ensuring that there are very attractive advertisements on the radio and television that outline to Barbadians the various programmes that are being offered. We see that in terms of the Barbados Vocational Training Board, the AGANOR Programme where participants have been interviewed. Therefore I congratulate the Government Information Service for getting out these attractive packages. Ma’am, the feedback from these participants is very positive and that will definitely encourage more Barbadians to buy into this and to take advantage of these opportunities so that as I said, we can really have full participation of the labour force in mainstream society, keeping them away from the fringes and helping them to make a very important contribution to the national development of Barbados.

Madam President, in closing I would again wish to make the point, for example, when I was a student at Harrison College, having come the Lodge School, at both schools we did not have access, for example, to G.C.E. or Caribbean Examination Council in Principles of Business, Agricultural Science or Principles of Account. In fact, when I was in the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, and Innovation I was so happy to be able to visit the opening of the Greenhouse at Harrison College, yet I learned that Agricultural Science was not on the curriculum. Ma’am, I am saying that we have to expose students not just from the newer secondary schools but from the older secondary schools to all of these areas. For example, on the “Bank-On-Me” programme we have a young lady who specialises in fish farming, who is making a decent living from this, so that we should not frown upon Agricultural Science as though it is secondary. We need to ensure that all students, both from the newer and older secondary schools, are able to engage in this vocational training programme.

Madam President, as I understand it, there is some buy-in, to some extent, in terms of the National Vocational Qualification and the Caribbean Vocational Qualifications being offered to students in the older secondary schools as

well and this must be encouraged. Madam President, I would really wish this Barbados Vocational Training Board every success. I remember the leader of that team reporting to a Sub-Committee of the Cabinet of Barbados and indicating that they had travelled to Latin America and were able to acquire some insight in terms of programmes offered. For example, they would have observed that in some of these countries equivalent agencies were able to train students in the manufacturing of low-cost artificial limbs and that is an area which they were looking at. They were also looking at areas of best practice in terms of the production of meat for human consumption. They are very excited, learning from abroad to ensure that in Barbados we are at the cutting edge of the positive trends throughout the world.

Again, I would really support the Minister’s point about the need for recreational facilities throughout our country, and I am very happy to see that the Maria Holder Foundation has been able through philanthropy to provide assistance in this regard in terms of the refurbished community centre at Parkinson. I have visited it and it is really wonderful. You have seating for hundreds looking onto the playing field, and then downstairs you have areas for washrooms, kitchen, training rooms and so on, so that members of the community can be provided with homework classes, and ballroom and line dancing. I am also looking forward to use of the area which housed Harry’s Nitery on Bay Street many years ago. That area now is available. I know there were some land issues, but they are now sorted out, and I look forward to Government and/or private agencies using it. We have talked about the Hyatt Hotel going up close by, and I believe that some of these developers can really show that good faith in terms of giving back to the society and assisting Government in providing similar multi-purpose community centres, which could house shops on the roadside as we have at London Bourne Towers. There are also the stands for the hard courts there, and of course, the necessary facilities for skills training, computer training and so forth. It would ensure that there is greater community participation, and that people would be kept healthy.

Madam President, many of us have our degrees and good jobs and we are driving our air-conditioned cars and getting obese. Some are getting paunches which are bad for one’s health and create stress on the internal organs. The poor, young fellows out there playing on the pasture by the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, at Emmerton or Bay Primary are rocking with their six-packs and looking very attractive to the ladies, while we are looking less attractive with our paunches and “love handles”. Madam President, we therefore should not frown upon people if they decide to walk home from work, but we should see that they are keeping healthy. I know that Professor Hassell spoke to the subcommittee of the Social Partnership, encouraging people to look after their health so that we do not have

obesity among the children, as the Minister mentioned, or indeed the adult population. We should really understand that. For instance, a person may want to get some bread from the minimart 100 metres down the road but that person is too aloof to walk down there; you have to flash your fancy air-conditioned car and therefore you do not get the exercise. I am saying that we have to really see where we are going as a people and do not put pressure on others whom we see walking around, but see that as being healthy. In developed countries such as Britain, we see parliamentarians walking to Parliament or travelling by the subway, and I am saying that we as a people must really understand where we are going and promote healthy lifestyles. We should not think it is beneath us, and end up going to the grave faster than we should because we are not getting the necessary exercise.

I fully support this measure and I congratulate the Minister of Labour and her team for taking vocational education to a higher level, to the extent where we are seeing greater buy-in, Madam President. This is my final point, Madam President: I have learnt that even professionals are being encouraged. They may have their academic qualifications but in anything involving skills such as being doctors, engineers or what have you, they can have a vocational qualification in terms of that practical experience. Again, this bridges the gap between academia and vocational training and certification. I thank you.

