
THE SENATE DEBATES

(UNOFFICIAL REPORT)

PARLIAMENT 2013 – 2018

THE SENATE

Wednesday, March 29, 2017

The Senate met in the Senate Chamber, Parliament Buildings on Wednesday, the March 29, 2017 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. D. W. Boyce, B.Sc. (Econ.), M.B.A. (Fin.), CMA, F.C.A. (Minister in the office of the Prime Minister)

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),

Senator Sir Roy Trotman, K.A., M.A. D.D. (Hons.)

Prayers were led by Rev. Father Errington Massiah.

MADAM PRESIDENT: Good morning, the Senate is now in Session.

ANNOUNCEMENTS BY Her HONOUR THE PRESIDENT Madam PRESIDENT: Senators, I am in receipt of excuses from Senators McClean and Byer-Suckoo. They are both travelling on Government Business and will not be with us today. I am in further receipt of the Minutes of March 20, 2017. If there are no errors or omissions then I ask that these Minutes be now confirmed.

PAPERS

Senator the Hon. D. W. BOYCE: Madam President, I am commanded to lay the following document:

1. The Annual Report of the Barbados International Promotion Corporation, (Invest Barbados) for the year March 31, 2016.

ORDER No.2

RESOLUTION TO APPROVE THE GUARANTEE BY THE MINISTER OF FINANCE OF THE PRINCIPAL SUM OF BD\$17.625 MILLION AND INTEREST THEREON TO BE BORROWED BY THE BARBADOS CONFERENCE SERVICES LIMITED FROM FIRST CITIZENS BANKS (BARBADOS) LIMITED, TO ASSIST WITH THE OUTFITTING OF NEW OFFICES AT THE LLOYD ERSKINE SANDIFORD CENTRE.

MADAM PRESIDENT: Senator Sandiford-Garner, you have the Floor.

Senator Mrs. V. I. SANDIFORD-GARNER: Madam President, as would have been previously said, I rise today to move the Resolution seeking the approval for a Government Guarantee for the borrowing of BDS\$17 million for the outfitting of new offices at the Barbados Conference Services Centre Limited. Ma'am, we know that facility as the Sir Lloyd Erskine Sandiford Centre as well but it has fulfilled many uses over the years and we are now looking to rent some of the space at the property to Government offices, which means that Government will be paying itself, as they will be renting from the Lloyd Erskine Sandiford Centre management, a Government entity. Madam President, the Government offices that will be moving to the Centre the majority of them are from Bay Street. The Ministry of the Civil Service was a late entrant but we are going to be having on the Ground Floor the Government Information Services offices and studio. On the First Floor will be the Ministry of the Civil Service and the Ministry of International Transport. On the Second Floor will be the Ministry of Tourism and the Office of the Prime Minister. On the Third Floor will be the Office of the Prime Minister and Cabinet Office.

Madam President, the designs and layouts have been completed. As you know we would have borrowed some money some time ago to refurbish the whole center. In 2008 when we came to Government, as many Barbadians know, the Lloyd Erskine Sandiford Centre was an unfinished project for reasons known only to the Opposition Barbados Labour Party Government at the time. We endeavoured to transform the building and to make it the facility that it had been planned to be. It was the vision of Sir Lloyd at the time to have a Caribbean Examination Council Headquarters and also to have a multipurpose auditorium and so on on the spot. It was never completed and we determined at that time that we would complete it, so that in 2008 a business proposal was given to the newly-appointed Board of Directors who then presented the proposals to the Government, the major shareholder and it was decided that the building would be transformed into a world-class meeting facility.

Madam President, this decision was made in conjunction with the Government strategic plan of ensuring that the tourism infrastructure of this country was enhanced and built out. When you have tourism and meetings and incentive business, it is always wise that you also invest in facilities. Many conferences are kept at the hotels at which the guests may stay but there is a burgeoning business out there for meetings and incentives and we did the research and realised that if Barbados had a separate meeting facility for major conferences, especially international conferences with all the attendant facilities such as translators and business facilities, that we would see some added value to our destination materialised, that is why we took that step. Therefore, the lettable areas would now be rented to

Government offices while renovations take place at Bay Street.

Madam President, many of you with a political history would know that Bay Street has looked that way from the day that it was built and that when you work in those offices you would realise that the internal infrastructure is just as aged and tired as the external facade. I do not know that there will be any major architectural design changes to the facility, I cannot speak to that at present, but I do know that considerable refurbishment of the interior will be undertaken because we do have our sensitivities regarding the age of the building and the type of architecture that have overlooked the day since we have known ourselves politically.

Madam President, I want to give a little bit of information on the achievements of the Lloyd Erskine Sandiford Centre.

No.D7 (1)11.38 a.m.

When that building was conceptualised, I do not know that many people saw the vision of the architect or the vision of the leader of the time. We have now come to see that Barbados could not accommodate much of what it does internationally without that Centre. Every single major CARICOM meeting is held there; every single Caribbean Tourism Organisation meeting is held there; Organisation of American States (OAS) meetings are held there, and major conferences. We just opened CARIFESTA at the Lloyd Erskine Sandiford Centre on Monday afternoon. It is indeed a building of which we can be proud. The total net revenue of the organisation, Barbados Conference Services Limited (BCSL), would have increased nine per cent over the same period last year. When I look at the amount of money we have spent on it, the initial loan, I think, was \$35 million for the total refurbishment. Then you had a separate tranche for the multi-storey carpark which was budgeted for \$9 million and came in at \$8 million. After we had done all that work, then we were asked to see if we could have the lettable floors outfitted to ensure that the Government offices could occupy them; and that is why we are here today, because the First Citizens Bank has requested a Government Guarantee for that BDS\$17 million which we are going to be using now to outfit the building.

While we did all of the transformation, we looked to see how we could save money, and one of the first things we did was to establish a relationship with the Government's Smart Energy Project. We outfitted the whole building with LEDs between 2011 and 2013; that was one project. From that time until now, where we would have seen an electricity bill of \$1 million, our last electricity bill was BDS\$745 000; so we have seen already that this type of strategic thinking and investment is paying

off. The next step is to install LEDs along the walkways so that we have a comprehensive outfitting. We are also going to be looking at having photovoltaic panels on the roof of the building so that the entire facility will be powered by solar energy, or as we say, green energy. This is an initiative that I think every single businessperson should be examining in Barbados going forward. Our reliance on fossil fuel has cost this country greatly, and any person -- I do not think we should even restrict it to just businesspeople -- now going forward in building their own home, or any facility that would use a considerable amount of electricity, should sit down and put pen to paper and examine the commonsense and the dollars and cents in looking to see how you can institute a green energy home or green home; a home that relies on the sun which we have setting and rising in this country every day. It would save this country considerable foreign exchange, and in the final analysis your home budget becomes more manageable. It is not an immediate financial fillip, but over time the money adds up and, as I have shown here, we are seeing it at the Lloyd Erskine Sandiford Centre. We have also entered into something, and I want to give you the correct name so I am going to have to look at my notes. It is something called an Interruptible Service Agreement with the Barbados Light & Power Company, which is about to save us at least \$3 000 a month when the service is being interrupted for any length of time. We will be using our generators right through and at the end of that period, the Light & Power will reimburse us, and we are seeing another saving of about \$3 000 a month. We get a reduction when we use our generator for that service period. As I said, we would have recognised a \$4.2 million increase in revenue over the \$3.9 million as at March 31, 2016. I am told that as at yesterday, March 28, we were running at seven per cent ahead of what we were making at the same period last year. This tells me that despite the fact that we are not a major revenue-generating facility as yet, we are making our way out of our debt. These things take time. I also want to emphasise that the lease includes the rent, service charge and the outfitting costs; all of that will be included in the payments. That means the Lloyd Erskine Sandiford Centre will not be receiving any subvention from Government to repay any of the money it has borrowed. When we start to rent those floors, we will be paying the interest and principle from the rent we will be receiving. The outfitting costs that we are here to Guarantee are, as I said, part of the lease agreement for the offices. The Centre normally receives a \$2 million subvention from Government annually. As of last year, that has been brought down to \$1.7 million; so even where the subvention is concerned, they have made efforts to ensure that that also has been reduced. Most of our organisations within the Ministry of Tourism have been given certain mandates, including the Ministry itself. As you heard, we would have gone to Estimates with a budget of \$2 million less than what we really would have required, but we knew how we would get around that and really see what we

wanted, because it was lower than what they expected us to ask for. We have diligently tried to work within our means and to use creativity and innovation to ensure that we keep our bills at a minimum. In essence, Madam President, this is what we need the ten-year loan for. The term sheet was approved by the Ministry of Finance in December last year, and once we have that approval the loan agreement will be finalised and the financing will begin, and hopefully by the middle of this year we will be well on our way to outfitting those offices. The Certificate of Compliance was requested on February 27 this year. We have done all that we need to do. The copy of the lease agreement is done. All of the paperwork is done, so we are just awaiting now the approval of the Guarantee so that we can have that money sent forward to start to outfit those offices for our potential tenants. With that, Madam President, I move that this Resolution do now pass.

MADAM PRESIDENT: Senator Fraser, you have the Floor.

Senator Sir HENRY H.S. FRASER: Thank you, Madam President. I rise to give full support to this Resolution because there is no question, as Senator Sandiford-Garner has so eloquently stated, that the Sir Lloyd Erskine Sandiford Conference Centre plays an enormously important role for Barbados, and a role that I would submit can still be further expanded in many ways, Madam President. I am not sure that the Conference Centre is absolutely fully utilised, because I am not sure that we have yet begun to exploit the opportunities for creativity of performance in so many ways that we can in Barbados. Having organised medical conferences in particular, as well as heritage conferences, over the last 35 years, I have been very much involved in conference organisation, having to rent a wide variety of facilities, looking constantly for the best opportunities, the best facilities, the facilities which are closest to the hotel accommodation and the facilities which provide impeccable service. That means impeccable audio, impeccable translation for the international conferences as well as food and drink at the times they are needed, so obviously I have used the Sir Lloyd Erskine Sandiford Conference Centre several times, and it has fulfilled the need.

