

THE

House of Assembly Debates

(OFFICIAL REPORT)

FIRST SESSION 1994 - 99

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

Tuesday, December 6, 1994

Pursuant to the adjournment, the House of Assembly met at 11.20 a.m. o'clock.

PRESENT

His Honour I. A. ROETT, B.A. Dip. Ed. (Speaker)
His Honour R. D. MARSHALL, (Deputy Speaker)
Rt. Hon. L. E. SANDIFORD, B.A., M.A., (Econ.),

J.P.

Mr. H. deB. FORDE, Q.C., M.A., LL.B.
Mr. B. M. TAITT, B.A. (Hons.), M.P.A., LL.B.

(Hons.)

Mr. L. A. WEEKES, G.C.M., J.P.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS, Q.C., LL.M. (Attorney General and Minister of Home Affairs)

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON, LL.B. (Hons.)

Hon. Sir HAROLD SL JOHN, Q.C., LL.B.

Mr. L. R. TULL, Q.C., M.A.

Hon. Dr. R. L. CHELTENHAM, Q.C., M.A., M.Sc. (Econ.), (Minister of Tourism, International Transport and the Environment)

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER, (Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Foreign Trade and International Business) (Leader of the House)

Mr. J. O. TUDOR, J.P.

Hon. G. W. PAYNE, (Minister of Public Works, Transport and Housing)

Hon. R. C. EASTMOND, J.P., B.A. (Hons.), Dip. Ed., LL.B. (Hons.), L.E.C. (Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development)

Dr. R. C. HAYNES, M.B., Ch.B., F.R.C.P. (Edin.)

Mr. D. CARTER

Hon. R. N. GREENIDGE, B.A., LL.B. (Minister of Labour, Community Development and Sports)

Mr. G. A. CLARKE, (Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry of Public Works, Transport and Housing)

Mr. J. M. EDGHILL

Mr. F. J. STUART, B.A., LL.M.

Mr. W. C. C. CALLENDER, J.P., B.A., Dip. Ed., B.Sc. (Chairman of Committees)

Mr. H. F. LASHLEY

Mr. R. St. C. TOPPIN, LL.B.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN

Hon. Miss H. E. THOMPSON, LL.B. (Minister of Health)

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY, LL.B. (Minister of Education, Youth Affairs and Culture).

Prayers were led by Rev. Ivan Harewood. Mr.

SPEAKER: This House is now in session.

MINUTES Mr. SPEAKER:

Minutes of 15th November, 1994.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that the Minutes of the proceedings of the Honourable the House of Assembly of its meeting on the 15th day of November, 1994, which have been circulated, be taken as read.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: I beg to second that, Sir.

Mr. SPEAKER: If there are no alterations or corrections, then let those Minutes stand confirmed.

PAPERS

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Mr. Speaker, I am commanded to lay the Report of the Operations of the Sugar Workers' Provident Fund for the period January to December 1993.

I am also commanded to lay the Report of the Operations of the Severance Payment Scheme for the period January to December 1993; the Sugar Industry (Sugar Workers' Provident Fund) Order, 1994; Annual Reports and Statements of Account of the Barbados National Bank for the years 1992 and 1993; and the Report of the Audit of the Accounts of the National Insurance Fund for the year ended December 31, 1991.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Mr. Speaker, I am commanded to lay the Report of the Fire Service for the calendar year 1991 and the Report for the calendar year 1992. I am also commanded to lay the Annual Report on the Immigration and Passport Department for the year ended 31st December, 1991.

GOVERNMENT NOTICES

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Mr. Speaker, I beg to give notice of a Resolution to grant the sum of \$9 970 916 from the Consolidated Fund and place it at the disposal of Government to supplement the Estimates 1994-95, as shown in the Supplementary Estimates 1994-95, No. 3, which form the Schedule to the Resolution.

I further beg to give notice, Sir, of a Resolution to approve the exchange by Norma Clarke-Adamson of a parcel of land, together with dwelling house thereon, at Wanstead, Cave Hill in the parishes of St. Michael and St. James.

I beg further to give notice of a Resolution to approve of the lease to the Barbados Port Authority of a parcel of land at the Bridgetown Harbour in the parish of St. Michael for the development of a coastal cruise facility and for facilities of the Sand Pit community.

Further, I beg to give notice of a Resolution to approve the compulsory acquisition by the Crown of a parcel of land at Bryan's Road, Welchman Hall in the parish of St. Thomas for the preservation of ecological and aesthetic value of Harrison's Cave.

I further beg to give notice of a Resolution to approve the compulsory acquisition by the Crown of a parcel of land at Well Gap, Cave Hill in the parish of St. Michael for road improvement.

NOTICES OF QUESTIONS

Mr. SPEAKER: The Right Honourable Member for St. Michael South, re project funding and investment sector loans.

Rt. Hon. L. E. SANDIFORD: Mr. Speaker, to ask the Prime Minister and Minister of Finance and Economic Affairs:

Bearing in mind the statement by the Prime Minister and Minister of Finance and Economic Affairs to the Barbados Chamber of Commerce on Wednesday, October 27, 1994 to the effect that Barbados can stand to benefit from having access to U.S. \$240 million in project funding and U.S. \$30 million in investment sector loans from the Inter-American Development Bank -

1. Will the Minister indicate the separate projects and their individual costs as components of the U.S. \$240 million referred to?
2. Will the Minister set out the purposes of the investment sector loan, as well as what pre-conditions and macro-economic policy framework, if any, the Bank is requiring with respect to the loans?
3. Will the Minister state what roles, if any, are being allocated to the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank with respect to the loans referred to? And
4. Will the Minister state when work on the loans was initiated and give the time, place and nature of the discussions held with the Inter-American Development Fund and/or the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank on the loans between September 7, 1994 and the date of the Minister's statement to the Barbados Chamber of Commerce?

FIRST READING OF BILLS

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move the First Reading of a Bill to amend the Savings Bonds Act, Cap. 104A of the Laws of Barbados. Notice of this Bill was given on 1st December, 1994.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: I beg to second that, Sir.

CONGRATULATORY AND/OR OBITUARY SPEECHES

His Honour R. D. MARSHALL: Mr. Speaker, I rise in this House to pay homage to the life and times of the late John Wesley StClair Rollock, late of Parkinson Road, Fairfield, St. Michael. The late John Rollock domiciled in the constituency of St. Michael West Central which I have the honour of representing in this Honourable House. 11.30a.m.

I first came into contact with John Rollock in 1990 on the campaign trail, and I can say that on the first few encounters I had with him I characterised him as a person with the patience of Job. On many occasions, I came

into conversations with people talking about John Rollock and what was generally said was that he never spoke ill of anyone or ever did anyone harm.

Many times when I passed I saw him in his verandah - he was an avid cricket fan - sitting in his composure listening to the game and reading his newspaper. I attended the funeral last Saturday at the Church of St. Leonards where the service was conducted and his remains interred.

I listened to the eulogy by Mr. John Rollock's son, the Honourable Member for St. Michael West, and I remember his saying that his father the late John Rollock was a man from whom he inherited many traits. Sir, he also mentioned that his father was never a liar but, Sir, he did not say if he inherited that trait from his father.

Sir, I also heard his tribute to his father and from my recollection the poem was from Tennyson:

"Break, break, break
On thy cold gray stones, O Sea!
And I would that my tongue could utter
The thoughts that arise in me."

Sir, it was quite fitting to send off his father in that manner and I, on behalf of the Members of the Barbados Labour Party in this Honourable House, would like to say we extend our condolences to the Honourable Member for St. Michael West and his family on the passing of this distinguished man. Thank you very much.

Mr. L. A. WEEKES: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I believe it is customary for the person who speaks first on a Resolution of this sort to indicate that the Resolution would be before the House and so by that method the House would be able to communicate its sympathies to families, and it is in that respect that I join the Honourable Member in paying that tribute to the father of my colleague and friend from St. Michael North West.

It is not always that persons of humble origin and persons who have lived in the years and the environment which surrounded those early years of one's life... It is extremely difficult to understand how they have been able to at least achieve some merit or satisfaction in things that they have done in life. John Rollock was a man who was known to be one of many parts and that was, to my mind, the entire environment that surrounded persons living in that era. They were not able to obtain the specialist training that many young persons today would have been able to do in order to reach the maximum of their own abilities and capabilities in performance.

Even though he did not catch the public eye in any particular flamboyant way, he had by his way of life

contributed to the building of the fabric of this society of which we are justifiably proud of those persons who with limited resources were able to do. Of course, he was no scholar. He was no teacher, but he was a man who was given to many activities in life. One of them seemed to be charity. He was always willing to lend a helping hand and, as a result of his life, communities in which he has lived tend to be richer, more cohesive and most of all, they have been able to live as a people as village life would afford them.

Very often we regret that the younger people with better facilities and better opportunities have not been able to do what persons like John Rollock was able to do, live in his community, serving his community, helping his community and most of all, be an inspiration to those who are around him.

Needless to say that there was not much recreation in those days and one of the best forms of recreation for persons like John Rollock was to sit at his neighbors and friends and converse with them. I believe that those kinds of attributes which are so sadly lacking despite the creation of centres for our own communities, playing fields, we do not get the kind of environment that inspires people to look at them in a much more serious light. It is because they do not reach the headlines of the newspaper that we believe that they have not contributed much to this society, but in truth and in fact, they are the main planks, the pillars on which this society has been able to function and which you and I have been able to come to this Chamber and boast of the traditions that we have got.

It is in that vein Sir, that I pay tribute to such a man who was not only a religious person but a family person, a person who cared dearly for his family and all of us have been privileged to see him at least live to recognise some contribution made at a higher level by his only son, the Honourable Member for St. Michael West.

None of us can envy the Honourable Member for St. Michael West because I believe that persons like him do not drop out of the sky. They always come out of a proper family environment. I am sure that as we pay tribute to him we want to remember him as a person who has made his own personal contribution at his own level and he has given to Barbados a person who has served not only in this Chamber for 20 years but has been able to serve in other capacities abroad internationally and made Barbados proud of the things we have achieved.