MADAM PRESIDENT: Senator Adams, you have the Floor.

Senator A.A. ADAMS: Madam President, I want to thank you for giving me the opportunity to speak on this Resolution. I want to promise, though, that I shall be brief because I may be in danger of going on a bit too long. I want to join the other speakers in congratulating and giving kudos to Minister, Senator Byer-Suckoo, for the way in which she piloted this Resolution this evening. I thought to myself that I perhaps had never seen before so much being made of so little, in the sense that the Resolution is about a quarter of an acre of land, about 11 000 square feet; yet with great aplomb, skill and even erudition, she was able to convince us in a very passionate manner that she was really on the ball. I said to myself as well that she spoke as one in authority and not as the scribes, or as another person would put it, she spoke as an authority in authority. I want to congratulate her for that.

Without going into the details that others went into, I want to say that the Ministry of Labour has a strong reason to work hand-in-hand with the Ministry of Education. I think that was implied but perhaps not said explicitly, in the sense that the Minister of Labour has the know-how to carry out manpower studies, and with the surveys, data and information that come back to her, she would be able to analyse it and work with the Ministry of Education,

perhaps through Senator Husbands, and be able to indicate what the manpower needs of the country are, and to point out that the Ministry should orient the curriculum in our schools, starting from the primary schools, in the areas indicated. This is fundamental because it has to do with the economic development of the country, and while we all agree that we have made pretty good and reasonable economic progress, we have to understand that it was in a different era and that what we did in school that helped us to be where we are now is not the same thing that is needed for the next 50 years for our development. I think that is where we ought to be focusing our efforts in this 50th year of our Independence. For example, we may not remember that the onset of technical education in Barbados does not have a very long history because we have come out of a British academic system, and quite a bit of that baggage is still with us even though we have made some progress.

Madam, in case I might be misunderstood to indicate that there has been a lot of progress that has been made but a lot more needs to be done. The reason why a lot more needs to be done is because we have the tendency to equate ourselves and compare ourselves with CARICOM and the islands around us here and when we do that we find that we are pretty good and we can pat ourselves on the chest and say that we have done really well but in fact, our competitors have outstretched the region and our competitors are now the whole world, the global world and we have to look at where other countries have succeeded, particularly those that have gone ahead of us. There have been some countries who in the 1950s, 1960s and even the 1970s, we were ahead of them and because of the point I was just making about that linkage between education and the world of work and then bringing the types of programmes that are necessary and to start those programmes early in the education into the secondary schools and the post secondary education, not necessarily the tertiary education but areas like apprenticeship which has been mentioned here. Madam, because I have mentioned that just let me say that if we were to look at two European countries and sometimes perhaps even Jamaica where we see that the apprenticeship system has been really fully developed, what we find that where the apprenticeship system has been fully developed there is a better fit between the school leavers and the needs of the country and as a result of that you have less problems with your school leavers. Therefore, notwithstanding the fact that we have other programmes, we need to have a relook at the apprenticeship programme and to begin to set target. Madam, one of the things we may not be doing is that we might be setting programmes and we may not be putting enough emphasis on the time scale and the type of results that we expect in those time scales.

Madam President, I want to say in terms of that point that it is often not so easy to turn around the school in a year or so. Madam, sometimes you hear that a person has

gone to be a principal of the school and, all of a sudden, in the newspapers you hear that he had done all these things in a year. Madam, a school really though is like a battle ship and it takes you three years or so to get things into place. It takes time to put things into place and you have to have a system of evaluation. Madam, that is not very easy but you have to start by putting some monitoring system into operation to ensure that at the end of that time frame you know what progress you are making. Madam, this is something I feel with the programmes the Ministry of Education are involved with along with the Ministry of Labour, is something we ought to do, so that the monitoring and the evaluation are areas that we ought to look at. Madam, those are kinds of broad parameters.

Madam President, I was principal of two schools for some good reason but when I got to the St. Leonard's School and got the teachers together one of the things that we did together was to set out a booklet for the teachers, for the students, for the parents and the community in general with aims and objectives, so that it became like a bible. We also indicated that within a number of years we want to be at a particular position. I am not saying that this worked miracles but what we are saying is that one of the things we agreed on is that students coming into that school in the first form, by the time they reached the fifth form that one of the aims and objectives is that they should be leaving with a marketable skills. Madam, that was something that was not particularly done at the time. I am not saying it was not done at all but we set about to do a number of things and one of the things I want to mention here was to begin to out into the business community and work with them and have discussions with them, so that students from the school be given time off to go and work in the industry. There was scarcely a business person in the area of that school that we did not have a meaningful link with and secondly, we also brought expertise into the school, people that did shoe repair, leather craft and all those sorts of things and we asked the Ministry for support to have those persons come into the school to bring some of those skills into the school. Madam, as a result, I think that we were able to make some steady progress and be able to help with the behavioural problems of the school. Madam President, when I went over to Coleridge and Parry, which was a different type of school, we found we did the same thing.