11.44 a.m.

I could wish that one of the two major areas for conferences were larger because I have had opportunities to bring conferences to Barbados where the numbers of people who would have participated would have been 2 000 and we would have wanted a facility which would have provided the space for 2 000 at one time. That has not been possible so there have been some medical conference opportunities that sadly we have lost because we could not quite fit that number into either of the two large spaces but we certainly held lectures there, we had the most eminent

physician of the 20th century, Doctor Francis Collins, gave a lecture with standing room only in one of the big suites there and the estimated crowd was 800 packed into that room to hear Doctor Francis Collins the leader of the human genome project working out of the NIH in Boston. That is one of the sessions that we have held there with great success. I do remember when the initial proposal was made for the Lloyd Erskine Sandiford Centre it was at a time when the concept was for an examination hall and I had discussions with functionaries in the Ministry, not with Sir Lloyd Erskine Sandiford himself, but with the Parliament Secretary at the time, the Permanent Secretary and so on, and emphasised the importance of us having an international standard conference centre. It was a great delight when it came on stream.

Madam President, there are a number of things that I think we have not yet begun to exploit in Barbados and when I gave the keynote lecture for the FOROMIC Conference, it was held in Barbados five years ago, I pointed out the importance of the branding that we had received as a world heritage site and how this exposed Barbados for all kinds of levels of exploitation at the level of creativity, creative arts and so on. There is a town in Kentucky, for example, which was going through a horrendous decline associated with bad sewage treatment and all sorts of things and a team got together there and said: how can we bring income into this country? Do you know with the facilities that are associated with that particular State in the United States of America (USA) they decided: do you know what we are good at? We are good at telling stories. They development a story telling centre there which is an international centre which has multiple events every year and there are times when there are many thousands of people coming to that centre to tell stories. Barbadians love to talk, we have a wonderful tradition of everything from tea meetings to Parliament, of course, where people talk beautifully and eloquently and with excitement and passion and tell stories. I go back to my childhood when the great Alfred Pragnell was on Rediffusion telling stories. I go back to my friend, colleague, university mate, the late Timothy Callender and his ability for storytelling, the wonderful stories he wrote and the way that they were put across on the radio, especially by Alfred Pragnell. I think that we too could exploit that area of storytelling. We are now famous through Rihanna as songstress, we were famous across North America and in Britain with the Merrymen, we have had, obviously, other great singers, other musicians who have all done Barbados proud but I would like to put a cross that storytelling is a feature that we have not yet exploited and it is one of the things that the conference centre at Sherbourne can do. I think our international branding should be helping us to exploit the conference centre to its full. There should not be a week when do not have a major international conference there. I do not know how well we market the conference centre but I would like

to encourage the Ministry of Tourism in this area in collaboration with the other department and ministries of Government to make full use of the conference centre. I noticed in the Estimates that there were still a subvention towards the conference centre and I would like to think that a conference centre of the quality of Sherbourne and with its improvements and refurbishment would be self-sustaining, would not require a Government subvention but would actually make us an enormous profit.

Madam President, with those few words I fully endorse this outfitting of the offices but also to say that I believe that we can with some, perhaps more aggressive marketing, exploit our rebranding as a heritage site, exploit our creativity, exploit the skills and the gifts that our Barbadian population has and make the Lloyd Erskine Sandiford Centre actually a profit generating centre for the people and Government of Barbados. Thank you, Madam President.

MADAM PRESIDENT: Senator Husbands, you have the Floor.

Senator H. A. HUSBANDS: Thank you very much, Madam President. I rise in support of this Resolution before us this morning. I think it offers us the opportunity to 1) congratulate the relevant authorities for the foresight and the work that has been done in an area that is much needed but often not as recognised as it should be, that is, providing modern up-to-date facilities which are in accordance with some of the highest standards of safety and health for public officers. We often talk about efficiency and productivity and while a lot of efficiency and productivity is certainly related to intrinsic and motivation and so on it is also related to the conditions under which people work. It is important that some emphasis should be placed on these conditions.

I am pleased that this Government from the early days in 2008 took the initiative to have, for example, the two towers in Warrens constructed to provide adequate facilities for public officers and this is another initiative in this area. In the area of education, Madam President, and I say that we can use this opportunity to recognise what has been done, what this Resolution aims to do but also I think there is the wider issue and that is provision of adequate facilities for public officers to do their work and in the area of education I want to say just a few things, Madam President, of what has been done and what is planned to be done to continue the trends started in this Resolution.

It always seems that when we have a debate in recent times in this Chamber, I have the privilege of attending a function just before that is related to what we are doing and what we are discussing in the Resolution. This morning I had the privilege in my capacity as Acting Minister or as a friend of mine would say, "acking" Minister of Education

to open a conference here in Barbados sponsored by the InterAmerican Development Bank. The topic of the conference is "Learning in 21st Century Schools". The InterAmerican Development Bank and the Government of Barbados has brought to the country a number of representatives from Latin America and the Caribbean here to Barbados for the remainder of this week to discuss the conditions, modern construction techniques in school, modern maintenance techniques in school construction and these principals can be applied, not only to school, but I suggest that the principles could also be applied to other Government facilities. This is a Government that has taken this issue very seriously. As I said, the conference is ongoing and it is really ironic or whatever word you want to use in that sphere that while we are discussing this Resolution on Government's moves to improve the conditions under which public workers carry out their duty, it is also important that this conference which deals with some issues as improving management of school maintenance, in Latin America and the Caribbean mechanisms for school maintenance and so on. I want to suggest that we are using a broad picture and we are looking at these issues in the broadest possible context of which one aspect is the Resolution that we have this morning but also the wider aspect is how do we go about constructing and more importantly, maintaining because I submit that the challenge we have is not so much in the construction but the challenge we have always is in the maintenance, so we have to be very careful that we borrow this money and provide modern and up-to-date facilities but at the same time we do not put the necessary mechanisms in place to deal with the maintenance, and in education I think we have been foresighted enough to do that.

Senate D 7 Seq 3

Madam President, let me say that in recent times there has been much public discussion and much public debate about the conditions in our schools. When we talk about the conditions in our schools we are talking about conditions for teaching and learning but because schools are also centres of employment we are also talking about the conditions under which people work, so it is a two-fold aspect and they are very interrelated. If we improve the conditions under which teaching and learning occurs we are therefore at the same time improving the conditions under which people work, or rather that is the hope, so there has been much public discussion in recent times on this very issue.

We have had quite a few challenges on the issue of safety and health in many of our schools. The most recent which is very close to yourself Madam President and very close to me is that of the Combermere School. We have had in recent times issues at the Lawrence T. Gay Memorial School and these are real issues, but let me say

that in my view these issues are not as alarming as they might seem. The Ministry of Education, Science, Technology and Innovation manages in excess of 500 buildings and in any one day all types of things happen and you the public will only hear about the few occasions that something makes it into the media. I am not blaming the media because certain things are news and ought to be covered but we have to have a perspective on these things.

The Ministry of Education, Science, Technology and Innovation faces challenges with the Barbados green monkey especially in some country districts where monkeys literally go into the schools and take things out of the hands of children. There was a recent incident not much publicised right here at Harrison College where monkeys are getting into the school. We have challenges with birds. Even with the best efforts, the birds nest in the roofs of the schools. We have design flaws. Well, we would say now that there are design flaws but there were designed in that way for ventilation and so on but what happens now is that what we may refer to now as design flaws are avenues for rodents to enter into the school so on any one day in the over 500 buildings that the Ministry of Education, Science, Technology and Innovation manages even with the best intentions and even with the best management systems we have challenges and we have issues which must be resolved.

The Minister has made a statement in the Other Place about how he has so far spent \$500 000 at the Combermere School which would not have been budgeted for, that would have had to come from somewhere else in the budget in order to deal with the challenges at the Combermere School. We in the Ministry of Education, Science, Technology and Innovation certainly think that we have wrestled the problem to the ground and we are confident that important solutions are in place. There was a similar occurrence at the Lawrence T. Gay Memorial School. Again, the Government has had to spend \$400 000 correcting some of these challenges.

We live in an era in which people are much more aware of issues of safety and health and are much more susceptible as we know to respiratory issues and so on, but I think, as I expressed this morning to the participants in the seminar, that we ought to develop or work on developing a consciousness of safety and health but this consciousness is not safety and health at work, it is safety and health in our everyday life so that with the recent spate of accidents we have been having on the highway with people driving their own personal vehicles... Now, if they were driving delivery trucks or something we would immediately identify that as an issue of safety and health at work, maybe the truck was not well-maintained, the employer did not do this or the employer did not do that, but that same consciousness, I think, needs to be brought to everyday life so that we develop a culture of safety and

health. It is not safety and health at work but it is safety and health at your home and when you are driving your own personal car and so on and so forth, and that is what I think we need to do.

Madam President, it is really interesting when workers at a particular institution, maybe a school or maybe a school meals centre, see rodents and they run out of the building and sit down outside and call the media. Every one of us have rodents at our homes some time or the other, so what do we do. If I see rodents at my house, what do I do? Run outside and sit on the curb and call the Nation Newspaper. No, I take reasonable action to correct the problem, so when I say a culture of safety and health that is what I mean, that issues occur but we have provisions to correct them so while we meet these challenges every day in the school system with the various safety...