It is then Sir, that I join the Honourable Member in remembering John Rollock as one of the persons whom we can justly feel proud about to have made his contribution and made it significantly in the constituency of the Honourable Member. No doubt he was moved to speak before us and I want to say, Sir, that is one of

the developments that I hope Parliament will develop. On an occasion like this there need not be any division on party lines. Sincerity and honesty is what we need to put out. I join the Honourable Member in passing the Resolution and I hope that his memory will be an inspiration to his grandchildren and most of all encourage his son to keep on the straight and narrow path which the Christian principles demand. I thank you, Sir.

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I too would want to express my condolences to the Honourable Member for St. Michael West and his family. I must confess that I knew his father before I knew him since his father was a very close friend of my father's and I found a remarkable similarity in their attitude to the society over the years where they both had a very strong sense of commitment to the community, I am not surprised that both of their sons find themselves in an environment where they are also contributing to the society. 11.40a.m.

I myself, Sir, could not attend the funeral on Saturday and I regret that I could not do that since my sister was in an emergency at the hospital and I really had to give her priority even though my heart was very much with the family of the late John Rollock. I think it would be remiss of me to allow this situation to proceed without my paying public respect to such a remarkable man in the name of John Rollock.

I would like on behalf of my own family and on behalf of the other Members, to express my sympathy to them.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Mr. Speaker, on my own behalf and my family's behalf, and also on behalf of the Members of the Democratic Labour Party, I wish to extend condolences to the Honourable Member for St Michael West on the passing of his late father, John Wesley St. Clair Rollock, whom I did not know personally but I certainly have had a long association with the Taitt family extended and also with the Honourable Member for St. Michael West and his immediate family. Therefore, I believe that, based on that association, one can glean from the attributes and qualities the family life which they enjoyed, the way in which they extended a friendly hand to other people and welcomed them in their home, and the kinds of qualities which they sought to imbue in the generation with which I was closest, that being his grandchildren it obviously would have had been some reflection on the kind of life which John Wesley StClair Rollock and his wife who predeceased him and other members of that family possessed.

Certainly, based on the Eulogy which was read by the Honourable Member for St. Michael West, one was able once again to hear the story of an outstanding Barbadian who was outstanding, not because he ever reached the

headlines of the newspapers except to say on one occasion that he was firmly supporting his son for the leadership of the Democratic Labour Party, and rightly so, but he never reached the headlines of the newspapers with regularity. What he did, which is so common in many of the stories of our foreparents, was that he was willing to make considerable sacrifice to be thrifty, hardworking and to be committed to ensure that his children were better off than he was. That certainly is the story of that generation of Barbadians which worked so assiduously in the immediate, pre and post independent period of this country to ensure that all of us could enjoy the lifestyles which we now enjoy. Regrettably, we are not as successful in passing on those same qualities to our own children. I hope that in my lifetime and yours, Sir, we will meet with the same kind of success and work with the same dedication to ensure that our own offspring are able to live a lifestyle that is better than that which we enjoy.

His son spoke of two incidents in his life which he felt very strongly about, the Swain murder, and the second one was Bishop Hughes' last sermon, the first of which I am aware of, the second of which I will have to ask somebody else to enlighten me on the details. The entire story was based on a man who had contributed to his country and certainly had contributed to the growth and development of his son who has been an outstanding politician and public figure in Barbados. I believe that certainly his contribution should be acknowledged.

I extend on behalf of the party, the Members of the Opposition, to our colleague, the Honourable Member for St. Michael West, our sincere condolences and also to his family.

Rt. Hon. L. E. SANDIFORD: Mr. Speaker, I rise to add my condolences and those of my family to my colleague, the Honourable Member for St. Michael West and his family on the passing of the late John Rollock, his father. I was unable to be present at the funeral. I was out of the country. I therefore could not allow this opportunity to pass without joining with colleagues in here on both sides of the House in paying tribute to the life and work of John Rollock. I did not know his father personally. I certainly know his son very well and we have been in many political battles on the same side. I could tell you that there is no person whom I would rather have as my friend and not my enemy rather than the Honourable Member for St. Michael West. He is certainly a redoubtable colleague.

I would just urge that in this political battle where it seems as though we believe we can only succeed if we trample on the shoulders and backs of other persons, that perhaps we should recall and remember that they are our forbearers who themselves perhaps had harder

struggles than we had, in order not only to make ends meet, but to pave a way for their offspring to have a better life and a more secure future than they themselves were able to achieve.

We ponder on this question of eternity and this question of leaving a mark in the world. Those of us who are Christians place our hope in the belief and faith that because Christ died for us, and if we follow the right principles, morals and ethics laid down, we also will gain everlasting life. The classicists tell us that we too can perhaps have a memento more lasting than bronze if maybe through our literary efforts or through our offspring we are able to fashion and shape people or things to carry on after us.

I believe that apart from the success of struggling in life, John Rollock would indeed have made his mark, not only for his own time but for succeeding generations, in his offspring and in the contribution which he made in the shaping and fashioning of the Honourable Member for St. Michael West. In this context I pay tribute to his life and his times. I know that my colleague will gather strength from that experience and will continue to make his own mark in the public affairs of this country.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: Mr. Speaker, the passing of a friend or a relative is always a traumatic occasion but I do not think that there is any so traumatic as the passing of one's parent. I therefore understand in a very fundamental way the sort of emotions which would have consumed my colleague, the Honourable Member for St Michael West, in the circumstances surrounding the passing of his father. 11.50a.m.

Sir, on behalf of myself, my family and the entire family of the National Democratic Party, I associate myself with the remarks of previous speakers and I sincerely hope that this exercise in this Parliament today would bring some measure of solace to the Honourable Member for St. Michael West.

Indeed, it is often a very important occasion when these things happen for us to reflect fundamentally, reflect on value structures not only of our own lives but the lives of a society as a whole and to think of the kind of legacies which we hope to pass on to those who will come after us.

Quite clearly, Mr. Speaker, he was part of a generation that made the kind of meaningful sacrifices which will endure forever and which have contributed significantly not only to the development of himself, his own personal family but to the society as a whole. We have been fortunate in this country to have had generations of people who have made the major sacrifice of dedicating their lives to improving the quality of their offspring, not only in the area of their moral development but especially

in the area of their education. In a sense the achievements of the children of those persons over the years are an integral part of their own achievement because their entire lives have been dedicated to the improvement of their families.

I sincerely hope that his life would be an inspiration to many young people to recognize the importance of the family, the importance of the community from which they spring and the contribution which they can make at that level. In a sense there is probably no greater contribution that any individual can make to humanity than the kind of contribution which he has made. Many of us may feel satisfied if one becomes a professional or a successful businessman or a successful politician or whatever; but when you really analyze your life, when you analyze the true legacy that you would be passing on to this society, those things are largely peripheral and I think, as I said earlier, that it is a very useful exercise for reflection on occasions such as this.

I know, Sir, that the Honourable Member for St. Michael West would have great difficulties in adjusting to the situation. But he can be assured of one thing and that is, that, as time passes the pain will ease but what will surface time and time again would be the pleasures that he has had in the relationship with his father, the recognition of the contribution which his father has made to him and to his family and that his father, in fact, as far as he is concerned, will never really pass away because the values, the emotions associated with fatherhood will always remain there and I can assure him that that is what will reside with him for the rest of his life.

I thank you very much, Sir.

Mr. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for St. Thomas.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I rise to associate myself and Members on this side with the sentiments expressed by those who have spoken before.

I wish, at the outset, to say that if it were the fact that the Members on the Government side were not evident in full force on Saturday, that absence was not meant as any disrespect to the Honourable Member for St. Michael West and his family but rather was occasioned by an accumulation of other events which called for the presence of Government Ministers, in particular, at those events. I myself was hosting a meeting of regional Attorneys General on Saturday, the Honourable Minister of Foreign Affairs, Acting Prime Minister was herself engaged at Sam Lord's, so was the Honourable Minister of Tourism and the Minister of Education and the Minister of Labour were engaged at other meetings over the weekend. That really was responsible for our absence.

Therefore it gives me an opportunity today to say, publicly, that we on this side share the sense of grief and loss which is obviously felt by the Honourable Member and his family over the passing of his father. I did not personally know his father but from my association with the Honourable Member, it has always appeared to me that he and his father were particularly close. Indeed I think it was on November 15 when we last sat, that in discussing the present position of my own father the Honourable Member drew to my attention that his father had been in hospital and he was causing him some concern. At the time I had no inkling that his father would pass so suddenly. I was away the previous week and I did hear on my return last week of the death of his father and it is a matter of great regret that I could not attend the funeral.

I wish, on behalf of my own family who are particularly close and well associated with the Honourable Member and his family to extend deepest sympathy and heartfelt condolences on his recent bereavement.

I am obliged to you, Sir.

Mr. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for the City.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I too would wish to associate Honourable Members on this side with the utterances of condolence to the Honourable Member for St. Michael West

Some of us have travelled this road before including myself. It is not easy. In the end, one seems to live with a constant sense of someone simply not being there. I do not know what further words of comfort can be offered. The loss of a father is a major event in one's life.

I too wish to offer my apology for the fact more Members of the Government were not present on Saturday afternoon. It appeared that the Government was working through the weekend. There were consultations going with the social partners and several Ministers including the Prime Minister were involved in that on Saturday as the Honourable Attorney General has said, I was chairing at Sam Lord's right into the night on Saturday. He himself likewise, the Minister of Labour was involved with visiting Ministers and officials to do with the Canadian Farm Labour Programme. There was a whole host of things going on. For that too I am sorry, because at times like this we have to uphold each other. There is no partisanship in this. 12.00 noon.