Madam President, an area I just want to mention since we were dealing with land is the area of agriculture. Madam, although we were talking about a quarter acre of land, what I found in both schools there were pieces of land in the area that were unused and we went to the owners of the land and made provision for the owners to allow the agricultural sector of the school to work the land and this worked beautifully to the extent that it awakened the passion for agriculture in quite a number of students and we saw the results in the fact that one of those same

students is at the very highest pinnacle of the agricultural field in Barbados today. There were also the notion of the hotel industry and the business people around the Speightstown area, whether it was Port St. Charles, Heywood Hotel, Crystal Cove Hotel all the way up the St. James coast, we had situations where we had sandwich courses where students would be able to have time off once or twice a week to go and get work experience in those areas. Madam President, we believe that a lot of that is being done and I want to also commend those things.

Madam President, just on a slightly different note when Senator Abrahams spoke about St. Giles School, I want to commend him for having gone to a good school.

Asides.

Senator A.A. ADAMS: Traditionally, in case you did not know, it had a reputation. I do not want to say it was the best in Barbados but it was the best in St. Michael. I thought when I came back to Barbados and get my children they would go there. They were living next door and so they naturally went there, and they did fairly well.

Madam President, one of the things you mentioned was table tennis and so on and that was still there. In fact, you were there with some of them but there were areas where progress were not made and I just want to mention two areas that were brought to my attention by my son and he said in almost the identical words that you know dad I am doing fairly well in school but he does not do any music I should have sent him to private lessons and he could not draw because they were not taught in the school. I am saying this because it is at this stage that the inventiveness and the ingenuity and the genius of young children are brought out and if you concentrate too heavily on the academics, you block that and to some extent, you make people who have that talent feel you know well this is not important. I feel that presently in schools a lot more of that is being done and I want to say that a lot more ought to be done. I want to commend the Ministry in areas like that because the 11 Plus which has really bedevilled, I know Senator Harcourt Husbands may not like that, but the point I am making is that if you were to really do the history of that exam you would find that there are substantial children year after year after year, virtually the same type of children who are not benefitting in the way that you would want them to benefit. It is my call - and especially since the Ministry of Labour, Social Security and Human Resource Development has been speaking in such dulcet tones - that you must pay special attention to those students, you must bring programmes to make them feel that they too are worthy. It is my pleas that one of the things that we need to do is to ensure that the students who are not, some people say are not academically minded, are not to feel that stigmatised, not to feel that they are worthless and so on, because in fact these students are very

worthy and worthwhile for the most part. Some of the problems that Senator Husbands have been speaking about in terms of behaviour probably come from that source, not exclusively, and so it is something that I think we ought to look at. We could speak of individual cases and so on but I would say right now because sometimes these things need to be said. Right now there is a student studying in Canada for a Master's Degree in Music. I am not going to go into all of the details except to say that for him to have done a degree in music in Barbados it would have been somewhat difficult because he did not have the requisite academic qualifications. I went out of my way and the University of York said that they would have to audition him. He did not have the money to go and I was going to give him but he came up with an idea so I want to make this point. He, for some reason, had CDs of his performances at NIFCA and at the schools and so on because we were a music school and he sent the CD off to the Music Department of York and when they saw it they wrote me back and said he does not have to come, we will accept him on the face of the performances.

He has been there, and I am sure that the Parliamentary Secretary would know who I am speaking about, he did exceptionally well in the first degree and they invited him back, they did not given him the scholarship but they helped him in some ways and the Ministry of Education went out of their way to help him and he is now doing the Master's Degree in Music including the directorship and all that sort of thing of the band. Now there would be countless people across the length and breadth of this island and it takes teachers with the empathy and the skill and so on to draw out those kinds of talents. In this discussion, I thought rather than go the route of details and so on I would want to mention those things because they are of huge, national import and where you find that you are kind of failing economically you have to look at the education system. You have to look to see where you need to make a different orientation, where you need to reform the curriculum, where you need to use leverage and it has to be done, I would say, from the primary school and you come all the way up to the university level because, as I mentioned before, you can use the leverage at the university as well to ensure that the emphases in the purely academic areas of the university can now be focussed in a different direction. Those are aspects of the education that I want to mention.