The other thing we must consider is that the Ministry of Education, Science, Technology and Innovation has now developed in conjunction, I think, with the Inter-American Development Bank a mapping system that will help us decide where are the best places to construct schools. The same Lawrence T. Gay School, for example, is constructed in a village. At the very parameter of the school, the village is right on to the school. At the Combermere School one of the issues there was that a person in the village, as we use to call it in those days, was cleaning out their septic tank. One day that was the smell and so on. The environs of the school have changed dramatically in the last 20 years. There is a densely population all on the very border of the school or other Government institutions or other business places so we have developed a mapping system that will allow us based on demographic changes and so on to try to arrive at the ideal places that schools can be constructed, but even when you do that changes occur over time. Madam President, you have make sure that you are projecting into the future because it may be ideal today but in 10 years the decision would have to be reviewed so we are doing all of these things.

I just want to run through very quickly, Madam President, some of the things that are being done. Every year we spend considerable amounts of money using a competitive bidding system to make sure that the primary schools are ready for the September term. We operate in an environment now where we all know that there is a scarcity of money and we have to apply the limited funds that we have in the best possible areas and in the most critical areas. I want to say also, while I am on that topic talking about primary schools, that I hear all of the time about these deficiencies in the primary school system in relation to supplies and so on.

Senate D7 Sequence 4

I have been a primary school teacher all my working life. I went to primary school. Every now and then at some primary school, somewhere, there is a shortage of toilet paper or there is a shortage of chalk. That has been so from time immemorial and it is so every now and then. These are not critical consistent shortages or any such thing. This is ongoing. Sometimes they end up for whatever reason with more toilet paper than chalk. There is an abundance of chalk one semester, everybody's chalk is all over the place. Senator Adams knows this. We send for toilet paper and they say they do not have toilet paper but they have chalk. Some days you send for chalk and they say they do not have chalk, but they have toilet paper. That is how the system works ... we have to make the system more efficient, but there is no critical shortage of supplies within the school system, just the usual administrative hang ups and so on. The schools are getting sometimes late. There are grants and so forth. Let me stick in here quickly and say that, the health authorities are concerned about the sale of certain products at schools and so on. That is very important, but unless you have some money to substitute when you ban these, A, B and C, unless you have some funds to substitute because all of those funds that go for the sale of those things are used to subsidise the schools. It helps to send the children on tours and so on.

So we have had these major expenditures in 2015/2016. We spent \$1.91 million. We are expected to spend slightly more than that this summer in fixing schools and making the environment more conducive in the primary school system.

Madam President, I have a list where we have already selected the primary schools that will be repaired in the summer programme and the various projects. I would not bore you with all of them, only to say for example at the St. James Primary, repairs to the roof of the main building, general repairs to the annex, that is \$120 000; Wesley Hall Infants, replace defective-- doors and ceilings \$50 000; Sharon Primary, a full electrical upgrade; Christ Church Girls repairs to the roof of the administration block; Workmans Primary, replace defective ceiling \$80 000. All of these, I have to repeat, all of these contracts are given on competitive basis. The notices go out in the newspaper and people have to submit bids. They come and collect the information about what needs to be done and competitive bids are submitted in an effort to correct these deficiencies.

In the secondary schools I want to suggest ... I am sure Professor Fraser would be happy at this -- I had the privilege recently to visit the Lodge School. Although I work in the Ministry of Education I have worked there for the last couple years and I am a teacher and all of that -- Senator Todd also- I was shocked at, and this is positively shocked, not negatively so, positively shocked, at the improvements that have been made to the Lodge School. The historic buildings have all been maintained, retrofitted

and those that carry the office and administrative, those old Lodge boys and students, Senator Worrell would know these things better than I have, but the most stunning work that has been done there is in the area of the Hall. This Hall is, in my view, a top class institution and will be used, I think, extensively hopefully in the coming CARIFESTA celebrations. The Government has spent a tremendous amount of money repairing the Lodge School. Again, in the context of making working conditions, just as this Resolution takes cause for the borrowing of \$17.5 million for the improvement of conditions for public officers, the Government has spent considerable amount of money in excess of the \$17.5 million here to improve the conditions at the Lodge School and rebuild the institution, provided enhanced teaching and learning situations and also enhanced conditions for the teachers and other workers at the Lodge School to perform their duties.

Madam, let me add that the new Hall at the Lodge School is the third or fourth hall at secondary schools -- I speak of the Hall at the Daryell Jordan School and the Hall at St. Leonard's Boys which are of an extremely high standard and I expect they will both be in full use during the coming festival.

Again, the schools that are being constructed and the people attending the seminar from the Inter America Development Bank this morning visited the Maria Holder Nursery School. These, I think, are grand examples of the harmony between improved working conditions and also the improved teaching and learning situations. This construction, I think, goes a long way to enforcing Government's policy in education to (1) improve the conditions of teaching and learning while at the same time, improving the conditions under which teacher work every day. The design and so on is very highly recommended. I have previously said that Honourable Members of this Chamber should use an opportunity at some time in the future to visit one of these school to see the important and, I think, design initiatives that have been taken. Just as solar energy has become an important aspect at the Lloyd Erskine Sandiford Centre, so in education. At many of the schools I had the privilege of flicking the switch of at least two schools to start up their solar energy product. We have all of these roofs in at least 500 building and the Ministry of Education and the Government, have been utilising these roofs for the generation of solar energy, helping the schools to save on their electricity bills.

Important work has been done at the Samuel Jackman Prescod Polytechnic, the Education Sector Enhancement Programme will see the construction of new schools throughout the country, Belmont, Wesley Hall, St. Elizabeth, Boscabelle and St. John Primary. The actual physical construction has not started, but the teachers are being prepared for the new syllabus offerings that would be made in these schools. Sequence 5

One aspect -- Phase 1 of that project is completed and we expect that Phase 2 when we enhance the physical conditions under which teachers work every day, is fully on stream. We have \$12 millions...

His Honour Senator the Very Reverend H. E. Crichlow. On a point of order. Are we speaking about the passing of a Resolution to approve the guarantee by the Minister of Land, of the principal sum of \$17 million to be borrowed by the Conference Centre, to assist with the outfitting of new offices at the Lloyd Erskine Sandiford Centre? Is that the business we are engaged, Madam President? The Honourable Senator is speaking on education and the building of new schools.

Madam PRESIDENT: Senator Husbands, I caution you to draw closer to the Resolution at hand and you have four more minutes.

SENATOR H. HUSBANDS: Madam President, I am making the point that Government is borrowing this money to improve the conditions under which public officers will work. There is a wider prospect that we have not only been doing that in this area but also in education and I am giving examples of how we have been implementing these programmes, which a large part of is at the Lloyd Erskine Sandiford Centre in the field of education

Madam, let me end by saying that there are some weaknesses. We have to recognise our weaknesses. I said last time that a weakness we have is at the Hospitality Institute. We need desperately, as of yesterday or of last week, to expand the facilities available there. That is one weakness. There is another weakness at the Frederick Smith Secondary School and St. George Secondary School. These are in need of urgent repairs. We have visited them and our commitment is to the unions and the teachers at these institutions that every effort would be made to improve, just as Government is improving the conditions for those public officers who are going to enter the Lloyd Erskine Sandiford Centre, every effort is going to be made to improve the conditions in these three institutions.

I am satisfied, Madam President, as a matter of fact I am confident that we are on the right path in this area. We have taken the step in the wider society and wider community and in education, Government has also sought to ensure that the facilities which are provided for our students to learn, and for our teachers and other workers to work, are of the very highest standard.

I thank you.

Madam PRESIDENT: Senator Hunte you have the Floor.

Senator R.A. HUNTE: Thank you very much, Madam President. I rise to give my support to this Resolution which, of course, guarantees a loan to the Lloyd Erskine Sandiford Centre for retrofitting purposes. Madam President, I hope one day we can actually without debate apart from the normal areas of finance, and the definition of what we are going to do when we raise a loan, have more defined answers. That is understandable, but to be critical of more space or improving space as far as the entity of a building is concerned, I think we need to go pass that. Elsewhere I heard the criticisms but that will I hope one day will end in the way it has been spoken of, rather than the debate itself, because obviously a debate for a loan or any particular matter, of course, is going to have concern, or even people who may want to make queries or support for that matter.

The Lloyd Erskine Sandiford Centre was named the Sherebourne Conference Centre, up to when it was opened and was very much criticized. I know we have spoken of this on several occasions, but we need to, because that building has done so much in terms of the development of Barbados in terms of hosting conferences, et cetera, and you cannot repeat that too often because it is true. That is why I am very weary of opposition politics. It sounds strange for me to repeat that but I am very weary of opposition politics. To me it creates division, it creates concern to the citizens of the country that we should be spending this here and not spending it there, et cetera. Look what has happened to the Centre today. Look at the production. Look at the services that building is providing. It was referred to as the Erskine Sandiford museum of madness. This, of course, was a big insult to a man who was a Barbados Scholar, a Prime Minister of this country who has served well in education, et cetera. It was a big insult. The person who made that statement turned around and made their offices there when there was a change of Government.

Asides.

Senator R.A. HUNTE: They moved their offices into the Sherebourne Conference Centre as it was then. Of course, it was still a building owned by Government.

I think we can fast forward. The recently opened Barbados Water Authority building, when there were difficulties in our water services recently, you should hear people who should know better, why build a big building like that like if building or not building would have improved the services of the water authority. Madam, workers must work in conditions not conducive to their health. The comparison is not there. That is what I want to speak about in this debate. There is no comparison when \$10 million a year was paid by Government on behalf of that authority for rental space. There is no comparison. The water problems have ceased and the building is there. We

will have water problems somewhere down the road again because Barbados is being termed as a water scare country.