I have to admit that I am one too who did not know the late John Rollock but it is clear, having listened to the speeches so far this morning that this was a man who realised the dream, I think, of most parents and particularly most Barbadian parents that their children and

grandchildren would enjoy a better quality of life and this has been a large part, from what I have been hearing of this contribution. For that we have to be grateful.

I would wish, Sir, in the course of things that the usual resolution of condolence, suitably worded, would go forth from this Chamber to the family of the late John Rollock.

Mr. SPEAKER: This Honourable Chair would like to support all of the sentiments that have been expressed about the late John Rollock. I am sure that sentiments expressed do reflect the true feelings and sentiments of Members.

Although I did not know Mr. Rollock personally I have heard of his outstanding contribution and of course his commitment and his community involvement which of course we can all see has continued with his son the Honourable Member for St. Michael West. This House will support with acclaim the Resolution of Condolence and as a mark or respect I beg you to stand with me to observe one minute's silence.

Members stood in their places in silence for one minute.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Mr. Speaker, Sir, by virtue of the high honour which has been bestowed on me by the people of Barbados, I have been in this Chamber long enough to, in a sense, experience what I am experiencing now on this the third occasion.

I was in this House in 1978 when my mother died. I was in this House in 1990 when my wife died and now I am here to witness the passing of my father. I wish to put on record for my sister and my brothers and the rest of our family our sincere gratitude to the House and through the House to the people of Barbados from all over this land who have by the odd word here, a touch, a letter, card and attendance at the funeral on Saturday, indicated their support for us as a family. We are profoundly grateful for this and I know in particular my sister and brothers are very touched.

I am always moved by these occasions and I am particularly grateful to the Honourable Member for St. Michael West Central and the other colleagues who have spoken for their very kind words. I must also thank the Honourable Member for Christ Church East Central who was very helpful in his way on Saturday.

Mr. Speaker, I do not know that there is anything I can say about my father that was not said on Saturday that would bring him into any sharper focus as an outstanding man, for me at least. Let me say that I know of no one in my life whom I have admired more and that

admiration was based on the quality of his life. A man who lives to be 88 years in a society like this must have had some measure of steel to have survived for so long. The art of survival in his first SO years would have required, as indeed it would have for his contemporaries, a tremendous capacity.

He wanted me to be a priest, Sir, and I do not know to this day if I disappointed him by being a politician. But I know that he never allowed me to feel, in the end, that I had chosen any less noble profession. Indeed I am one of those persons who is not ashamed or afraid to proclaim that my profession is politician. In that context, Sir, my father rubbed shoulders with many politicians, mostly before they were politicians. It may come as a little surprise that among the people in what he described as his "gang", and I am sorry a former Attorney General is not here because the word "gang" was one of my father's favourite ways of describing the people with whom he roamed. It included the grandfather of the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East. They trumped up quite often to raise the 6 cents necessary to buy a nip in those days. He assisted the father and uncles of the Honourable Member for the City in the building of an aeroplane which was assembled about 150 yards from my house in Fairfield. It was one of the many aeroplanes which the Honourable Member's father was in the process of building but this one actually took shape. It remained in Gilkes* yard for a substantially long time. I am not prepared to discuss the merits or otherwise of its ability to fly, Sir, but my father talked with a certain amount of pride about how they had built an aeroplane. That may have, of course, been one of the reasons why he was never himself in an aeroplane that left the earth in all of his 88 years.

He also, Mr. Speaker, was a man who had as his best friend, for a substantial part of his life, a former Member of this House, the late T. O. Bryan. The late T. O. Bryan represented St. Michael when St. Michael was a double member constituency. I think he was the junior member for St. Michael. I remember asking my father the difference between a junior member and a senior member and he explained to me that when you are a junior member it meant that you did not make as many rounds after your colleague had canvassed as he did for it was a difficult task when two people were running together for them to continue canvassing for each other and they would constantly say to the constituents when they were canvassing together that you must split the vote but they would always return to ensure that they got the requisite number of plumps. My father found that particularly amusing and was very glad that we were going to be in single member constituencies when I ran.

But I wish to put on record that our family accepted as part of its responsibility what I choose to call service and my early recollection of my father and my father's

house was having it open to all and sundry, whosoever will may come. One of the great phenomena for me was how we were able to accommodate so many persons at the same time in so small a space over so great a time. 12.10 p.m.

It really was a phenomenon but my mother and father were able to do that and it is one of the things which I will always remember. I wish, to say no more than again to thank on behalf of my family this Honourable House. I hope that I will not be in this position where this House will have to again reflect on the life of anyone who is close to me, because the pain gets a little too much to bear after awhile. I can only express that hope by thanking Honourable Members for their sincere condolences.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that Standing Orders 6, 16, 18, 20, 42(5), 43 and 44 be suspended for the rest of this day's sitting.

Hon. Dr. R. L. CHELTENHAM: I beg to second that, Sir.

The question that those Standing Orders be suspended for the remainder of this day's sitting was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

Mr. SPEAKER: Government Business is now the order of the day.

Order No. 3 was called.

ORDER NO. 3-TO MOVE THE PASSING OF A RESOLUTION TO APPROVE THE BORROWING OF US\$859 948 FROM IBM WORLD TRADE CORPORATION FOR THE PURCHASE, INSTALLATION AND MAINTENANCE OF COMPUTERS FOR THE POLICE DEPARTMENT

'Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I beg your indulgence before we move properly into Government Business. I would just like to give notice of the fact that the Resolution of which has already been given in the sum of \$9 970 916 is intended to be pursued in all of its stages today. I have spoken with the Leader of the Opposition on this matter.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Mr. Speaker, Sir, in regard to Item No. 3 on the Order Paper, this is

a Resolution under Section 2 of the Special Loans Act which has been deemed necessary by Government to borrow the sum of US\$859 948 from IBM World Trade Corporation to facilitate the purchase, installation and maintenance of computers for the Police Department and that sum, of course, is within the authorized borrowing limits prescribed by Section 2 of the Special Loans Act.

Mr. Speaker, the Resolution seeks approval for Government to borrow this sum of US\$859 948 for the installation of computers. I think the terms and conditions of the loan ought to be told to Honourable Members. The amount has been given already. The method of payment is that each tranche of the loan will be repaid by monthly installments over a period of 3 years commencing one month after the date of installation or the effective date of purchase specified in the agreement for purchase. The rate of interest is 6 per cent calculated on the reducing balance. As I said, Sir, it will be disbursed over a period of 3 years and the annual tranches are in year one US\$466 401, in year two US\$278 045 and in year three US\$115 502. But those bald facts appearing in the Resolution and its Addendum do not do justice especially to this matter before us.

Mr. Speaker, today ought to be a day of great satisfaction in the Royal Barbados Police Force. The rationale for the decision to computerize the Force stems from Government's resolve to modernize systems in Departments with a view to increasing efficiency, saving costs and man hours and improving effectiveness of relevant Government Departments. On Page 35 of the BLP Manifesto 1994, we pledged, Sir, "to speed up the process of computerization and improve communication systems in the Royal Barbados Police Force" and true to that pledge we are today by this Resolution making it possible for the computerization of the Force. I want to be quite frank with Honourable Members. For a number of years going back as far as 1990, the previous Government had been researching, investigating and looking at this matter and I suppose it was the consequence of harsh economic times that prevented the fulfillment of the computerization of the Force during the tenure of the previous Government. But both parties have been committed to the computerization of the Force.

Sir, I have spoken in here when I was on the other side about it and I am pleased that it has fallen to my lot to realize the reality of computerizing the Police Force in 1994.

Mr. Speaker, Government is determined as quickly as possible to computerize as many Departments in the Public Service as are necessary and deemed worthy of computerization. In respect of my own Ministry or that section which bears the rubric Home Affairs, the process of computerizing the Immigration Department is almost

completed and I am hopeful that all systems including the duty free aspect of that matter will be finalized and indeed be operational by December 15. I perhaps ought to let Honourable Members know that the Tourism Development Corporation and the Chamber of Commerce have agreed to finance the computerization of the Immigration Department to the tune of approximately \$600 000. Equipment has been procured and installed and on my last visit to the Immigration Department there was quite a substantial amount of training going on in the Department 12.20p.m.

There was a hold up in the Immigration Department, Sir. I am not meaning to stray from the Resolution, but I am trying to put it within the context of what is happening in my own Ministry. The programme which would have recorded arrivals and departures at the airport and facilitate duty free shops in claiming rebates on goods sold duty free to visitors was being held up for an inordinately long time because of a lot of administrative bureaucratic bungling on the part of previous personnel in the Immigration Department and an inability to agree with the terms and contents of the E.D. card. At one meeting with all the relevant Government Departments I settled the terms of that E.D. card. It has been laid in here. There will be a new E.D. card in operation and the new E.D. card is similar to the American E.D. card with a perforated piece at the bottom to be torn off and the serial numbers are identical on the main part and the part to be torn off. We hope to get all of that running, satisfy the persons in the private sector, in the duty free sector, so that they will be able to claim their rebates. As I said, Sir, we hope to get it fully operational by December 15. So that the Immigration Department will be fully computerised and there will be terminals of course at the airport, the sea port and the main office in Town.

In regard to the Registration Department, I presently have in hand for study and discussion within the Ministry a report detailing the implications of computerising the Registration Department in Coleridge Street. I expect to be able to inform Honourable Members of a favourable decision and the details of that decision by the time we come to do the Estimates of Expenditure in March before the close of the fiscal year.

Honourable Members are also probably aware that in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Foreign Trade and International Business, which has assumed responsibilities for the Corporate Affairs Registry, it is expected that computerisation of that Department will be completed by the end of this calendar year, December 31. So that I hope Honourable Members are seeing a decision to computerise Departments which have linkages - Police, Immigration, Corporate Affairs, Registry and ultimately the Supreme Court/Registration Department

The system which the House is being asked to vote today is in use in the Bahamas, in Bermuda and in Jamaica and it has the inherent capability of providing communication between our island and those other islands while retaining the appropriate security component necessary for the type of information in such a system. We are confident, Mr. Speaker, that the computerisation of vital information, collected and maintained by the Force, can provide a significant benefit to the effectiveness of the Force in solving crime, preparing reports and providing the Force with timely and accurate information. Perhaps I could give Members some statistical information which may lay the foundation for an understanding of the necessity for computerisation of the Police Force.