I will just briefly make a comment, I am not going to attempt to make any policy or anything on my feet, in relation to some of the aspects that Senator Husbands mentioned in relation to behaviour and problems, et cetera. In a very broad sense, we may need to consider whether the schools, as constituted, can compensate for some of the serious shortcomings that some students bring into the schools from the society therefore, it is not an easy matter but one needs to look and see how this can happen, whether

teachers are being overwhelmed or whether new resources need to be brought in and try to get back to the stage where order and peace endure in the school. The point needs to be made that teaching and learning is an interaction and it cannot take place in an indiscipline environment. We have centuries of experience of running schools in Barbados. Indeed even before the Education Act and we run schools in Barbados by three basic concepts: (1) duty of care. The fact that the teacher is expected and duty-bound to do a number of very simple things which you sometimes cannot write down. He has to be in his class on time, he has to marked books, he has to do a whole range of things.

Asides.

Senator A. A. ADAMS: If that is the case, SBAs, because those are the things that have to be worked out, but I just mentioned them because there are so many. I say that because in an Education Act you cannot write all those things down so when you are having to deal with the management of the school you cannot just run to the Act you have to look for the principles. Is a duty of care being carried out? The basic thing about a school is the fact that the teacher is in loco parentis.

Almost any time you go to court you will find, and the lawyers can tell me if this is so or not, it is not so much the statute but a wise judge will ask if the teacher acted in a way that a reasonable parent would act. Cases that have been brought to court here in Barbados and across the British Commonwealth have been settled on those grounds. Once you have established that is the way the teacher acted, then a decision can be made. A case in point, if I were to mention one is that I was in the court at the time when a student brought what you would call cow-itch into the school on the teacher's desk and so on, and the Principal in his discretion did not send her home or expelled her but flogged her and in flogging her she got -- remember that flogging is still on the books -- a little cut and the case went to court and the judge at the time - one of Barbados' Attorneys-General was the lawyer and I was there - made the ruling on the grounds as whether or not the headmaster had acted in a way that a reasonable parent would act. It is those kinds of principles, sensible things, that we want to see brought back to bear in our schools.

The next thing is natural justice. Natural justice is saying, as the lawyers would know, that you cannot be a judge and jury in your own case, you must give the other person a hearing and all that sort of thing. In a situation with a student and a teacher there has to be a deference. The teacher as much as he or she may want to cannot be the mother of 30 students and so in order for things to happen there have to be a deference there and so in relation to when he or she is going to dispense any punishment and so on, some aspect of natural justice must ensue and therefore that is an area that must also be brought back to

the fore in our schools. Whether it is with the teacher and the child or with the teacher and the headmaster or with the teacher and the parent or whoever it is, that is something that I think we ought to do.

MADAM PRESIDENT: The Honourable Senator has five more minutes in which to conclude.

Senator A. A. ADAMS: I have the feeling that persons rush to look into the Education Act and so on to find out which Clause has said this that or the other and so on when you are dealing with an interactive situation in a school that have been governed by those principles from time immemorial, so I thought I would mention that without going into any great details so that in due course good commonsense and good judgement would prevail in the situations in our schools.

I thought I would be able to say that from the standpoint of having taught from 1961 to 2007, whatever the mathematics of that is, and also from being a member of virtually every trade union in terms of the teachers, the BUT, the BSTU and BASP and have been signatory to all, up until the time I left, the protocols, Protocol 1, Protocol 2, Protocol 3 and all that sort of thing. Madam President, I thought I would use this occasion to mention those things because at the end of the day if you want to have productivity in a school you have to have order and you have to have discipline. Just a simple point that might be misunderstood, where a student is giving trouble and so on and a teacher has to spend five minutes dealing with that student it translates into man hours because it is not five minutes on that student, it is five minutes multiply by 30 students, and therefore if that is happening on a regular basis it is significantly affecting the productivity of the school, so these are factors that has to be addressed and steps need to be brought to bear to bring them in line.

Madam President, I want to say that this debate this evening has been a very salutary one. A lot of good ideas have come about. I want to stress again the skill which Minister Byer Suckoo displayed and I want to say that I learnt a lot from all of the other speakers and I thought that I was duty-bound to bring an overarching view on some of the points that were made, and so with those few words, Madam President, I want to thank you.

MADAM PRESIDENT: Senator McClean, you have the Floor.

Senator the Hon. Miss M. P. O. McCLEAN: Thank you very much, Madam President, it was not my intention to speak on this Resolution but I thought that having listened to the opening presentation by Senator Byer Suckoo and the others as they stressed the importance of technical and vocational education in the context of what we are doing through the acquisition of this to enhance the

work of one particular facility, I believe that there is one issue that I wanted to flag and it is linked with something... Of course, as you know, Madam President, for many years I have been involved in the matter in training as it relates to entrepreneurship but I think that if we are to take some of our young people further there a critical piece of equipment I think that we need to invest in. We talk about science, technology and ...mathematics and innovation but a 3D printer is something that has become very commonplace in facilitating the innovative efforts and the design efforts of persons whether we are talking about people in the medical sciences... You have heard of medical researchers developing prototypes of different body parts. In the context of our cultural services industry, and we talk about entertainment and film, 3D printers can be used to create props, costumes, special effects, et cetera. I know that we have at the University of the West Indies the Errol Barrow Centre for Creative Imagination as part of the programming at the Cave Hill Campus a film programme, and I am sure the students would not mind... Final year students in the next couple of weeks would be showcasing their work, so as these young people develop their skills in dance, film, scriptwriting and whatever else...