Madam President, the Lloyd Erskine Sandiford Centre -- you heard the information given in this debate by the Parliamentary Secretary has been a success. It was opened in 1994 when we had the SIDS Conference here in Barbados. In that same year, if I recall, Barbados was number one as far as human resource development is concerned. I remember that very clearly, number one in this part of the world.

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I think that we need to look more carefully and that we need to be more balanced in our arguments. Madam President, it only seems that when Government is doing something for the people of Barbados... Ma'am, there is nobody in politics in Barbados that can will any Government building to their families, not one, that is why I say you cannot separate the Government from the people, all belong to the taxpayers of this country, those yet unborn and those living now.

Madam President, I attended the opening of the Mandela Park last night, it really was a right national ceremony. I am glad that I attended. As usual, when there are any events at the university I am always invited but some days I cannot go because those events fall on a Wednesday and I cannot go but of course that has nothing to do with the very good relationship between a former principal and I, but whatever the university has up I go to it. Madam President, I really enjoyed that ceremony last night and for the first time I was able to see, even though I did not go and talk to her, Nelson Mandela's granddaughter.

Madam President, it is that kind of atmosphere that we need to create in this country by using comparisons that are really eligible to be used, rather than confusing the populace with what should or should not be used. Why must there always be a difference? Ma'am, I do not believe in these cheap political points, it is not the same way when giving away footballs or cricket bats, this is serious business, so that when you come to this Honourable Chamber we need to act responsibly. Ma'am, therefore Government could not go on paying these large amounts for rent when they themselves can build a building. Madam President, what I would agree with is that the maintenance of these buildings is a problem. I would have been glad to see the usage of some of the buildings out there, for example, the Old General Hospital. Ma'am, I am not talking party, I am beyond that that now, but I believe that better use of some of those buildings could have been made. They are still strong but to maintain them because of their being made out of coral stone is a challenge, that we cannot get away from.

Madam President, I have been to the Old General Hospital on two occasions, for a dog bite and for a stone bruise, that was in the late 1950s, early 1960s. I went to the Queen Elizabeth Hospital for a small hernia operation on January 31, 1986. Madam President, so that I have had to occupy the use of either of those buildings, one which is old while the other building is getting old but which has to be looked at in another 15 or 20 years. Madam President, the thing is to find the finance to build a new hospital. I know that Senator Fraser is not one for that, based on what his architect friend has said about that building but the point is that we need to move on.

Madam President, I remember a former Prime Minister saying that we will never build too big an airport or that we will probably never build too big a sea port and we have seen the extensions in Barbados of both the airport and the seaport in our time, because I believe that everybody here would have been alive when that Harbour was opened. Ma'am, therefore we will never get accustomed to this, we always have to look at somewhere down the line we are going to have to spend money spend money to expand because of not only the amount of trade that we are doing but the size of either the aircraft or the ships that are coming to our shores and so we have to cater to those vessels or be left out.

Madam President, we will always see these guarantees coming at some point and we need to give it the kind of support and understanding that these things are necessary no matter what we say or how we feel but that reality must take place. Ma'am, there are so many examples I could use, for example, the Treasury Building here. I know when that was being built and the criticisms that incurred, some said that it was going to sink because we were near the Wharf and almost in the middle of the Careenage. Ma'am, it is still there after nearly 50 years. Similarly, Independent Square, they said that the whole of Bridgetown was supposed to be washed away but it is still there. Madam President, I use these example of this cheap political criticism as to why this Government is spending so much money, but the Government is to pay away the taxpayers money to other people for rental or usage, but not to build something that will belong to the people of Barbados no matter what comes.

Ma'am, that is why there is no need for a lot of debate on this Resolution but sometimes you have to jerk people's mind that it has not always been smooth sailing and that we should expect these things to happen. Madam President, Government is Government, if one does not pay today the other will have to pay tomorrow. Let us look at the amount of loans that this Government had to meet when they came to office, nobody is speaking about those things but they speak about the expenditure as though there are people in some other parts of the world are giving away things freely. Ma'am, it does not work that way, we need to

get beyond that kind of politics. Ma'am, the easiest thing is that when a new Government comes in, especially in these parts, it is sometimes said that they left the Treasury empty. Ma'am, there are two things about the Treasury, it is always either full or always empty, so that Government always has come kind of revenue, it may not be enough to do what should be done but it is one way or the other with the Treasury, it is either full or empty. Madam President, I wish to close my debate on this matter and to express my support for this Resolution. I thank you.

MADAM PRESIDENT: Senator Watson, you have the Floor.

Senator J. A. WATSON: Madam President, I rise to speak on this Resolution, but up front I could say that I am going to support it because it is something that is worthwhile to have expanded in more than one way but even in the way that this fund is being used is worthwhile. Madam President, I want to speak generally first on the idea of statutory corporations because I believe that this is one of the concerns of the discussion that is going on. Of course, the Barbados Conference Service Limited is one of those corporations. Madam President, there are some State-owned corporations in Barbados that are revenue-earning corporations and there are some that are not and I think we have to be concerned with the ones that are revenue-earning corporations and make sure that they do earn, rather than become a burden on Government for transfers year after year.

No.D7 (7)12.36 p.m.

I believe that when you look at the Estimates, you would realise that a lot of these corporations have been benefiting from transfers by Government, and I think that some programme or policy should be put in place to, for want of a better word, wean them off Government. When you look at places like the Port and Grantley Adams Airport and the Caves, and other organisations like those, they really need no grant from Government. In fact, most of these corporations can be helping to fund our Treasury. When you look at the number of State corporations, I believe a lot of them are revenue-earning corporations, and in fact should in some way be turning some of their surpluses into the Treasury. I believe that the ones which are making money should be well capitalised. I think the ones that are not making money should also be capitalised, and it should be made sure that they are brought up to a level where they are actually making surpluses so that they could be helping Government's finances.

Madam President, one way of doing that, I believe, is that -- if I could use the Lloyd Erskine Sandiford Centre as an example -- if you have a loan and that loan is going to eventually generate funds for the Conference Centre, out of the revenues from the operations of the Centre some

amount should be set aside, maybe in a sinking fund that would eventually repay this loan or, in the future, have sufficient funds for any more renovations or anything else that the corporation has to do. In fact, Madam President, what I am saying is that all these State-run organisations should have not so much a budget but more like a target for some sort of return on investment, so that they have sales targets which they would be able to reach; and at the end of the year, instead of becoming a burden, they would actually be contributing. In any business and even in households, there are two ways of doing things. If you have money that is given to you, all you have to do is budget how you will spend that money. On the other hand, if you have to earn money and spend money, you have to do both. You have to look and see how much money you are earning and how you can spend that money; and I believe that is how we have to look at the State-run corporations in Barbados. Instead of having a budget and just drawing down on a budget, I think they need to be looking at more like a cash-flow projection where you are actually looking at your expenditure needs and then trying to meet them through your income. I think that if we start to approach the management of these corporations that way, the large amounts of transfers which we see from central Government would over time be reduced. Madam President, I think that is something we should consider very seriously; that all these corporations should be identified, they should be given targets to meet, and they should be, if not at present then very soon, contributing to revenue of the Government. Madam President, let me turn to the Lloyd Erskine Sandiford Centre. I too have always been impressed with the idea of that building. I know that it got a lot of criticism at first, but I think that it was visionary. I think that Sir Lloyd should be congratulated, not only for the vision of that Centre but for the Barbados Community College across the street as well. I think there were two very good, visionary projects, and if for nothing else he was knighted, I believe that would have been sufficient for him to be knighted. At first, of course, the Centre did not seem as though it was going anywhere. Immediately, as was mentioned, it started with the Small Island Developing States Conference, but then after that it seemed to be wobbling. Then it got going again. Madam President, one of the things that I understand Sir Lloyd wanted at that Centre was to house the youth orchestra, if I am not mistaken. I believe, Madam President, as was said before, you have to be looking for ways of earning money. I do not believe that the Lloyd Erskine Sandiford Centre needs any grants at all. I believe that it has a good product, and it should have the ability to sell that product so that it could have surpluses every year. I see no reason why it should not be able to. Conferences are things which happen all the time, along with meetings and so on. Some people might come to you, but I think that the Lloyd Erskine Sandiford Centre might need a salesman. I think that we pay little attention to selling in Barbados, and selling the services at the Lloyd Erskine Centre should be a major

task. I think that the idea of event planning and that kind of thing will take precedence over the actual selling of the services of the Centre. One of the major tasks at the Centre should be selling those services. Madam President, I take the point that was made earlier, and I believe I might have made it before; that where you have a conference centre you always need accommodation. Some of my friends criticise me quite a lot for suggesting the converting of the space over at Ilaro Court into a hotel, but I believe there is enough space in that area that some four- or five-storey hotel could be built with 300 or 400 rooms, and that could be some project for the private sector to take up. This would enhance the operations of the Lloyd Erskine Sandiford Centre. The idea of being part of the Ministry of Tourism and going overseas on these promotional tours should also be a way of getting more business for the Centre. Madam President, I see no reason at all why every weekend the Lloyd Erskine Sandiford Centre should not be having some interesting concert, probably with the same youth orchestra. I was captivated one Sunday night when I watched Nicholas Brancker and a group of his contemporaries playing some music. It went on for almost two hours, and I do not think I took my eyes off the screen for that entire period of time. I was amazed at the kind of music that Barbadians are capable of. I have a feeling that if we are going to raise our level of quiet and good feelings in Barbados, sometimes we need places like that to go instead of a lot of this “ram bram” type of thing. Not very often you are able to go. Every now and then you might get an opportunity to go and listen to some good music, but that does not happen very often.

12.43 p.m.

I think that should be a project for the centre to have good, mature entertainment at least once a month because I am sure there have a lot of other entertainment that some of our older people like myself could go and enjoy at least once a month.