Mr. Speaker, all countries - prior to the breakup of the USSR and since the breakup of the USSR - internationally have witnessed the phenomenon of an almost relentless spiralling of crime. Barbados is no exception. In 1986 there were 8 204 offences reported to the Police and that steadily went up. In 1987, 8 755; 1988, 10 037; 1989, 10 870, right up to 1991 when we hit 12 000, 12 775, and in 1992 12 883. Those statistics indicate that the incidence of crime between 1986 and 1992 increased by 57.3% and of course from our own experiences we know that illegal narcotic drugs increased dramatically over that period, from 274 cases in 1986 to 642 by 1991. So those figures tell a story of an increased workload for the Police Department.

Necessarily, Sir, that increase in workload increased the complexity for the Police in trying to solve crimes and providing relevant information for the courts. In the same period, and certainly from 1986 to 1990, the strength of the Force remained relatively static at 1200. Even though we had witnessed a 57% increase in the incidence of crime, the numbers in the Force never moved significantly until fiscal year 1991-92 when there were an additional 40 persons added to the Force. The fact is, therefore, Mr. Speaker, in my submission that the impact in the growth of the workload and the complexity of trying to deal with that workload resulted in an excessive number of criminal cases and traffic cases remaining on the books "pending trial".

It is against that background of statistical information that the Government feels that there are areas in which computerisation will be of assistance and be of a distinct advantage, not only for the Force, but to the community as a whole, and if I can just briefly summarise and indicate to Honourable Members why we think that computerisation will help, it would be to say first of all, Sir, that in the area of criminal records, the CID has tried manfully over the years to correlate information on criminals by various methods, including colour coding. That is not satisfactory. They are trying, but it is time consuming. It is a manual operation that is not terribly productive. There are deficiencies in that method of operation. There is certainly

a difficulty in retrieving information on a timely basis. With computerisation it is our view that information which takes two weeks to retrieve could be brought up in a matter of minutes. Indeed, IBM has done a report and has had a long meeting with me - Mr. Castillo and Mr. Forde - and they explained everything thoroughly to me, and they explained everything thoroughly to me and I was convinced enough in October to recommend that we proceed with this matter, subject to the availability of funds, of course. 12.30 p.m.

I would not wish to state it as a matter of logical consequence but I would hazard the opinion that fast access to computerised records will result in a quicker resolution of crime, and certainly would assist in the quicker identification of characteristics which may help in the subsequent identification of crime.

The second area in which computerisation will be of inestimable assistance is in terms of regional and international cooperation. I think particularly in regard to drug offences and now the phenomenon of organised transnational crime the capability of the Barbados Police Force to be able to respond to requests for information from regional forces and international forces and Interpol and whoever will be clearly enhanced by the installation of a computerised system in the Police Force.

I don't think I have to do much to convince Honourable Members of that advantage and of the need for us more and more to maintain links with regional forces and international forces and organisations to try and nip the operations of organised transnational criminals in the bud as early as possible.

The third advantage that we see for a computerised system is the reduction in time spent in administrative matters. Time could be considerably reduced by having easy and quick access to information, for example, the preparation of morning reports and various statistical reports that are necessary products of the Police Department. We think that the speed with which these reports can be made available would be considerably increased and improved.

Fourthly, the computerised system being provided by IBM will enable us to create a repository of personnel information in a proper way, information about the length of service, opportunities for training, promotion, leave, all of that, Sir, can be easily stored and retrieved on the system which we are getting.

I think Honourable Members on the other side must also see that the computerisation of the Force in itself may conduce to an enhanced revenue-generating capacity in the Force. Take for example, fire arm licenses. The records kept in relation to firearms licenses are all written up manually and kept on cards and so on. Very often

because of the backlog and the complexity of other work the follow-up for renewal for firearm licenses is not as timely as is desired. Some years some persons, even some of us, do not even get a notice reminding us of the date for renewal of the firearm license. The Licensing Authority for motor vehicles sends out a little reminder, a computerised document to you now. We hope that in installing the computer system in the Police Department that we will be able to follow up better the applications for firearm licenses and the renewals for firearm licenses.

In 1987 there were 3 144 licenses and in 1990 we have seen that only 2897 had actually paid for renewal so there was obviously slippage within the Department. Now the computer will help us to keep on top of everyone. Of course, there is a fee attached to the grant of a firearm license and a fee attached to the renewal of the firearm licenses. If we can get them operating in a systematic and orderly fashion we will be better able to recover the revenue that is necessary for these applications.

In terms of revenue generation, we see the area of certificates of character as being one other area in which significant revenue can be gained from having a computerised system. There has been a steady increase in the number of certificates of character issued. We need them for all kinds of purposes now. Of course, the expansion of security services and private investigators and security at the Ministry of Defence and Security requires production of certificates of character. If you are travelling overseas, particularly to the United States, they are required to have certificates of character.

In 1990, the latest year for which I have figures, 10 049 were issued generating revenue of \$1 490 but the problem is that it takes about one week to get your certificate of character. IBM has analysed that for us and they are satisfied that with the new system it would take about two days, if so long, a maximum of two days, to get certificates of character.

From my own experience dealing with constituents and applicants for certificates of character, it is a considerable turn-off for persons who want certificates of character to go into Central Police Station and line up in a long queue, wait for hours - a great wastage of man hours - to get fingerprinted and do all the things that are necessary. Then you have to go back another week later and line up again to collect your certificate.

We feel that all of that can be reduced by computerisation of the system. The lawyers among us will, I think, be happy to hear that it is our forecast that accident reports, reports of vehicular accidents, will be able to be processed and produced far more speedily than is the current practice. There are approximately ten requests

received per day for accident reports from lawyers, from insurance companies and so on. There is a fee charged \$50. But the fact is that there is a backlog and a long waiting period to process these reports. Computerisation will allow these reports to be almost automatically generated. The system will help in the provision of crime reports and also fire reports from the police angle.

Mr. Speaker, we don't have properly operational ticket system for traffic offences. The provisions exist in the law. The relevant provisions have not been promulgated over the years but I can assure the House that soon, rather than later - (I did not say sooner. I do not ever say that) - the system will come into operation where you commit a traffic offence and you get a ticket. You fill up that form and pay the fine within the specified period. 12.40 p.m.

Now, Sir, when we bring into effect the Traffic Ticket - if I may call it that - Collection System, clearly the use of the computer is going to be of great assistance to us in following up the payment of fines, who have not paid, who have paid, and so on. We can foresee tremendous help in that regard when the system comes in place. One of the reasons for delaying the introduction of that system fully in Barbados is that we wanted to have the computerisation in place first and then have the linkages that are necessary.

Now, Mr. Speaker, before I wind up, I did say that Jamaica has the system, the Bahamas and Bermuda have the system. I can give Honourable Members some information on the Bermudan experience. I suppose the Bermudan experience is best exemplified by the fact that the Bermuda Police Force has not increased its manpower for 10 years. They have not had the necessity to increase their manpower for 10 years even in the face of an increase in the incidence of crime. Equally important, their clear-up rate for crime has significantly improved after installation of the system. Now that is the precedent that we have. That is the justification of the effectiveness of a computerised system. I am commending the IBM AS400 system to Honourable Members because we now have the benefit, the historical experience of Bermuda and we are seeing two significant benefits from Bermuda improvement in the clear-up rate for crime and no necessity to increase the Police Force.

Perhaps, I had better tell Honourable Members before there is too much clamour for an increase in numbers, because I know it is a popular whipping horse, that there will be the time when increases in the establishment will become necessary. I have in my Ministry now a report commissioned by the last Government, prepared and submitted by the Deputy Chief of Police of the RCMP in Canada, Mr. George Allen. He has made 161 recommendations. It took me a long time to go through

them but he has done a nice summary at the back. Nowhere in those 161 recommendations does he recommend any increase in the manpower of the Royal Barbados Police Force.

Aside.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Thank you. I went through it carefully. It took me a couple of days. I read every line and I looked for it but nowhere in Mr. Allen's Report does he recommend any increase in manpower in the Royal Barbados Police Force among his 161 recommendations. Of course, let us be fair to him. He does recommend an enhancement of the equipment, and he does recommend making the Force more mobile, but in terms of human personnel there is no recommendation for increased persons.

I wish Honourable Members to note that I have asked that that Report be evaluated by the Commissioner of Police's Department and then come back to me. We in the Ministry will do our own evaluation but we have asked the Police to do their preliminary evaluation of Commander Allen's Report

Sir, I had got a little sidetracked but let me return to the Bermudan experience as the justification for this system. In addition to increased efficiency in clearing up crime and finding it unnecessary to increase manpower levels, the Bermudans report an improvement in the ability to access criminal demographic information. They report a better knowledge of the criminal and his *modus operandi*. They report better management control and supervision of officers and a reduction of the bottleneck in respect of information in the Criminal Records Office. Finally, of course, they report significant increases in productivity in the supply of information and the preparation of reports.

I wish to adopt the Bermudan experience as the basis for the justification of the system that we are buying. I hope that in time when we should be monitoring it carefully over the next four to five years, I will some day in the future be able to report to this Honourable House that the Barbadian experience is similar to that of our Bermudan colleagues.

Sir, I must confess to some illiteracy in things to do with computers. I bought them for my Chambers in Bridgetown when I was in private practice but, as we would say in Barbados, I cannot mark fat on them, Sir. However, for those Members among us who are highly computer literate, let me just say that the system is an IBM AS400. I know what it looks like and what it is designed to do. It has provision in the scheme for work stations in each police station and a Headquarters Special Branch Personnel Video Display Terminal at all Police Stations so that no one will be left out.