Madam President, if we look at the Barbados Community College again, we have our Fine Arts, and we have people who may be young architects. Only yesterday we had an exercise where the finalist of our 50th Anniversary Monument was identified, and in there you had a number of young people under 25 years old. This is a very useful addition to any work that we are doing within the context of technical and vocational education. I mentioned its use in film. Persons who are into the design of jewellery are using 3D printers to help them to do that.

What I wanted to suggest, Madam President, to my colleagues is that within the context of all the efforts that they are making, I am not sure if they do have or how it is realised, but I certainly would want to recommend the investment in one or two of these pieces of equipment to make them available, of course making sure that they are properly secured and supervised, to facilitate the innovative efforts, whether it is in manufacturing, as I said, product design so that they can build prototypes, where people can collaborate to come up with designs et cetera. Madam President, because of its diverse use I think that this would take our efforts to train whether...

We have heard from Minister Byer Suckoo about the programmes. We have Skills for the Future. We have the broad human resource development strategy and a critical part of that would be application of ICTs, various elements of technology. Madam President, I thought that I would just want for the record to share that as something that we need to look at at our training institutions and certainly within the context of the critical work being done by the Barbados Vocational Training Board.

With those few comments, Madam President, I too support this Resolution for the compulsory acquisition the land. Madam President, I would not go into the other purpose for which it will be used but I think that it is a critical element of the broad strategy that is being pursued and overseen by my colleague, Senator Dr. Byer-Suckoo. Madam President, with those words, I do support this Resolution.

MADAM PRESIDENT: Senator Byer-Suckoo, you have the Floor.

Senator Dr. the Hon. E. R. BYER-SUCKOO: Madam President, I rise to wrap up this debate, one for which I want to thank my colleagues for, I think it shaped up into something very interesting. We had a very interesting discussion on technical and vocational education and training and I am pleased to see that all who spoke do agree with where we are positioning technical vocational education and training starting, of course, with my colleague, Senator Abrahams, who probably gave the best speech I have actually heard him given. Senator Abrahams has actually agreed with everything I said. I do not know if that will ever continue but I make note of today's day, May 04, 2016.

Madam President, for me this is a very significant moment. As I said, this is a process that started back in 2010 when I took over the reins at the Ministry of Labour and was still the Honourable Member for St. George South. We were trying to get facilities in the area and we realised that this piece of land was there, that it did not belong to the Barbados Vocational Training Board, but that it was sitting right there next to it, that there was really nothing else that was going to happen with it. Right now there is nothing but rocks and some grass on it, it has been rab land for a long time. As I said, it was the playing field for the Old Girl's School decades ago, but it has taken us six years to see it come to this point and I am glad that we can see this here today.

Madam President, we have been trying since 2008 to get facilities in the Workman's/Jordan's areas but the problem again has been identifying the land and doing the searches, et cetera. Madam President, very often you would think you have secured a piece of land but by the time you do a search, somebody... Madam President, for example, we were trying in Workman's, we thought we had a piece of land identified, by the time we went through the searches somebody came out of the woodwork and said that the land belonged to a relative and that we could not use it. That has happened a number of times and so areas like Workman's and Jordan's that have been promised facilities, because those are areas that area well-populated, but have no facilities within easy access.

Madam President, not every community can have some facilities but you still would want to ensure that there is something that is accessible to them. In areas like Workman's and Jordan's there is none and we have identified a couple of pieces of land and went through the early phases of this process, only to come up empty-handed. Therefore, this for me is a significant achievement. As I said, we were able to do that in Todd's because all the land had been identified for housing but we said no, let us pull that back. We then went back to Parliament and changed the use of one of those parcels of land from housing to recreational facility. Now that we have the land earmarked and we do have a field that has been prepared, it is now to be able to have activities going, the kinds of things I talked about, but to get the community involved because we are seeing too many young people playing cards, gambling, huddled in corners under streetlights where we know that these are not activities that are beneficial to them or to the community and so we want to get them out into better pursuits.