Madam President, while the Resolution was being presented by Senator Sandiford-Garner, she mentioned the fact that some or most of the offices from Bay Street, in Government Headquarters were moving over to the Lloyd Erskine Sandiford Centre. What she did not say is what will happen to the offices at Bay Street. Maybe in her wrap up she might be able to tell us.

Asides.

Senator J. A. WATSON: Well, I did not hear what would happen to them. I heard that they were going to be renovated. If they were going to be renovated for the offices to move back there, then what will happen to the offices at Lloyd Erskine Sandiford Centre? It is a question of are we creating space that we are spending \$17 million on and then not using the space afterwards. I think that is a

question that Senator Garner may want to enlighten us on because when I heard the move from Bay Street to Lloyd Erskine Sandiford Centre I speculated in my mind that here is an opportunity for an extremely good private sector investment in a hotel in a very good location but that was just my speculation. I would be good to know what will happen with the offices at Bay Street.

The other things about the Resolution that I noticed, Madam President, and I believe if Senator Ince speaks he could probably inform us more about that as well. There was something about the arrangement with the bank, I am not sure whether the 1 per cent below prime rate was 6.5 or it is 1 per cent below 6.5 which would make it 5.5. I was not too clear on that but in any case, Madam President, I understand the sort of ratings that our Government has now but this is a local bank, as far as I am concern, and I believe that where you are seeing rates for mortgages from some banks in Barbados, between around 4 per cent and 4.5 per cent that we needed to be treated better in terms of the interest rate by a local commercial bank and 6.5 or 5.5 I consider a little higher than I would have liked to see it based on the fact that there are commercial mortgage rates going around Barbados at 4 per cent to 4.5 per cent. Those are the few things on the loan itself.

The other thing was a condition. Sometimes I think that we need respect, Madam President, and I think it is a very important value in anybody's life. I do not like the idea of a commercial bank telling my Government that one of the conditions that you have to meet is to, I do not remember the exact terminology, oh hear it is "assignment of monthly disperses from the Government departments or agencies occupying the space as a condition. Even though you have a letter of comfort that I find to be a little bit unnecessary. I think that the commercial bank even in the condition that we are in, should not be making those sorts of demands on us. The other thing I heard Senator Sandiford-Garner said was the idea of the greening of the building. I think that is an excellent idea. I think that more and more we should be looking at greening all of our Government buildings first and I mentioned last week that the initial cost is kind of high, but it is the way to go and wherever it is possible I think that we should be doing it so a place like the Lloyd Erskine Sandiford Centre, I could see those roofs covered with photovoltaic and the whole compound being supplied with renewable energy and that I consider to be extremely good. Maybe the next loan might be for that purpose. I commend the Ministry for going in that direction, \$17 million based on the suggested set asides for small business, one will hope that we will see a lot of small businesses getting some of this \$17 million. There are lots of small contractors that can supply some of the work that is required. I believe some of the solar would be included. There are lots of small contractors who can do cupboards and many things and I think that when I see these contracts being proposed I think it is easy upfront to

determine that 40 per cent of this contract should go to the small businesses and that the areas of supply of goods and services can be identified upfront so that the main contractor can negotiate and have as much as possible or as close as possible to that 40 per cent procurement going to small businesses in these sorts of contracts. These sorts of contracts I think are easy to get the sort of proposal implemented. Finally, Madam President, I want to mention that -- and I think I heard Senator Sandiford-Garner said this in a forum, the Ministry of Tourism and the Government of Barbados work extremely hard at creating valuable foreign exchange in Barbados. That forum supports our dollar to make sure that it does not move from where it is and when we do not have it, it is a threat to our dollar. A threat to our dollar means it is a threat to our livelihood so that the earning of foreign exchange is extremely important to Barbados. It cannot be overstated. I think that all of know but all of us do not pay attention to it so when the Government goes out of its way to borrow \$17 million to upgrade a facility that will eventually earn some foreign exchange and then we get people just wasting foreign exchange buying unnecessary things and spending it unnecessarily. I think that is a shame and therefore I would just want to remind our private sector of the importance of not wasting foreign exchange or rather by ensuring that whatever foreign exchange we earn it is used properly. The foreign exchange we need are for things we do not make in Barbados and that we do not produce in Barbados. A lot of it is used on medicines, medical equipment, motor cars, things that we do not make here therefore, we should not then be using foreign exchange for things that are made in Barbados or produce that is grown in Barbados.

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With those words, Madam President, I want to support the Resolution and suggest that if the deal is not a done deal as far as the loan is concerned that we look at that interest rate again and at the conditions and see if there could be any softer. I would also like to see that wherever possible much of the work be given to small businesses, subcontracted or however other, and that we continue to look for ways of making sure that our State corporations instead of being a burden on the Government are being able to finance Government by earning enough revenue to have surpluses that would go into the Consolidated Fund every year. The Lloyd Erskine Sandiford Conference Centre is one of these corporations that I am sure that can be turned into a surplus in a very short time.

Thank you, Madam President.

SUSPENSION

Senator the Hon. P. M. T. TODD: Madam President, I beg to move that this Sitting be suspended for lunch until 2.15 p.m. today.

The question that the Sitting do now suspend until 2.15 p.m. was put and resolved in the affirmative without division and MADAM PRESIDENT suspended the Sitting accordingly.

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RESUMPTION

MADAM PRESIDENT: This Sitting is resumed. Senator Todd, you have the Floor.

SENATOR the Hon. P.M.T. TODD: Madam President, I rise to support the passage of this Resolution to approve the guarantee by the Minister of Finance and Economic Affairs of the principal sum of BD\$17.625 million and interest thereon to be borrowed by the Barbados Conference Services Limited from the First Citizens Bank (Barbados) Limited to assist with the outfitting of new offices at the Lloyd Erskine Sandiford Centre. Madam President, as other Honourable Senators have mentioned, this activity is a further tangible demonstration of this Government's commitment to the provision of safe and healthy working conditions to members of the public service and indeed to members of the public who have to do business at the various Government offices in our country.

Madam President, as you know, the Government Headquarters Building at Bay Street was built back in the 1950s, as Senator Hunte would have mentioned. I believe that was the work of the architect, the late Mr. Tomlin, along with some other leading buildings in this island. Government Headquarters was constructed using what we would call Barbadian soft stones or limestone, just like this building at the Houses of Parliament in Bridgetown. Madam President, as a result we say the limestone breathe, as it were, so that moisture coming from either above due to precipitation of rainfall or even from the subsurface in terms of the foundation can permeate this limestone and as a result it is difficult for paint to hold fast to the walls because of this oozing of the moisture causes the paint to peel from the wall and the limestone can break down into almost sand over a period of time. This can also give rise to respiratory issues in terms of these particulates floating in the air. Madam President, in fact, I understand that in the Other Place at one stage air purifiers would have had to be installed. Madam President, I know that, for example, if you visit the Library immediately downstairs where we are now that a special compound in terms of paint or paint substitute had to be applied to the walls that were more

resistant to this natural peeling of the paint coming off the walls. Similarly, at Government Headquarters, especially to the eastern side of the building this is more affected by the elements given that the northeast trade winds would blow wind and rainfall onto the eastern side of the Government Headquarters which is not easily visible from Bay Street, only on the eastern side where we would have that whole exposure to wind and rain and especially on that side we have to be constantly repainting. Since being in my office we have had to paint the walls with a special paint that is more resistant to the peeling and a number of air purification devices have had to be installed in a number of the offices at Government Headquarters to ensure that the air quality is not substandard and affecting the health of the members of staff negatively.

Madam President, this intervention is timely where we are providing the offices at the Lloyd Erskine Sandiford Centre where we are able to at least temporarily relocate many of the workers who are currently stationed at Government Headquarter, thus freeing up the building for comprehensive renovations which are not easily done while staff still occupy those buildings and interfacing with the general public. Madam President, as I said, the building would have been constructed in the 1950s and in those days a lot of the plumbing fixtures and piping would have been made out of metal as opposed to the current PVC plastic derivatives, so that a number of those installations could very well need to be looked at in terms of the natural weathering in terms of rusting and so on. Madam President, after a while in this tropical environment and high humidity tiling sometimes just all of a sudden would blow and would need to be replaced. There is also the issue of electrical wiring. Madam President, these comprehensive repairs would then be more easily conducted when the staff are able to move to another location.

Madam President, this maintenance is a good practice because it then ensures that these Government buildings that are worth millions of dollars would not run to ruin but that with timely maintenance and interventions these buildings can actually remain viable in terms of being in a position to be occupied and utilised in a meaningful way for decades to come. Madam President, I full support this intervention. Madam President, before I go further I would also wish to indicate to Senator Watson, through you, that even if after the renovations are completed at Government Headquarters that the staff of these offices have to be returned to base at Government Headquarters, that the office space at the Lloyd Erskine Sandiford Centre is prime commercial real estate and is within a five-mile radius of the capital Bridgetown, it is right next to the ABC Highway, you have major infrastructure in terms of Sky Mall and so on and so it is prime real estate that I am sure would be attractive to the private sector.

Madam President, before we go to the private sector, even today we still have a number of Government agencies housed at private locations, that is where we have to pay very high rents to the private sector. Madam President, next door at Sky Mall there is the entire Ministry of Culture, Sports and Youth being rented where we have to pay rents on a monthly basis to the private sector and so this is just a stone throw away from the Lloyd Erskine Sandiford Centre. Ma'am, there are several other Government departments or statutory agencies that are renting, for example, the Urban Development Commission and Rural Development Commission are renting from the private sector in a building that is just directly east of the Treasury Building, and the list goes on, Madam President.

No.D7 (11)2.43 p.m.