Provision has not yet been made for Crab Hill. We are re-assessing Crab Hill. For the Honourable Member for St. Lucy, we are going to do some repairs between January and March on Crab Hill but as to the longevity of Crab Hill as a Police Station, I would not like to give any assurance today that it will remain as it presently is because on another occasion when I deal with the perspectives that we have for re-organisation of the Force and the better distribution of police stations throughout the island I will advert to what we want to do with Crab Hill and places like Worthing and so on. 12.50 p.m.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, I wish to commend to Honourable Members this system which we hope, fervently, will improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the Police. It would be a dereliction of responsibility on my part if I did not also thank IBM for putting together a financial package that has ensured that we can manage the payment for this system in a phased way over 3 years that will not put any undue strain on Government's finances.

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

I am obliged to you, Sir.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: I beg to second that, Sir.

Mr. R. St. C. TOPPIN: Mr. Speaker, I wish to second this Resolution.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: On a point of order, Sir. I thought I heard the Honourable Member for the City second the Resolution.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Very well, Sir, I rise to second the Resolution.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: In which case it caused the Speaker to look the other side. I thought so, Sir. I am on my feet, Sir.

What time do you want to go to lunch? Do you want to go to lunch now? My speech will be longer than 15 minutes. I am just establishing my position.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Very well.

SUSPENSION OF SITTING

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Mr. Speaker, Sir, in view of the hour and the Honourable Member for St. Michael West having indicated that his contribution would run in excess of fifteen minutes, I beg to move that this House be now suspended until 2.00 o'clock.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: I beg to second that, Sir.

The question was put and resolved in the affirmative without division and Mr. SPEAKER suspended the sitting accordingly at 12.55 p.m.

RESUMPTION Mr.

SPEAKER: This sitting is resumed.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Mr. Speaker, Sir, when the suspension was taken the Honourable Member for St. Michael West indicated that he wished to speak first on behalf of the Opposition.

Mr. SPEAKER: I am aware of that. The Honourable Member for St. Michael West.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Mr. Speaker, Sir, first of all let me say that the nature of this Resolution and the history of it confirms that there is unlikely to be any negative reaction from this side of the House.

The Honourable Member said when he was introducing the Resolution that the only constraint which caused the Government of the day to delay implementation of the computerization of the police department or any department was the fiscal circumstances surrounding the country at that time. As a matter of fact it is precisely because of those circumstances that the rather, not quite unique, but special arrangement with the IBM company was entered into.

Let me start off by saying that we are very pleased that the work which was done in conjunction with the department. The question of computerizing the Police department is one which had been raised for some considerable time. I wanted to say that unfortunately in Barbados if one goes back 10, 15 years ago, not only in Barbados but in many developing countries, the realization of the benefits of computerization was very slow in coming and we always find ourselves in the very interesting position where those who need computerization the most are those who can afford it the least. If there is anything which will assist in propelling developing countries into the twentieth and twenty-first centuries it would be this capacity to bring high speed to information that is routinized. In Barbados which has a very good history of proper administration it would have been very helpful if we were able, 15 years ago, to move promptly into the computerization of a number of areas.

I believe in 1974 we started discussions when a Mr. "Natty" Greene was the Comptroller of Customs. We started the discussions as to how to computerize the Customs so as to allow for a more direct relationship between development and the Customs Department. I

believe it took a very long time. I think it was only a year or two ago that they came finally to computerization. The Honourable Member for Christ Church South, as Minister of Trade, continued the effort to see if the Ministry of Trade could get the Customs computerized so that a number of issues which assisted in keeping us back could be dealt with.

But there was always the question of the administrative culture in Barbados and the question of money. On the question of administrative culture there sprung up, for some reason, a strange concept that all computerization could only be done from a central point in the administration. Somebody had it in their heads and managed to sell it to most of the illiterate - in relation to computer - administrators that no computerization should occur in any department unless the so-called Data Processing Department had jurisdiction over the computerization.

The real truth is, Mr. Speaker, that knowledge in the field of computerization was travelling much faster than some of the people in that unit could comprehend. As a result, while they were still struggling with first and second generation computers, the rest of the world had moved to personal computers. The result is that, in fact, the present Ministry of Health was computerized in spite of the directive that they could only be computerized after consultation with the central system because we were able, very skilfully I thought at the time, and the then Minister of Finance looked the other way, to get the Pan American Health Organization to finance a project that would bring computerization to the region. As a result, the Ministry of Health was then able to benefit considerably from a number of aspects of computerization and the cost has always been a factor for Barbados.

This device by which IBM is going to lend us the money to pay them is the kind of divide that is standard in the United States. It is standard in many countries. But even so our Financial Rules did not allow us easily to take advantage of what is really a simplistic approach to financing computerization. One has to go through all kinds of hoops to arrive at this kind of arrangement. We have, in many ways, devised methods of shooting ourselves in the foot. And until we look at the administrative reform which I believe has been started now with the World Bank Project, until we get administrative reform going as part of our development process, we are always going to have these difficulties. 2.10 p.m.

Mr. Speaker, with your permission I would allude to the project which we have for the categorization of the Queen Elizabeth Hospital. The project cost approximately US\$1 million. In 1988 the Parliament had agreed to

this sum of money but because of our economic difficulties we were unable to spend that money. The company that was supplying the unit was quite prepared to do exactly what we are doing in this Resolution. It took us about two years to be able to do that within the framework of what is lawful and legal in Barbados.

In fact many of these companies like IBM who sell large scale systems have departments and divisions that were designed to finance these large scale systems and they have no problems if they are going to have the private sector finance the project. A company can come in Barbados, go to DaCostas or one of the private sector people, make an arrangement, put in the system and have it paid for over 5 years. When it comes to the Government we have to come to Parliament and we have to get all of the money for the entire cost of the system; during the time of economic stringency we simply were not permitted to spend that kind of money. So our administrative systems lagged behind because we were not able to make use of modern systems that are now available.

I am very pleased to see that we are going to pay for this system in what is really a logical way. We are going to pay for it over time. We can now do it legitimately and the police will have the benefit of the system.

The other aspect of this which I think is important for Barbados to understand is that whereas in the past when the public sector used to create employment by virtue of its own system, in these days of economic difficulties the public sector simply cannot add another ten people. It is these kinds of systems that will allow us to get efficiency with the large quantity of individuals we have. But we will need to redirect and retrain those individuals.

I know Your Honour is fully seized of this need because Your Honour has been, in a different capacity, pioneering in ensuring that people start to think in those terms. But we are not necessarily able and the country will not be able to sustain a large public sector beyond where it is at the moment. I do not know how and I do not anticipate that the Government would be able to increase its numbers across the Board much more than they have at the moment unless it finds a fairy godmother or godfather some where. Whatever the system of discussion or talk, the fact remains that the public sector, at its present level, is likely to remain the public sector. At a different time, and on a different debate, I will discuss the solutions which the Government seems to be coming up with which are not acceptable, but this is not the time. Suffice it to say that we are going to have to use devices more and more to produce the kind of efficiency that allows the taxpayer to see what is happening with his or her dollars and to have the kind of satisfaction which the community has every right to anticipate.

We have one of the most efficient police departments, certainly in the region. I do not think there is any doubt about that. We have a number of highly trained persons. Neither Government has spared the effort to see, especially at the senior ranks, persons receive their training.

We have a Commissioner of Police - and I am not speaking negatively, Sir - we have a Commissioner of Police who invariably seeks to get every ounce of resource that could be made available to him. But the truth is that, with the increase in crime, the country itself will not be able to foot the bill at the level that might be desirable for an administrator. We are going, therefore, to have people who are more highly skilled and more highly trained with more sophisticated equipment. All of this will take us into the twenty-first century. These are the planks which the Democratic Labour Party Government laid down during the last 8 years or so. Notwithstanding political rhetoric from time to time and the indiscriminate assaults by certain aspects of press comment, it is very gratifying to see that, in the final analysis, Government itself has to recognise that when you hold a pint-pot under a pipe you can run the pipe forever, but when you remove the pint-pot it cannot have more than a pint in it.

Therefore, Mr. Speaker, they are going to find that systems that were put in place, as in this case, were systems informed by the same kind of expertise as they have to work with. They are going to find ...

Aside.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: You are the ones who know why they decided not to become part of the Government. They understand these things. But the young enthusiastic Ministers are going to discover that the system that we have in Barbados is continuous.

There may be slight variations but at the end of the day the same people who advise the present Attorney General are the same people as advised the previous Attorney General. The same people as are advising at the level of the police are the people who were advising before and so we are not going to be able to do more than we are able to do. We may change the style from time to time and the Attorney General might allow the impression to fall that this new system is as a result of new thinking, but the truth is that these things are continuous and will go on.

I want and hope that since, for example, the new Evidence Act makes provision for certain other improvements in the system that it will not be long before we see, for example, the video taping of interrogations of suspects by the police. It is something which is accepted now in most of the advanced countries of the world. We have made provision for it in the Evidence Act. If we are going to be giving the police improved systems, we

must improve on all sides. It will not be acceptable for Barbados to continue to have the record which we have, an enviable record, of having the most confessions of any country anywhere in the world per capita. There are more cases solved in this country on the basis of a confession than any other country in the world.

Now, I have no doubt that that is a direct result of the diligence with which the police are able to carry out their duty. I have no doubt, Sir, that if the police were asked, that is what they would say. But I think that in a time when we discuss transparency at all levels, it is necessary for the Government, to the extent of its ability, to provide the facilities for the police to do their work and be seen to be doing their work in such a way that it is acceptable to the rest of the community without more. Video interrogation is now a requirement in the Voice State. It is a requirement in the United Kingdom. It is now taken for granted and it has shown up that the British Police have not been all that they were cracked up to be for all of the years. The British Police have been demonstrated to have all of the foibles of police everywhere else. 2.20 p.m.