Madam President, I want to thank colleagues for their remarks and suggestions regarding the Barbados Vocational Training Board. To Senator Adams, I would assure you that a number of the things you have said are captured under the Human Resource Development Strategy, particularly training. You went on to talk about other issues in schools relating to behaviour and so on, but you talked about the collaboration between the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, and Innovation and the Ministry of Labour. One of the things under the Human Resource Development Strategy is strengthening our labour market information system. We are doing that so that the information is there to inform training, whether within the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, and Innovation or post-secondary.

Madam President, we are also strengthening our National Employment Bureau which will provide employment services to the public. The Human Resource Development Strategy is a very comprehensive programme. We are also strengthening career counselling. The Barbados Vocational Training Board provides career counselling. We have an association of guidance/career counsellors. We are building capacities in those organisations as well, so that students have the benefit of knowing not only what careers are there but being able to get a handle on what kinds of things for which they might be best suited.

Madam President, last year I travelled to Singapore as they celebrated their 50th Anniversary of Independence. One of the things they did was a salute to tripartism and they invited Barbados as one of the models of tripartism. While there I took the opportunity to look at their national employment services, career guidance, et cetera, and I saw what was to my mind is best practice, so that we have a

vision for where we want to take the National Employment Bureau. Indeed, eventually you will be seeing coming before this Honourable Chamber some changes but we are before Cabinet now and we do have a Paper before Cabinet for changes in the National Employment Bureau and career counselling.

Madam President, we are working with the Barbados Accreditation Council. The Barbados Vocational Training Board is actually now in the process of doing the write-ups and applications to be recognised by the Accreditation Council as well, so that they are getting themselves formalised.

Madam President, I would also want to make this point because I have heard it said, perhaps not in this Honourable Chamber but by Parliamentarians, that we keep hearing about National Vocational Qualifications and Caribbean Vocational Qualifications and that nothing is really happening. I am glad that Senator Husbands was able to dispel some of those myths that we hear out there about nothing happening. Madam President, without going into too much detail, I just want to mention, for example, that in 2015/2016 the TVET Council awarded 238 National Vocational Qualifications and Caribbean Vocational Qualifications, so that it is not like this is a mysterious concept somewhere that has not really taken hold or that it does not have any application. We have awarded those 238 certificates alone last year, then 100 other certificates of competence. This is done by the TVET Council, not the Barbados Vocational Training Board, often the public gets them both mixed up. The Barbados Vocational Training Board delivers the training services, while TVET Council's role is more administrative. They are the ones who will work on the standards, et cetera.

Last year they developed ten occupational standards and competency-based qualifications. To date 17 National Vocational Qualifications have been developed and validated, with 12 being approved and five validated for local use in competency-based qualifications. We have been training assessors and verifiers. Madam President, do you remember I talked about taking people and based on their level of skills, assess them and give them some level of qualification, therefore to do that you have to train assessors and verifiers. We have set up centres, we have already trained and certified 88 assessors and verifiers, and 36 trainers and instructors were certified in competency-based education and training. Madam President, that aspect of the programme is also moving very nicely along.

Madam President, I mentioned prior learning assessment and recognition, in the last year 40 persons were certified based on their prior learning, on the skills that they had, though they did not have any certification to show for it.

Madam President, one final point, Senator Husbands made the point that if more people knew what things were actually taught at the Barbados Vocational Training Board then you may not see so many of them sitting around doing nothing, they may decide that there is something there that they can pursue. Madam President, I would want to make the point that the evening's programme at the Barbados Vocational Training Board consist of auto mechanics, auto electronics, barbering, braiding and weaving, cake and pastry making, cupboard construction, dressmaking or event planning, something that can be very useful on the side or if you are looking to switch career. We also do horticulture and landscaping, and we actually do a beginner's course in housekeeping. Perhaps, my colleague here can take a course in housekeeping. There is also interior decorating, international bar and restaurant services, international cooking, introduction to computers and computer maintenance, makeup artistry, masonry, nail technology, plumbing, tailoring, tiling, and decorative finishing. Those are things that we offer in the evening classes, and then in the full-time course which is a longer programme, they do automotive trades, construction trades, air-conditioning and refrigeration, agricultural trades, business trades, furniture manufacturing, food technology, information technology, craft and textile trades, and mechanical machining. There is a website and all this is available there, or you can come to the Ministry of Labour's website or even the Government Information Service's (GIS) website where there is a link.