Madam President, I was talking about best practices in terms of the accommodation of Government workers, because we hear of this concept of sick building syndrome where if the buildings are not properly maintained in terms of the air quality, then you can get particulates in the atmosphere which can give rise to ailments like asthma and other respiratory issues. Therefore, a caring Government, as this Administration has demonstrated we are, is always looking to ensure that the accommodation of its staff is the best possible. That is why, as Senator Husbands would have mentioned, when we list in the nine years since this Government has been in office since 2008 and with the prevailing economic challenges affecting us, we have still been able to show this commitment to proper accommodation for our staff by constructing Baobab Towers and Warrens Towers and moving the Ministry of Health from the old General Hospital site at Jemmotts Lane to more modern conditions at the Frank Walcott Building at Culloden Road. The Vector Control Unit was also moved from that location, and is now renting accommodation at the British American building at Magazine Lane, east of the old Carnegie Library. There is the Barbados Water Authority building, where we now have modern photovoltaic solar-powered street lights; dozens of them as you pass that site along the Pine section of the ABC Highway. You can see dozens of these brightly lit solar-powered street lights covering the entire carpark of that new Barbados Water Authority building, Madam President. We would have inherited a situation where, at the old National Insurance building at Fairchild Street, unions had to take industrial action under the previous Administration because of the poor working conditions. All of the workers have been relocated to these modern complexes built by this Administration, as I would have mentioned before. This is very relevant, Madam President, given that this Administration has again passed legislation in terms of safety and health at work, so that both the Government and the private sector by law are expected to maintain best practices in terms of safe and healthy working conditions for members of staff. Madam

President, Senator Watson also mentioned the whole issue of whether, after renovating the Government Headquarters Building, we should return these Government offices to that location, or if we should free up that space for hotel development. In fact, since this measure has been introduced in The Other Place, this matter has been hotly debated on the radio call-in programmes. I would not delve deeply into this except to say that this Democratic Labour Party Administration has been taking the lead in looking at this whole Needhams Peninsula-Carlisle Bay area and stretching right down to Brandons. The Administration has been looking at the possibility in this area for tourism development. Master plans and so on are being looked at and developed, and the Minister of Tourism would have also publicly made reference to the fact that his Ministry is actively looking at the possibility of constructing a massive conference facility in this area; not at the site of Government Headquarters but in surrounding areas. This would massively increase the capacity in terms of facilities to host conferences, as the Parliamentary Secretary in the Ministry of Tourism, Senator Irene Sandiford-Garner, mentioned in her introduction of this Resolution today. She also mentioned the whole issue of MICE (Meetings, Incentives, Conferences and Events), which is a very lucrative aspect of the tourism industry worldwide. Madam President, I remember just a few years ago attending a conference at one of the Disney hotels in Orlando, the Coronado Springs Hotel, where you had a corridor of nearly 70 metres long and on either side of that corridor were conference facilities, and they were fully subscribed. The conference I attended was in one of those conference rooms hosting 2 500 delegates comfortably and being able to cater to banquets. This is commonplace in developed countries, and very lucrative, as I said. You could imagine that tens of thousands of delegates would have been accommodated at that one hotel, Madam President. This Administration is forward-thinking in terms of looking at expanding the tourism plant, so that when we have these conference facilities we will be able to house thousands of delegates at one location with all the necessary amenities such as translation facilities, restaurants and bars, and accommodation within close proximity. Madam President, what happens is that we would then be in a better position to attract these massive conferences, because they will not come here if we do not have the necessary capacity in terms of seating at conference facilities in one location. Of course, along with this would be room stock, in that if we are able to attract these conferences, then we would have to have accommodation. Madam President, it serves as a catalyst to encourage investors locally and internationally to invest in the building out of more hotels and hotel rooms. As I said, we can leave Government Headquarters alone. We have so many areas along this stretch that are very appropriate for hotel accommodation, given that the Carlisle Bay itself is one of the best beaches in the world, really, Madam President. It is on the western side of the island and not the windward side, so we have calm beaches

and even, compared to the 1970s when I was growing up, there was not as much beach as there is today. The waves used to crash against the Esplanade concrete walkway, but now we have beaches several metres long and heavily utilised by locals and tourists alike, Madam President. As I said, I am very impressed with the vision of the Minister of Tourism and his Parliamentary Secretary and his entire team in terms of looking at the medium-term expansion of tourism in our country. Madam President, what we are looking at is thousands of jobs to be created as hundreds of hotel rooms are built along this area and other parts of the island; and sustainable jobs in the construction phase and when we begin to facilitate the day-to-day operation of these hotels in terms of reception, housekeeping, bar and restaurant services, maintenance, taxi operators, and the other spinoffs. I am looking at Bridgetown, our nation's capital, reaping the sweets of this infrastructural development in tourism in terms of thousands upon thousands of tourists traversing the streets of Bridgetown, going on their guided tours, patronising the bars, rum-shops, restaurants and village shops in Nelson Street, Baxters Road, Tudor Street, the Orleans, the Bay Land and other areas in the City centre, so that there is a win-win situation.

2.43 p.m.

You would have this trickle-down effect where much more money would be circulating in our country therefore, I do not really have time for the prophets of gloom and doom, Madam President, I see a bountiful Barbados. A Barbados where unemployment will go into the single digit levels, Madam President, as we seek to really propel this economy forward.

In closing I would again wish to congratulate this Democratic Labour Party (DLP) Administration for really sticking to our convictions in terms of the build out of the then Sherbourne Conference Centre in the first place, as other Senators mentioned, the Barbados Labour Party (BLP) and other opponents called it a white elephant yet, many of them as soon as they assumed office, rushed up there, renovated offices with all the various amenities for their creature comforts and so I really congratulate Sir Lloyd Erskine Sandiford who has just turned 80 years of age for his foresight. Against all of the critics he stuck to his guns. I remember we were seeking to host the Small Island Developing States (SIDS) Conference in those days and we had to have the necessary accommodation and this Democratic Labour Party (DLP) Administration bit the bullet and committed the country to the build out of that infrastructure. Madam President, we cannot imagine a Barbados today without the facilities offered by the current Lloyd Erskine Sandiford Centre. When you look at it, Madam President, on some occasions, as Crop Over is coming up, Lloyd Erskine Sandiford Centre has such capacity that on a single night, two calypso tents can be

hosted at that same venue. You have conference facilities to the East and to the West of the Complex, Madam President, we have had BMEX where that would have stretched out into the carpark, it is so heavily subscribed, Madam President. I have attended Church conferences of the Seventh Day Adventist Church and my own the Church, the Roman Catholic Church had an island wide assembly there a few years ago. We have conferences, private sector Government sector international conferences, beauty pageants and the list goes on and this could only have been possible because the right excellent Sir Lloyd Erskine Sandiford would have had the foresight and stick to his guns and construct that centre, Madam President. I fully support the work being done here at that site because again it builds out capacity to ensure that this site can be fully utilised. There is no need to turn Ilaro Court into a hotel, there sufficient space around in that vicinity that can develop hotel to support the work of the Conference Centre. I understand what Senator Watson is saying because I remember attending a conference many years ago down Town Kingston, Jamaica. The conference was held at the Jamaica Conference Centre and right to it, literally a stone's throw away from that was a boutique hotel, at that time it was owned by the Government, called the Oceana Hotel, so that as a delegate, I stayed there and just walked over to the conference centre. As I said, we have that entire areas, Haggatt Hall, Lower Burney, The Pine, Wildey, and even The Pine Basin, once the necessary drainage is done that could accommodate a hotel down the road to support the Lloyd Erskine Sandiford Centre because when we have these events at the official residence of the Prime Minister, Ilaro Court, which is a historic building, we see the repeat tourists who are accommodated there at these receptions are very, very impressed with the unique architecture there of that Ilaro Court location. It is a historic building that has tremendous value in terms of heritage tourism so to just knock it down and turn it into a hotel would be totally unnecessary. We have enough space nearby but the idea of having a conference hotel near to the conference centre is quite feasible and maybe we would be able to attract private sector investors to partner with Government in that regard.

Madam President, without further ado, I fully support the passage of this Resolution.

MADAM PRESIDENT: Senator Ince, you have the Floor.

Senator J. INCE: Madam President, I rise to support the Resolution that is before this Honourable Chamber. It is a Resolution where the Barbados Conference Services Limited (BCSL) is seeking a loan in the sum of \$17.625 million from First Citizens Bank (Barbados) Limited and for the purpose of assisting the outfitting of the new offices at the Lloyd Erskine Sandiford Centre.

Madam President, when we look at the purpose of the loan and we think of the whole idea of outfitting offices and we look at the conditions under which we have always said that we would like public servants to function, one would recognise that our feasible environment or what you would call a comfortable environment as to productivity, but, Madam President, the loan as we look at it, when we consider the terms and conditions, as I said before, that is being borrowed by the Barbados Conference Services Limited (BCSL) and I would term it the management arm of the Lloyd Erskine Sandiford Centre, that moneys is going to come from the lender, First Citizens Bank and when we look at the facility, we are looking at the facility of what we term, a Bridging Loan. What do you mean by a Bridging Loan? Bridging Loan simple says that we are going to put a facility in place that when everything is done you can still continue operations without having to halt any of the work processes that are involved and out of that you would also have - the facility is number two - a demand loan with the same amount that once you have completed, then that becomes a demand loan. Questions were asked, Madam President, about the whole idea of the interest rates but let me say something about Barbados Conference Services Limited. I think the Government must be congratulated and the efforts of the Minister of Tourism, the staff within the Ministry of Tourism and the Parliament Secretary. Barbados Conference Services Limited (BCSL), Madam President, started in October 10, 1997, and when we look at the history, that is why I say it is important that these things must be highlighted and the efforts of the Democratic Labour Party (DLP) to what we say to enhance the financial viability of State agencies and the history would show that despite Government grants, the Barbados Conference Services Limited (BCSL) were making losses, losses and losses but what is important and what we should note is that they made a profit under this Democratic Labour Party (DLP) Administration and that is why I said let us applaud the efforts of the Minister, the Parliament Secretary and the management staff at the Lloyd Erskine Sandiford Centre. I am going to do a little reading from page 5 and this is at March 2015, just a paragraph, it says here. When I speak of efforts when you listen to the comments that are being made about a Government not doing anything and a Government not heading in the right direction, it says here on page 5:

“Operational expenses were \$10.9 million which represented a 28 per cent increase when compared to the previous year’s expenses of \$8.5 million. The company recorded a net profit of \$5.033 million when compared to the loss of \$2.44 million recorded in 2014. The companies accumulated deficit now stands at \$1.5 million which represents 76 per cent less than prior year. This clearly shows that management has continued to progressively increase revenues while at the same time effectively manage expenditure to significantly reduce the company loss from operations.”