Sir, I do not intend to make this a long debate because the Minister has indicated that he would like it to be tight and that there is another time coming when we will be able to discuss these things in full. But it is important that, if we are going to modernize the Force, we must modernize it on both sides of the equation. I think it is important to the Police themselves. I think one has to give the Commissioner and his senior officers the credit that, when one hears their public statements, it seems as though we are all *ad idem*. But the Police themselves have a vested interest in seeing that the community regards what they say as valid. One of the ways in which this can be done is to use the modern methods of communication, modern techniques and allow the population to reward the Police with their praise for good work in the field.

I think, all that notwithstanding, that the opportunity should not pass without our paying some tribute to the work which the Police have been doing in drug detection. They have done a magnificent job according to the public information. It is very difficult, as we saw in the St. Kitts situation, and we know these things are not necessarily published everyday. But we know that there is some guerilla warfare going on almost daily by the drug barons and their ilk against the legitimate forces. The Police in Barbados can be proud and the people of Barbados can be proud of the Police Department, especially as it relates to drug crimes in which they have been doing a magnificent job. I think that once they continue to commit themselves to excellence, to good policing, and once they accept the rules which they themselves lay down, they will continue to be a Force to be reckoned with.

I represent a constituency, Mr. Speaker, that has many poor people in it. There was a time when my constituents were very upset and uptight about certain methods that were being used. I am pleased to say that, generally speaking, I do not now hear the kinds of complaints that used to be heard very frequently about the attitudes. In this respect the beat policeman, the new approach has been successful. I hope, however, that it will not be long before we see a return to more patrols in the poorer sections of the community. I believe it is necessary for there to be more patrols in the poorer sections. I hope the Police will continue to be humane as they do their work in the poorer sections. Some of the elderly ladies in the community, such as my constituency, sometimes feel that the police do not always regard them in the same light as they regard some other people in some other areas. I wish to see more and more that the senior officers spend some time educating their colleagues in this regard.

Mr. Speaker, in essence, what I am saying is that we are going to support this Resolution. We are pleased to see that it has reached us here. We are pleased to see that a technique of getting economic assistance overtime has been endorsed by the incoming Government and we hope that it will redound to the continued growth and development of the Force.

I want to say one last word since the Minister mentioned the Immigration Department I have already voiced my view about some aspects of the Immigration Department. I am glad that there is going to be a new ED Card. I am glad that the issue has been settled and I hope that the Minister will remove from the minds of those persons who persist in believing that you have to show something to some minor authority when you are leaving the country in order to leave. One goes to Germany, Russia, America and everywhere. One goes to the counter and pays for the ticket. One receives the ticket and hands in the card or whatever it is and then proceeds to the security clearance. Somehow there is some persistence that you can detect crime by having all 700 000 people who leave Barbados in a year show to some minor person some piece of paper. It makes no sense. When a person has come to Barbados and had a good time or when a Barbadian is leaving Barbados, it is officious for them to have somebody standing up saying "show me this, show me that" when they have already paid for the ticket and paid the departure tax. All they need to do is go through the security system to prove that they are not going to blow up the plane.

Sir, it is a terrible thing when you lose the Government. The next few weeks after that we find there are some fools in this country who seem to feel that they were ordained to embarrass. I hope the time will come, Mr. Speaker, when that will be a thing of the past. I hope so. I really look forward to that point We are too

sophisticated for that foolishness. There are people who seem to feel that if the Government changes it is open season on those who do not now form the Government. But you know, Sir, my mouth is very big and I had to tell an officious little fellow at the airport that it is impossible for me to move from being Minister of Foreign Affairs one week to being a "duppy" the next week. I had to speak to him. I did not repeat it. I spoke to him directly because he was being officious. I was leaving and had things in both hands. He told me that I had to show him the ticket and I asked "Why?" He was not the one you had to go through to clear security. He just wanted to be officious to show that he had power and I showed to him that I was not going to yield to that foolishness.

But the point I am making, Sir, is that that system only applies in Barbados where you have to go through an additional check-point. I read somewhere in the newspapers where it is alleged that the Police were saying that they need to have that to stop criminals from leaving. If a criminal who is leaving Barbados had to use that to stop them from leaving, they would not be real, serious and genuine criminals. No serious criminal is going to have any problem for not having the right thing to show to some little guard as they are going out. It is totally unnecessary. I think we should eliminate all paperwork that is not necessary and the things that will not be required for persons in this country. When you have gone to the airline counter, the airlines are responsible, as they are in the United States for example.

Mr. Speaker, let me say this. We are eager, it seems to me, to grab every aspect of the United States' culture that is undesirable. But in those areas where they have demonstrated efficiency, it seems that we are reluctant to follow them. There are some areas in which the Americans have been efficient and certainly they move millions of people everyday. When you go to America and you sign the little piece of paper, the airlines are required to ensure that that stub is returned to the Immigration Department. They have an obligation and we should see that they have that obligation here as well.

So the Minister said that we will have the perforated piece. I presume that with the ED Card he is going to see that the same set of functionaries have responsibility as you have elsewhere. 2.30 p.m.

The other thing is, Sir, that we have a very peculiar problem where we have the metric system. Our major trading partners have not bothered with the metric system. We were pioneers in getting the metric system on stream. I think we have to agree that the metric system is not absolutely necessary for life, because the Americans are not going to have it. We say that tourism is our major

important industry and we should try and standardise as much as possible to make things comfortable, because the system which we believe we are following is itself being modernised. The British are changing very fast and therefore there are some things we do not need to emulate any more, because we are only emulating what was and not what is.

Mr. Speaker, I think I have covered most of what I wanted to say on this and, as I said, we have no difficulty with it. We are going to support it, so you can expect that this side will support the Resolution.

I am grateful to Your Honour.

Mr. R. St. C. TOPPIN: Mr. Speaker, I wish to support this Resolution this afternoon. It is very clear that for some long period of time now the Police have been crying out for assistance and it is also equally clear that the Police Department has been vastly under-developed, especially in the area of technology. Certainly, as the Honourable Member for St. Thomas has pointed out, we have lagged behind some of our counterparts in other jurisdictions. This measure therefore is a step in the right direction and will redound to the benefit of all Barbadians.

The Resolution, Sir, highlights the Police and the area of law enforcement generally in Barbados and it seeks to cure a certain deficiency in the Police Department. I think it gives us the opportunity therefore to touch on some areas of concern in the area of law enforcement generally in Barbados. If we are to be honest, there are quite a number of areas of concern, a few of which I will try to touch on this afternoon.

In relation to the same Police Force, Mr. Speaker, I have a very healthy respect for the Police. I know that they do a very hard job and they do it well, but in relation to the Police in the courts, where I happen to spend a large amount of my time, I think there is definitely a need to revise the role of the Police Prosecutor in court. By that I mean it is really unfair not only to, in some cases, the prosecutor himself, but it is unfair to the whole system of the dispensation of justice to have prosecutors thrown in court, a number of police officers, who really and truly know little or nothing about the court system and who really have been untrained, largely so, in the art of legal technique and legal reasoning.

In our Manifesto we have pledged to intensify local and overseas training for officers and generally to move towards a more heavily trained Police Force. That is good news to me. It has already been happening in some measure, I must concede, and we are seeing the emergence of some legally trained police officers - they are studying at university - and I would hope to see that trend

continue. I mean nothing disparaging or disrespectful when I use the term "untrained" but it is a fact that they are not legally trained. That sometimes has implications for other areas of the dispensation of justice.

For example, Mr. Speaker, there is the question of the liberty of the subject. I am not trying to defend any hardened criminals, because I believe they should be dealt with very severely under our laws, but far too often we have a situation where the Police Prosecutors get up and make objections to bail on some really very specious and non-legal grounds, in situations where a legally trained mind would not even think about mentioning the kinds of grounds, and even in refutation of Counsel's arguments sometimes the points made in rebuttal are really specious and sometimes make little sense. That is a fact. I believe that we need definitely to come to see a massive expansion in this area and I would hope to see in the near future, and I will be calling on the Minister responsible, certainly in the New Year, to take some more serious steps, or continue the current trend, to ensure that we have courts manned with as many legally trained prosecutors as possible.

I heard the Honourable Member for St. Michael West make the point about Magistrates, because in the end it is the Magistrate who has to make the final decision, but that too deserves some comment, Mr. Speaker. The unfortunate truth also is that when it comes to persons asked to act as Magistrates they too sometimes have little or no experience in court matters, or if they do they have the experience in the area of prosecution and therefore they bring to bear on the Bench and the Magistracy as a whole their own set views, or sometimes they have to rely on these very untrained police officers about whom I just spoke for guidance. In fact, sometimes, more often than not, they take the cue from these Police Prosecutors in terms of the decisions that they make and therefore you often hear the term that many courts are controlled by Police Prosecutors. That is a fact. The Honourable Member for St. Philip South will bear me out on that, because we have spoken about that at length, Mr. Speaker. In at least one Magistrate's Court it has got so bad now that you have a situation...

Mr. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member, please do not stray away from the Resolution.

Mr. R. St. C. TOPPIN: I am dealing with the Police, Mr. Speaker, and the interaction of the police in the courts and law enforcement generally. It has got so bad in one court that when legal counsel makes a valid submission, loaded with legal elements, and we sit, the Magistrate would ask if the prosecutor, police officer again, wishes to respond and he would say: "No, Sir". The Magistrate then looks at you and says: "Counsel, I do not agree with your submission." There are not any reasons given, and that is a serious breach in the area of law enforcement that we would not want to see in our country.

While you can appeal from those things, there are not many people in Barbados who have the money to see them through at the Appeal Court level, and therefore they have to suffer the consequences, either being denied bail or being convicted in circumstances from which they just cannot afford to appeal.

Mr. Speaker, I am concerned. I will not be very long this afternoon, but I am concerned to see that we put systems in place to ensure that the courts are manned by more trained police personnel than we presently have. It can be very frustrating for counsel, the accused, the public at large and I want to see that area worked on. I am asking the Honourable Minister to look at that area and make a move on it as soon as he possibly can.