Madam President, I took the time to mention this because, as I said, this is important to improving the employability of our people, and maybe there are folks in the hearing of my voice who know somebody who needs to be doing something, or they themselves may need to be doing something. They may not know where to go from here, so I have just put these ideas out there. Someone may be saying, "Let me call the Vocational Training Board. I have always had an interest in this or that, and maybe I can actually make something out of that interest, and be trained." That is it for the Barbados Vocational Training Board. Let me also reiterate the point that we are not to stigmatise academic failure. We do that too often. In fact, even now with our students who did the Common Entrance examination. We should not even use the word "failure". When I speak to entrepreneurs, they use failure as if there is something wrong with it. One of the challenges we have with entrepreneurship in Barbados is that if you start a business and it does not succeed, you are made to feel by the banks and by those who have put some capital into your project that you really should not go again, because you tried once and it did not succeed. No, that is a part of the process, and if you look at all those persons who have had successful enterprises, there are many non-successes, if I may avoid using the word "failure", under their belts. There are so many along the way that are just stepping stones, and that is why we need to encourage our young

people. We have students who have just done the Common Entrance Examination, and I met with several of them in the schools in St. George South, and they are made to feel that if you do not get to your top choice of school at Common Entrance then that is the end of the world and you will never amount to anything. It is a myth that we need to dispel, and change our children's mindsets from the ages of 10 or 11, if not earlier; that not succeeding in one venture does not make you a failure. If you do not succeed in one venture, there is something else; and if you do not succeed academically, there is something else which you can do and which you can do well.

Madam President, I remember coming home from my medical practice one Saturday, feeling good with the money I had made, but then the pipe was burst and everything that I had made from that lucrative Saturday went from me straight to the plumber. I should become a plumber. This is an after-hours call, an emergency, so therefore you pay premium price for that. Plus, they would know I am a doctor so they would be looking for a little extra. I am saying that to say that we cannot continue to tell our children that if they do not have the academic skills from as early as ages 9, 10 or 11, that they will not make anything of themselves. If we do that, we are subjecting a generation, as we have subjected previous generations, to this notion that there is no point in trying to achieve anything. They will then sit back and do nothing. All of us need to be able to lead that charge and tell our young people, "Do your best and keep trying, and eventually you will find that one thing which you are good at." It may be music, but you may not have been exposed to music yet.

I knew a young man who was very shy at school. He hardly ever spoke. We used to walk home on evenings together and he never said a word. Then I went to university and when I came back, I heard him on the radio. My sister asked me, "Do you know who that is?" I said I had never heard him before but he was making a lot of noise and had a big following. She told me, "That is Peter Ram." I asked, "Ram? Ram can talk?" In school, he did not say anything but somewhere along the line, after we left school, he found his niche, and we all know that he has made a success in his particular career now; so let us not condemn our children because they have not yet found, in our formal school system, what they are gifted at. Let us continue to expose them to other things, because eventually they will find that one thing; and when they find it, let us be supportive as a community, as parents, relatives and guardians.

One final note, Madam President. Senator Husbands took the opportunity to speak to what is happening on the industrial relations front in education. Over the weekend, at May Day, I was asked by the media about the unrest in Barbados this May Day. I took the media to task. I said we have to be careful in Barbados when we talk about May

Day unrest. I say that because we are an open economy, we are looking for foreign investment, we are looking for international business investment, and we are looking for tourists to come. When you talk about "May Day unrest", did you see any May Day unrest on television across the world, as we have seen every year? There was May Day unrest in Seattle and Oakland, with people throwing bottles and fighting. In France there was May Day unrest. I think there was also unrest last year in Istanbul. People are injured and harmed. Even in Kingston, Jamaica in 2010, May Day unrest involved guns. We do not have unrest. We have a miscommunication, a misunderstanding. I am hearing the Parliamentary Secretary say that they have not even articulated what the grievance is in Barbados yet, so at this point there is a failure to communicate what the issue is. This is not unrest, so we have to be careful how, for sensational reasons, we go about branding things and saying "Barbados has unrest". Any person who has ever experienced unrest could well be planning a trip to Barbados, and then hears that there is industrial unrest here. He or she would think again, because their notion of unrest is completely different. They are thinking violence. Why is any sane person going to pick up themselves or their family and come to a country where there is unrest? We have to be careful in how we say things like that. That was just an "aside" occasioned by Senator Husbands' account of what is happening. I do urge the parties, as I have done before and as it has been reported, to continue to keep the lines open and try to articulate clearly what the grievances are. As I said on May Day, I know that in Barbados we have the structures in place that will allow us to deal with them. We have a mature Social Partnership, mature unions, a stable democracy, a good labour department which is 76 years old now, and we have the institutions and the experience so that we can handle all our disturbances long before they ever reach the stage of unrest.

Again, Madam President, I want to thank you for the opportunity to articulate the Barbados Vocational Training Board's activities and objectives and what we are doing specifically in St. Luke's in St. George South, and to thank all colleagues for their participation in what I think has been a successful debate. I also want to beg now that this Resolution do now pass.

The question that the Resolution do now pass was put and resolved in the affirmative without division, and Her Honour the PRESIDENT passed the Resolution accordingly.