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This Administration said to Barbadians that we were going to restructure and diversify the economy and all efforts are going to be made to ensure that these State agencies remain viable.

Madam President, let us look at the Terms and Conditions of this loan which are very basic. We had some queries raised. As I said, the amount is \$17.625 million, the currency Barbados dollars and the interest rate... Senator Watson queried the interest rate, and let me say here, Madam President, that the interest rate reflects what is happening with the Debentures and Treasury Notes being issued by Government and most of the time you would use a benchmark to arrive at your interest rate. The interest rate says prime less 1 per cent for a current effective rate of 6.65 per cent per annum. Interest will be calculated on the actual number of days elapsed and a 365 day year. Madam President, we issued \$50 million issued in 2015, mature 2025, 6.62 per cent. In addition to that, we also issued \$100 million, \$4.25 per cent and these are going to mature in May of 2017. What I am saying, Madam President, is that this is reflective, so the whole idea of the interest rate is of no concern but what I also say is critical is that even in the face of prior downgrades and in the face of present downgrades when you hear that it is going to be expensive for Government to borrow, I said publicly that it depends on the institution that is doing the lending. It does not necessarily mean because you receive downgrades that automatically you are going to get an interest rate of 10 or 12 per cent on a loan. The years here for the demand loan is ten years. It says that from the date of disbursement the loan will be paid by equal monthly instalments representing a blended payment of principal and interest of \$201 476. That is worked out by the lending institution.

Madam President, what I am saying is that even with the downgrades where we are down to C, Barbados still has the capacity, so in the light of the downgrades you have to know what the meaning... You would hear comments from some economists and some financial analysts as well as the Opposition that it seems that we are in no-man’s land. Madam President, this loan is reflective, as I said it, of the confidence that financial institutions still have in this Government of the Administration of the Democratic Labour Party. It is clear because without that confidence we could not achieve a 6.65 per cent rate for ten years given the fact, as I said, that we had previous downgrades and present downgrades, and you hear the comments that the Government now has nowhere to go.

Madam President, questions were also raised about the guarantee. Now, once you borrow you are not going to get a guarantee the next day. The institutions must put what we call temporary measures in place. It says, security:

(i) Letter of Comfort;

(ii) Guarantee from the Government of Barbados;

(iii) Assignment of monthly lease proceeds from the Government departments or agencies occupying the office space.

Madam President, it is important that you recognise the wording for the security.

Senator Watson queried again the whole idea of the assignment of monthly payments. Madam President, the assignments are what you call specific assignments. They are not general. If you had general assignments it would be a problem because a general assignment would say charge against the Consolidated Fund, and if you see an assignment that says charge against the Consolidated Fund it means that everything that goes into the Consolidated Fund would have to be paid to First Citizens Bank, but this is what you call specifics. It says lease payments and it identifies itself: It says departments or agencies occupying the office space, and that is the office space that is being outfitted at the Lloyd Erskine Sandiford Centre, and these are temporary measures.

Madam President, we can look at the prepayment. It says permitted without penalty after three years, so there is a clause that says that you can repay all of this money after three years and that is standard, but prior to three years if you want to repay you are going to pay the interest and the penalty. It is like a fixed deposit where they say to you yes we can give you your money but you are going to lose the interest. The bank is saying you can repay but if you try to repay you are going to lose the interest, and that is only reasonable. If I was a lending institution and I gave you \$17.625 million and you want to come the next day and say to me that the project is complete, the Certificate of Completion is in place, you can have your money back, that would not sit too well with me. After I gave you \$17.62 million in good faith and the next two days after your project is completed and you are going to come to hand me a cheque, you are going to come and say Mr. Ince you could take your cheque, no, I am going to put a system in place to say to you look you must keep my money for a certain time and let me get a little something, I must have what you call an opportunity benefit, so that is what it is. It says after three years.

Madam President, then you go down to Item (iii) where a Letter of Comfort is held pending provision of the Government guarantee supported by a legal opinion from the lender's legal counsel that the interim Letter of Comfort will provide the same collateral benefits and be treated as if it were a Government guarantee. Madam President, these are the systems that you put in place until you get that Government guarantee.

Madam President, you go to the final item (vi) on the same page 4 where it says that there is a legal opinion, and that is what is important.

Madam President, as I said, if the country was in a crisis, if the economy was falling off a cliff, or if the houses and businesses were falling apart...Sometimes it is important to see what the financial institutions put into your Terms and Conditions. It says there is a legal opinion from the lender's legal counsel confirming that there will be no negative implications to the lender entering into an agreement with the borrower in light of the company's insolvent balance sheet. Madam President, I think I need to read that again because it sends a message to those who would want to criticise that Barbados is still a place to do business. The economy is still what we termed an economy that is viable. We are still delivering those critical social services. Madam President, I will read it again. It says: There is a legal opinion from the lender's legal counsel confirming that there will be no negative implications to the lender entering into an agreement with the borrower in light of the company's insolvent balance sheet. Madam President, that is why I referred from the inception of the Barbados Conference Services Limited to the fact that they made a profit under this Democratic Labour Party Administration and what the legal opinion of the lenders are saying about the Government of Barbados, the people of Barbados and the economy of Barbados.

Madam President, I fully support this Resolution. It is a Resolution, as I said, that seeks to enhance not only the working environment but the operations of Government, and with those words, Madam President, I am obliged.

MADAM PRESIDENT: Senator Boyce you have the Floor.

Senator the Hon. D. W. BOYCE: Madam President, I just want to lend my support to this Resolution for the guarantee of these funds for outfitting the offices at the Lloyd Erskine Sandiford Conference Centre.

Madam President, I particularly want to support it because I think it sends a signal of what may be possible for us to look at a lot of Government properties around and try to make them into income-earning assets for the Government rather than just being idle. Madam President, the thing with that is that you have to do it in a phased way for a number of reasons one of which is the debt that it causes you to incur because a lot of that \$60 million a year that we pay in leases and rents goes to the private sector so one has to be fairly careful how you replace that leased space with your own space in terms of the overall economy. Madam President, surely that suggests to the Government that we have to look at a programme of asset management to an asset reconditioning to begin to give us some opportunities for the future.

I am particularly happy, Madam President, that this one is being at the Lloyd Erskine Sandiford Centre.

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Madam President, in 1974 I got a little 'pick' at the Ministry of Finance when I came back from Mona Campus, Jamaica. Since then the only thing that seems to have changed substantially is the fact that we now have air-conditioning, in those days we had fans and opened windows. I am not sure which is better now than then. Ma'am, I just want to say that the conditions in some of those facilities on Bay Street are really very ancient. My office is not the same now, they have moved me to another office which is not to my liking because it is not sufficiently old and not sufficiently austere but Madam President, the workers in those buildings really do deserve to have improved facilities. I think that often people concern themselves with salaries, wages and pensions and so on but these matters of accommodation for Government workers is very important, not only because of the concern for their welfare but because you put them in a position where they could be more productive, where you can have better electronic facilities and that sort of thing so that they can be more productive. Madam President, we keep talking about productivity which is also tied into the physical facilities that are available to the people, as well as the processes and so on.

Madam President, I want to support this Resolution from this point of view and therefore I want to lend my support to this Resolution and for those few comments for guidance for the future. I thank you, Madam President.

MADAM PRESIDENT: Senator Sandiford-Garner, you have the Floor.

Senator Mrs. V. I. SANDIFORD-GARNER: Madam President, as I wrap up I would just wish to address a number of queries which we would have had from our colleagues who would have spoken earlier. Ma'am, the first query was about marketing and having sales persons marketing the Lloyd Erskine Sandiford Centre. Ma'am, I would just want to clarify that the Lloyd Erskine Sandiford Centre is a fully operational business place which is marketed, there are also sales persons who have had a relationship built with the Barbados Tourism Marketing Inc., over the past year of formalised relationships where they work closely together with our meetings and incentives product. Ma'am, Senator Todd spoke about the M.I.C.E. industry where the staff at the Lloyd Erskine Sandiford Centre works with the Ministry of Tourism and the Barbados Tourism Marketing Inc., where they look at conference and niche events that are promoted at the Centre.

Madam President, they are also trained overseas and the staff of the Barbados Conference Services Limited has attended the 5th IMEX America Las Vegas Trade Show, they send brochures and collateral outside when they cannot travel but all in all they do promote the institution. They have told me that they promote the "Small Room Incentive" or volume bookings to increase sales and they have aligned themselves with an organisation called the Student Centre to promote edu-tourism and during the financial year 2016-2017 the Centre as well as the island benefited from the influx of representatives from various Canadian and United States of America colleges and universities promoting their various programmes. They have also been the venue for the past two years of the annual Canadian Educational Fair and during 2016-2017 there was a significant increase in smaller informational sessions, seminars and workshops held by individual colleges and universities. This was as a direct relationship with the partnership with the Student Centre.