Before I sit, Mr. Speaker, one last point, which deals with law enforcement again and it fits into the ambit of the Resolution. The question of splashing the names, photographs and sometimes other information across the media about accused persons. I remember some time ago there was some incident in a certain area in Barbados and it was reported in the newspaper. I think it was a shooting, and the newspaper carried the story that two men were assisting the police. I could not believe my eyes to see that they had actually stated that one of the men was already known to the police. It is impossible to have a fair trial in a situation like that where the media that shapes public opinion to the extent that it does could actually disclose prejudicial information of that sort about someone who at that stage is not even charged with a criminal offence. 2.40 p.m.

Mr. Speaker, the question of computerisation is a very important area. I am not denying that, but there are many other aspects of law enforcement that will have to be looked at over time and I would urge the Honourable Member for St. Thomas to, as I am sure he will and has stated to do, look at the question in much greater detail and ensure that we continue to have a system of which we can be justly proud.

The Honourable Member for St. Michael West made another point about the video taping of confessions which I had also wanted to talk about. There is not much I can add to what he has said. I agree that there is a need for that because that also affects law enforcement. The cry is going out too loud now by too many that the confessions being obtained are not legally obtained. Until we have that system in place where we can see for ourselves in court what actually happened when the accused was behind closed doors with the police, I don't think the public would rest too comfortably in that situation.

So with those few words, Mr. Speaker, I would like to support this Resolution.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: Mr. Speaker, I have no inherent difficulty with this particular Resolution which seeks to enhance the capacity of the Police Force through the process of computerisation.

Looking at the terms and conditions of the loan:

Amount - US\$859 948,

Interest rate 6% per annum, calculated on the reducing balance method,

Loan to be disbursed over three years commencing after the date of installation or the effective date of purchase in various annual tranches.

I must say, Sir, that I find these terms rather generous, if I may say so. I believe the current prime rate in the United States is over 6%. The present prime rate on the U.S. dollar is, I believe, in the region of over 6% and we are obtaining a loan below prime. I would say that is a very remarkable achievement, a coup. But a coup for whom?

I wonder if the Honourable Minister would tell us what other arrangements have been made with IBM for future purchases. I have grave doubts whether a company which would hardly be obtaining financing below prime can lend you money at a lower rate than if they are borrowing that money over a three-year period, in an interest rate environment in the United States, being copied once again in Barbados, where interest rates are beginning to climb and have climbed significantly over the past year. Perhaps the Honourable Member will let us know whether we are in fact seeing the first tranche of other purchases from IBM. It is only in those circumstances that this financing makes sense to me and I believe that it might well be a coup indeed but a coup for IBM in terms of locking in the Government over many millions of dollars in sales to Barbados over the years.

I do not necessarily think that there is anything fundamentally wrong with that but, as someone with a sharp eye on these financing matters, that is the first thing that struck me when I looked at this. What is the deal? What is the long-term deal with the IBM World Trading Corporation? On the surface of it, I am quite sure that this is what they might call a lost leader, the way in to further contracts with the Barbados Government

If I were a director of IBM I would only enter into this kind of arrangement if I were looking down the road. That is all I am saying. Otherwise it does not make any sense to me. Somewhere along the line there have got to be other contracts and more business which they will be looking for. Anyhow, IBM is a reputable company and I think it is reasonable to believe that it is all above board.

I am not questioning it from that perspective, but I would like to know, especially as we have heard mention of other areas soon to undergo the process of computerisation - the Registration Department, the Immigration Department etc.

Now, Sir, there are one or two other issues that have been raised. Very interesting, this financing deal that I see here relates to the purchase, installation and the maintenance of equipment. As I understand it, particularly in this area of law and order, accuracy is of critical importance in the gathering and storage and reproduction of information and therefore training is of vital importance. It would seem to me that if we are going to make the most efficient use of this kind of development then we must have a highly aggressive training programme.

Now only two weeks ago I was talking to someone who was here from the States looking for business and he was visiting private homes, offices of professionals and offices of businesses and he said it was an amazing thing. He was surprised at the number of computers in Barbados and he was also surprised that perhaps more than half of them are not being used other than as a little more sophisticated typewriter, that people have the equipment but in fact have not gone the further stage of making full use of the investment.

One of the areas, of course, for the use of computerisation in the area of law and order is that creative element which computerisation brings. Not only the question of storage and rapid retrieval of information but also to assist in many other areas. For example, Sir, in the area of fingerprinting. I understand it takes weeks or months to match fingerprints in Barbados. I also understand that in jurisdictions in the United States of America, for example, you can match fingerprints within a day or within a matter of hours.

The extent of training not only relates to secretaries in an office but there are several people out there on patrol who are actually expert in the use of computers. Not so long ago I was surprised when I was in a taxi that was stopped in the Fort Lauderdale area by the police. I think it was speeding. In a very short period of time the officer was able to go back to his car. I got out of the taxi and I walked back to stretch my legs and it was interesting. There was he actually feeding into a computer to get information on the particular taxi and all the information came out on the driver and what not and he was able to deal with the problem there with that background information. It is amazing what can be done when I talk about creative use of the process of computerisation.

I sincerely hope that the kind of equipment that is being put in will have the potential over the years to expand on it and be able to accommodate the

current developments in this area; that it will not become outmoded in three or four years but will have the capacity for linkages with other equipment

The second area that I want to deal with is this area where the Minister seems to me to be expressing a hope and seems to be very happy with a model he calls the Bermuda model which he wants to bring to Barbados.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. I never spoke of the Bermudan model. I spoke of the Bermudan experience. 2.50p.m.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: Bermudan experience, Sir. We have to be very careful with some political parties when they import models because not so long ago I recall that there was a statement about the Guyana model for Barbados. You may recall. That was some years ago. Who was that? I cannot remember who it was. There is no one here called Craig, Sir.

If I may continue, Sir. The point I want to make is that he was making the point that since the introduction of computers there was no need to increase the number of personnel in the Bermuda Force. I want to say this. My recollection is that in Bermuda prior to the introduction of computerisation there was an adequate level of personnel in the Police Force so I do not see any relevant comparison here. What I think is very important is to recognise that we need more policemen in Barbados. We have no doubt whatsoever in the NDP. Right from our foundation we have been making this point that we need at least 1 500 police officers there.

We know, Sir, that the Honourable Attorney General has a major psychological problem with the increase in the numbers of the Police Force and that goes back before 1986. I sincerely hope that he would recognise that it involves not only detection of crime and so on but policing involves the prevention of crime. I do not think there is anything more important in the prevention of crime than to have a police presence in communities on a regular basis. Therefore, I think there is no substitute, no matter how many computers you have in the Police Force, which might reduce the number of people involved in administrative work but that should in no way interfere with an effective programme for increasing the number of police.

Now, I live, Sir, in the Rockley area. I do not know the last time I saw a policeman there. I am always around there. Only night before I was walking between 11 and 12 o'clock. I do not run into any problems with crime there but I just do not see police officers.

Aside.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: I am very glad indeed that the police perform their functions so delicately that one can feel protected without being seen.

So, Sir, I could not possibly support that point. I think it is important to have those people out there in the community. I think it is a responsibility of this Parliament to recognise that its primary responsibility is to maintain good government, law and order in this country. Therefore, if it means that an adequate number of policemen are required to carry out that function, then we should not renege on that responsibility and should give it the kind of priority which is required.

Another point I want to make, Sir. Only recently I have heard numerous complaints about the number of Barbadians convicted of serious crimes in the United States, in particular, who are just being sent back to Barbados. It would appear that very often the forces of law and order do not know that they are in Barbados. My understanding was that the communications system in the States was so effective that they were able to trace these people on to the aircraft. They knew what aircraft they were put on so there is no problem but at the point, between the aircraft taking off and the aircraft landing here, very often they land here without the knowledge of police officers. I understand that there are a large number of people who are likely to be released from jail or be deported to Barbados in the not too distant future.

The point I am trying to make is that the computerisation system is not only important from the point of view of enhancing the capacity of the Barbados Police Force to deal with local matters but also where it interfaces with international policing because my understanding is, as in international banking today, that the language of communication is becoming more and more via computers in the areas of crime and international crime prevention. If your infrastructure is not in place to deal with this then you will be bypassed and you cannot reap the benefits of the whole system of international policing and international prevention of crime so that is another reason why I would tend to support this as an important development

But, Sir, I was also a little disturbed in the kind of matter-of-fact way on the impact which computerisation will have on employment, not only in the Police Force but in Barbados in general. I think that as a developing country we have to be very careful when we plan extensive computerisation in the public service - and this is a desirable thing - to, at the same time, recognise that we just cannot allow computers to displace and discard people out of the work force and leave them stranded out there.

Now, I have made over the years, repeated enquiries in the private sector. It would seem to me that in

those companies which have some kind of social conscience, when they have computerised they have done a parallel exercise of seeing how the human resources available to them at the time can be so developed so that they can benefit from the process of computerisation and also from enhanced human development and the two would work hand in hand so that in those companies computerisations have not resulted in major job losses. In others that has happened.

I sincerely hope that in all these grand designs for computers, we do not have a situation where more and more people are tossed out there on the street and have to live in a permanent state of joblessness. We have to find in this kind of developing country some kind of compromise and the public sector has to lead the way in this regard. The public sector has to have embodied in its approach to this matter the kind of conscience which would allow computerisation, human resource development and even higher employment levels to be generated as a result of that computerisation process. 3.00 p.m.

Sir, this is very important I will tell you why it is important. It seems to me that there is a new ethos which seems to be sweeping Barbados, lots of Third World countries and many developed countries where human beings seem to be considered more as a humbug in the development process than part of that development process; where some people seem to consider that they have achieved much if they can talk of corporate growth or even growth of a national economy, modernization of a modern economy, whilst at the same time, more and more thousands of people have been rendered below the bread line. We can be world leaders if we can demonstrate particularly in this kind of small economy how you do not have to have that heartless approach to human beings in the process of modernization.