ADJOURNMENT

Senator Hon. Ms. M.P.O. McCLEAN: Madam President, I beg to move that this Sitting be adjourned until Wednesday, May 11, at 11 a.m.

The question that the Sitting do now adjourn until May 11, 2016, was put and resolved in the affirmative without division, and Her Honour the PRESIDENT adjourned the Sitting 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 and date. The convening sentence in the source gives the date as Monday, March 21, 2016, but the heading and file name give Wednesday, May 4, 2016, which is used. Please confirm.

Q2. Masthead. The session is not stated in the source, so no session line is printed.

Q3. Order No. 2, Senator W. A. Abrahams's speech. After an aside, a passage beginning 'Madam President, I am talking about saving somebody's life' carries the label 'Senator A. A. ADAMS', but it continues Senator Abrahams's argument about the old Supreme Court building ('I started by saying it is about priorities'). Printed as in the source.

Q4. Papers and Introduction of Bills. Senator Dr. Byer-Suckoo says 'I am commanded to lay the following Bills', but the papers listed are Orders and reports; and the list of Bills to be read a first time includes a Resolution on vesting land in the Barbados Water Authority. Printed as in the source.

DEBATE SUMMARY

(Editorial summary — not part of the record.)

The Senate met on Wednesday, 4th May, 2016, with the President, Her Honour Senator Miss Kerryann F. Ifill, in the Chair; prayers were led by Rev. Father Errington Massiah. The Sitting was suspended at once until 1.00 p.m. because of problems with the sound, on the motion of Senator the Hon. Miss M. P. O. McClean. On resumption the Minutes of March 21, 2016 were confirmed. Senator Dr. the Hon. E. R. Byer-Suckoo laid eleven papers, among them the Senate and House of Assembly (Remuneration and Allowances of Members) Order, 2016, the Ministers and Parliamentary Secretaries (Remuneration and Allowances) Order, 2016, the Invest Barbados Annual Reports for 2013 and 2014 and the Green Economy Scoping Study. The Caribbean Accreditation Authority (Education in Medicine and Other Health Professionals) (Incorporation) Bill, 2016 was read a first time.

Order No. 2 was the Resolution to approve, under section 5(1)(c) of the Crown Lands (Vesting and Disposal) Act, Cap. 225, the lease to the Barbados Conference Services Limited of land and buildings at Two Mile Hill,

St. Michael, the Lloyd Erskine Sandiford Centre. Senator Mrs. V. I. Sandiford-Garner explained that the property should be vested in the company that had borrowed to improve it, a procedure begun in 2008. Senator W. A. Abrahams did not oppose it but asked how \$11.8 million could be spent on the Centre while nothing was spent on the old Supreme Court, from which a piece had fallen the day before. Senator A. R. Worrell and Senator Miss V. A. G. De Peiza rose on points of order, the latter saying the building had been abandoned by the last Barbados Labour Party Administration.

Senator R. A. Hunte read the Resolution and recalled that the centre, the idea of Sir Lloyd Erskine Sandiford, had hosted the SIDS Conference; Madam President ruled that his language towards Senator Abrahams was not demeaning. After lunch Senator Professor Sir H. H. S. Fraser spoke on derelict and historic public buildings. Senator J. Ince linked the centre to economic diversification, and Senator the Hon. P. M. T. Todd said the Barbados Labour Party had left the centre unfinished for 14 years. Senator Dr. Sir Trevor Carmichael and Senator J. A. Watson also spoke. Senator McClean replied that the lease could form part of a wider strategy to make the most of the facility, and the Resolution was agreed to without division.

After a further suspension, Senator Byer-Suckoo moved Order No. 3, the Resolution under section 5 of the Land Acquisition Act, Cap. 228, for the compulsory acquisition of land of Brighton Plantation Limited at Brighton, St. George. The land, a parcel of 1 100 square metres, was for car parking at the Barbados Vocational Training Board's St. Luke's Training Centre and for after-hours recreational use. She reviewed the Board's history since the Occupational Training Act of 1979 and the Human Resource Development Strategy, which had €50 million from the European Union. Senator Abrahams agreed with the Resolution and called for vocational training to be valued, and Senator Fraser suggested training people by restoring derelict houses.

Senator H. A. Husbands congratulated the Royal Barbados Police Force Band and the Dean Emeritus, and spoke on current challenges in education from his experience as President and General Secretary of the Barbados Union of Teachers. Senator Todd, Senator A. A. Adams, who urged the Ministries of Labour and Education to work together, and Senator McClean also supported the Resolution. In reply Senator Byer-Suckoo said the effort to find land had begun in 2010, when she was Member for St. George South, and she spoke on May Day and industrial relations. The Resolution was agreed to without division,

and on Senator McClean's motion the Senate was | adjourned until Wednesday, May 11, 2016 at 11.00 a.m.

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