Madam President, they have promoted the "Small Room Facilities" and volume bookings to increase sales by using a more aggressive form of radio and print media. They have also intensified their outgoing marketing strategies to reinforce the brand and they conveyed the concept of "Brilliant for Business, Extraordinary for Events". When you look at their advertisement, that is the tag line, using traditional and social media. They leverage e-commerce and social media, Twitter, Instagram, all the e-commerce platform such as Facebook and Search Engine optimization is also used when looking for business. They are advertised in the Organisation of Eastern Developing States Business Magazines and we have reestablished the link with CVent which is the premier venue selection website used by event planning companies globally. During the past year the sales team has responded to a number of requests for information mostly for 2017 and 2018 events.

Madam President, we also host Laugh-It-Off every year now, that has been a steady income generator for the organisation. Next World Productions partnered with the Barbados Conference Limited Services Limited in 2016, that is a young innovative organisation which deals with local entertainers. Ma'am, one of our Senators had asked about local entertainment. Next World is the company that promotes a very popular event called "Mahalia's Corner" which has proved to be a standing room only event every year and that will continue through September and October of this year. Of course, it is used for NIFCA every year. During the 50th Anniversary of Independence they partnered with the National Cultural Foundation to have the Lloyd Erskine Sandiford Centre as NIFCA central.

Madam President, what is coming up for the next year is that we have the Canadian Food Showcase by the Canadian Export Development Inc. We have the CUP-FEST Grand Fair which is an educational fair organised by

the same Student Center in May. In June we have BMEX 2017. We will also have for the first time the World Flower Show where the Barbados Flower Arranging Society is going to be hosting the World Flower Show and the entire center has been booked for that show.

Madam President, in July we have CARIB Food and Hospitality Exhibition and this came as a direct query through our corporate website. The event is being promoted as the first Caribbean Food Hotel and Restaurant Exhibition to both local and international participants. In August we have the Barbados CARIFESTA which was launched on Monday, then come September we have CUP-FEST where we have the Canadian universities exhibiting their products and services. Ma'am, they are the major events for the year. Of course, when Christmas comes, you have a hard time booking for your staff's events there and as well as Old Year's Night.

Madam President, the scenario was built that probably we might be outfitting the institution to the tune of \$17 million for Government offices to move over while their building is being refurbished. The question was asked what happens when they move back. Madam President, the Ministry of Housing, Lands and Rural Development has taken a 25-year lease because they understand that there is always a demand for space for Government offices. The infrastructure which public servants inhabit in this country has been rundown for a very long time, there was not much infrastructural development done in 14 years. It has now caught up with us. The Ministry of Housing, Lands and Rural Development is very well-aware of that and as landlord of the State they have made the decision that they wish their lease at the Lloyd Erskine Sandiford Centre to be for 14 years so that when the Government offices move out, because the Office of the Prime Minister will be going back to Bay Street and so will Cabinet Office when the repairs are done.

Madam President, a query was made somewhere in the public domain sometime this week about Bay Street because somewhere along the line people feel that there are plans afoot by the Government to utilise Government Headquarters for other facilities. I would wish to make it clear here that the Prime Minister before this one, the Right Honourable Prime Minister Owen Arthur was never in favour of Bay Street being used for anything other than Government Headquarters. The current Right Honourable Prime Minister, Fruendel J. Stuart and the Chief Town Planner have rejected any offers to utilise Bay Street for any other activity other than Government Headquarters and therefore they will be moving back to that building. Madam President, I do not know what within the next 10 years after that, which will come, what the other person who may be there may use it for but we are not controlled or guided by any other considerations other than the historical relevance of that building.

No.D7 (15)3.25 p.m.

We are not controlled or guided by any other considerations other than the historical relevance of that building and the importance of it on the Barbados landscape. That, I think, should make it very clear what this Administration has planned for Bay Street and for the Lloyd Erskine Sandiford Centre. With that said, Madam President, I do not think there were any other grey areas. We talked about the reduction in the operation expenses. Senator Ince spoke about the revenue which would have been earned last year. I spoke about it earlier as well. This indicates that the management and staff of the Lloyd Erskine Sandiford Centre and the Ministry of Tourism understand their mandate and will be proceeding to ensure that Barbados has another piece of valuable and prime real estate at the disposal of the public of Barbados. With that, I ask that this Resolution do now pass.

The question that this Resolution do now pass was put to the Honourable the Senate and was resolved in the affirmative without division. ADJOURNMENT Senator Hon. D.W. BOYCE: Madam President, this brings us to the end of Government Business for today, and therefore I wish to move that the Senate be adjourned sine die. The question that the Sitting do now adjourn sine die was put and resolved in the affirmative without division and Her Honour THE PRESIDENT adjourned the Sitting accordingly.

3.16 p.m.

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FRASER, Senator Sir HENRY H.S.

HUNTE, Senator R.A.

HUSBANDS, Senator H. A.

INCE, Senator J.

SANDIFORD-GARNER, Senator Mrs. V. I.

TODD, Senator the Hon. P. M. T.

WATSON, Senator J. A.

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EDITORIAL NOTES — NOT PART OF THE REPORT

Prepared with the transcript; for checking against the recording and the Minutes.

EDITORIAL QUERIES

Points noted while preparing this report from the edited transcript. The text has not been altered except where stated.

Q1. Masthead. The session is not stated in the source, so no session line is printed.

Q2. Adjournment. In the source the heading ‘ADJOURNMENT’, Senator the Hon. D. W. Boyce’s motion to adjourn sine die and the question on it run on inside the procedural sentence recording the passing of the Resolution, rather than standing as a heading, a speech and a separate procedural sentence. Printed as in the source.

Q3. Opening. The heading ‘ANNOUNCEMENTS BY Her HONOUR THE PRESIDENT’ and the label ‘Madam PRESIDENT:’ appear inside a paragraph of Madam President’s opening words, together with the Senators’ excuses and the confirmation of the Minutes of March 20, 2017. Printed as in the source.

Q4. Take-slips. The take-slips ‘No.D7 (7)12.36 p.m.’ (Senator J. A. Watson’s speech) and ‘No.D7 (15)3.25 p.m.’ (Senator Mrs. V. I. Sandiford-Garner’s reply) appear in the source as ordinary paragraphs. Printed as in the source.

Q5. Order No. 2 and Papers. The Resolution’s title names the lender as ‘FIRST CITIZENS BANKS (BARBADOS) LIMITED’, while the debate says First Citizens Bank (Barbados) Limited; and the paper laid is described as the Invest Barbados Annual Report ‘for the year March 31, 2016’. Printed as in the source.

DEBATE SUMMARY

(Editorial summary — not part of the record.)

The Senate met at 11.00 a.m. on Wednesday, 29th March, 2017, with the President, Her Honour Senator Miss Kerryann F. Ifill, in the Chair; prayers were led by Rev. Father Errington Massiah. Madam President announced that Senators McClean and Byer-Suckoo were away on Government business, and the Minutes of March 20, 2017 were confirmed. Senator the Hon. D. W. Boyce laid the Annual Report of the Barbados International Promotion Corporation (Invest Barbados) for the year to March 31, 2016.

The only item of business was Order No. 2, the Resolution to approve the guarantee by the Minister of Finance of BD\$17.625 million and interest, to be borrowed by the Barbados Conference Services Limited from First

Citizens Bank (Barbados) Limited to outfit new offices at the Lloyd Erskine Sandiford Centre. Senator Mrs. V. I. Sandiford-Garner moved it, explaining that the space would be rented to Government offices so that Government would in effect be paying itself, and that staff would move there while the Government Headquarters at Bay Street was refurbished. She recalled that the centre had been left unfinished when the Government took office in 2008, and said that fitting LEDs between 2011 and 2013 had cut a \$1 million electricity bill to BDS\$745 000. Senator Sir Henry H. S. Fraser supported the Resolution, arguing that the centre could be exploited further for medical, heritage and creative events, though some conferences of 2 000 people had been lost for lack of a large enough hall.

Senator H. A. Husbands, speaking also as Acting Minister of Education, supported the Resolution as part of providing proper conditions for public officers, as with the two towers at Warrens. He described an Inter-American Development Bank conference on ‘Learning in 21st Century Schools’, and named urgent needs at the Hospitality Institute and at the Frederick Smith and St. George Secondary Schools; Madam President cautioned him to keep to the Resolution. Senator R. A. Hunte recalled the criticism of the Sherbourne Conference Centre when it was built, and said Government had paid \$10 million a year in rent for the Barbados Water Authority before its new building. Senator J. A. Watson supported the Resolution but asked what would become of the offices once staff returned to Bay Street, and whether the rate was one per cent below a prime rate of 6.5 per cent.

After lunch Senator the Hon. P. M. T. Todd described the condition of the 1950s Government Headquarters, built of Barbadian limestone, and the need to empty it for renovation. Senator J. Ince quoted the company’s accounts: operating expenses of \$10.9 million, up 28 per cent, a net profit of \$5.033 million against a loss of \$2.44 million in 2014, and an accumulated deficit down 76 per cent to \$1.5 million. Senator Boyce said Government paid about \$60 million a year in leases and rents and should turn idle properties into income-earning assets in phases.

Replying, Senator Sandiford-Garner described the centre’s marketing, including its work with the Barbados Tourism Marketing Inc. and events such as Laugh-It-Off, the World Flower Show and CARIFESTA. She said the Ministry of Housing, Lands and Rural Development had taken a 25-year lease of the new offices, and that Prime Ministers Arthur and Stuart had rejected any use of Bay Street other than as Government Headquarters. The Resolution was agreed to without division, and on the

motion of Senator Boyce the Senate was adjourned sine | die.

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