It seems to me that the Honourable Attorney-General is very happy about the amount of additional revenue that he would be getting as a result of computerization.

Aside.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: Sir, the Honourable Member thinks that I should not say that he is happy. All I have said is that you are happy. Are you unhappy or happy?

Aside.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: I am very happy with you, except in the context of using this whole business of Certificates of Character as a possible source of increased revenue. Let me tell you what happens in Barbados. Those of us who have the honour to represent poor constituencies or in whose constituencies a large number of poor people

live often find ourselves in the situation where poor people who are jobless, who are penniless, who are seeking a job come to you and tell you they have already had to get X amount of Certificates of Character. They went to see Mr. X he asked for a Certificate of Character, they went to see Mr. Y, Mr. Z and they have had 20 Certificates of Character that they have paid for over a period of time and another one comes up. They are drained. They do not have the money.

I would hope, Sir, that when this is computerized that the cost of the Certificates of Character for poor people will come down because less work will be involved. When they have paid for one, when they go back the next time all they have to do is to bring it up on the computer, print it out and give it to the applicant free. What I am saying is that it is hard on young people, people who are under significant distress to be extracting every cent from them; when they go and apply for jobs, they have to get more and more Certificates of Character and they cannot get a job.

I think that even before the computers come along, you can put a stop to that tomorrow. You pay once and no more. Once every year or something like that. You could put a stop to it tomorrow. There are a lot of poor people affected. You would be very popular. You would get more votes. I will go out there and tell them that you did it.

Aside.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: Yes. I would enhance your majority for you tomorrow. Let me tell you something. You ask some Members over there and they can tell that majorities of 2 000 can disappear overnight

Aside.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: Have you never had a majority disappear? I think it is very important.

And also the other aspect of this Certificate of Character business. I believe this matter may have been raised in the House recently by the Honourable Member for St. George South or someone else dealing with the question that there should be a cut-off time. If the youngster committed some minor offence years ago and now he cannot travel to the United States of America, he cannot get a job 10, 15 years after living a law abiding life. After a while he must come to the conclusion that there is no point living a law abiding life. That kind of nonsense has to stop. The computers could also help with that. That is why you see, I stick very closely to this whole business of computers because if we have computers, they cannot only give you the Certificate of Character but you have your record there and the computer itself would out it out -

put it that way - after a given point in time. When his file comes up in the future there is no record. These things need to be done. We must not look at the computer as just a matter of putting in information and taking out information, it has to be creative in the context of Barbados....

Sir, I do not propose to deal with the Honourable Member for St. Joseph's aspect of this whole thing. This is very important for tourism and tourism statistics if it is properly used. I believe the card index system is still being used. Is that correct? I think they still go through those things one by one. That is the information that I have. That is the reason you see why the tourism statistics often lag behind.

But if you wish to be able to plan a programme for tourism, you cannot start promoting the winter at winter time. You cannot start promoting the summer at summer time. You need to have instant information to allow you to plan a programme.

My concept of development of the whole process of computerization in this area would be one to see how you can make the best use of this generous provision by IBM, a coup so to speak. I do not know who actually staged the coup but nevertheless some kind of coup to make sure that this spreads as widely as possible into the community for the benefit of our people.

I believe that once we are clear about what computerization means, the almost limitless capacity of computerization, in this area, this can be of considerable benefit to Barbados. I sincerely hope that the Honourable Attorney-General would instantly take steps to translate this into something that is meaningful to poor people by the 2 suggestions that I made and then the debate would have been worthwhile.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for St. Thomas.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Mr. Speaker, Sir, in winding up on this Resolution, I should like to thank all Honourable Members who contributed and I thank them also for the spirit in which the contributions were made and the fact that they took note of my other necessary commitments this afternoon. I wish to assure them, particularly the Honourable Member for St. Michael West that his generosity of spirit in this matter will not be forgotten and I will make it up to him one day soon when we can have even more time to be expansive in debate. I am grateful for the restraint that he showed and the narrow compass of his focus today, Sir.

Let me start with the Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central first As we have become accustomed since 1978 he would seek to find some ulterior motive or purpose behind the raw facts. If these were the days of communism I would say he would try to find a red under every bed. The files that I have here, Sir, show that the first proposal from IBM was for interest rate at 8 per cent and a year after in writing to the Permanent Secretary in the Ministry and I want to say that in my tenure I am not going to behave with information as though it is a matter of the greatest secrecy and the highest national security. Where national security matters are concerned, Honourable Members will not expect me to disclose them but otherwise matters appear on files from which I believe that the Members of the House, as representatives of the people, are entitled to information, as a function of transparent Government I am prepared to make that information available and in that spirit I wish it to be understood that the General Manager of IBM, writing to the Permanent Secretary last year mentioned, Sir:

"Our normal rate for an instalment payment plan is 2% above prime which is presently 8 per cent. So the rate will be 10 per cent. We have however decided to give Government a rate of 6 per cent This translates into a monthly repayment in year one of US\$14 188.84 an additional monthly repayment in year 2 of US\$ 8 458.67 monthly and an additional monthly repayment in year 3 of US\$3 513.75." 3.10 p.m.

I have read the relevant pages, Sir, searched the file and can find no evidence of anything collusive as between the previous Government or the present Government I can find nothing suggestive of any hidden agenda or deal as between the last Government, the present Government and IBM. It is a function of good negotiating skills that was able, ultimately, to achieve for the people of Barbados and members of the Police Force this loan at an interest rate of 6 per cent. I say no more about that.

The Honourable Member for St Michael South Central has ever since his success in befuddling the electorate of Barbados in 1986 believed that everything in public life can be done on the basis of a freeness. Sir, he has not yet come around to the understanding that Government, in the nineties, requires not only prudence in managing expenditure but it requires those who run Government to run it as nearly as possible along commercial and business line to ensure that the Government gets value for money. At the same time that is not to deny that Government must, at all times, have a human face. Government must be compassionate and Government must take into account the interest of the weakest members of the society. I am not saying Government can escape those social responsibilities. But I am saying also that in these days of tight money,

a changing world economic order, new financial arrangements, new linkages, new groupings on the international scene, we in developing countries have a responsibility as managers of the people's money to make sure it is spent judiciously and where there is an opportunity-for savings or an opportunity for cost recovery these are factors that cannot be ignored.

I know the problem of people who are out of work having* to apply for Certificates of Character and even a \$10 might be an imposition. I understand that. I assure the Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central that when the system is fully operational we will examine, as a matter of policy, how the system could be made to function in the interest, where necessary, of the public. And where there can be eases in terms of repeats and so on, Sir, we will look at that.

It is not to say that Government is in the business to fleece people. It is not so. It would be hard if a man can show that he made application for 10 jobs in a month, each one required a Certificate of Character and he had to go to the department 10 times and get 10 certificates and pay \$100. We will set up a policy and I am grateful for the type of input suggested by the Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central in this regard which only proves that when he extends himself, Sir, he can make very profound and solid points, Sir. But too much of his time, Sir, is consumed with looking under the carpet and looking through the crevices.

The files do not disclose that there are any commitments given, Sir, for future exclusive purchases from IBM. I indicated earlier that the Immigration Department is on IBM. Corporate Affairs Registry is on IBM. The Police are now going to be on IBM. We have a proposal which I said we were studying for the main Supreme Court Registry to be also on IBM. But that may have in itself natural advantages of dealing with one particular manufacturer over ...

Aside.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: No, but you were talking about secret deals about purchases. There are none. But in the area of computers I will say this, that compatibility is a key word in terms of the equipment, and the systems and the equipment that are being used are compatible in Barbados inter-departmentally and compatible regionally as I explained, with Jamaica, Bahamas and Bermuda which have the systems already.

In regard to the Honourable Member for St. Michael North, I take his areas of concern seriously. We are trying, Sir, to professionalize the prosecutors in the Magistrates' Court as the exigencies of business and the pace of qualifications will allow. The Honourable Member should

be aware, and I use names only by way of illustration and not pejoratively - that Inspector Dottin has been prosecuting. Station Sergeant Carrington has been prosecuting. Before he left Station Sergeant Blackman had been prosecuting. What has to happen now, Sir, a process which I have already initiated discussion on, is that we have to create a system, structure, or a scheme within the Police Force to allow those officers who at great sacrifice go to Cave Hill and qualify and go to Trinidad or Jamaica and do their professional courses a chance that after 5 years sacrifice to put to work the benefit of that education at levels of the Police Force where those earned skills, qualities and attributes would find greatest expression. I have already had a meeting with representatives of the Association and the Commissioner of Police and one or two senior members of his staff to let us start discussions and come up with new proposals as to how we can properly remunerate graduates. Also, they do not get any increments like the average civil servant will get an increment or two or whatever it is after getting a degree. They do not. That cannot be right. It cannot be right and something will be done about it. 3.20 p.m.

Sir, I have of course to conduct negotiations with the Unions and the Association and I am going to do it because I feel very strongly that we can only retain the best brains in the Force and improve the top and middle management of the Force if we provide a proper career path and career structure for those graduates. I am not seeking to create any elitist group and in due course I will keep Members apprised of how the discussions are going. I had one meeting and I conveyed my feelings to the members. Even though the need for professionalization of the Prosecuting Staff is recognized and forms part of our Manifesto policy, the Honourable Member for St. Michael North must not believe that all lawyers know and understand the law.

I went to a parliamentary meeting last night and returned home about 10:45 p.m. and for the first time had a chance to read the *Advocate* Newspaper of yesterday. I read a letter by Bobby Clarke asking me if I should not appeal the decision of the Court in the recent Singh Cases and asking me for a comment. He has been practising longer than I and he ought to know that those cases were begun in the name of the Commissioner of Police and, if the Commissioner of Police is dissatisfied, he is the one to appeal. They were never begun in the name of the Attorney General. The Attorney General has a limited constitutional function under Section 79 in criminal matters. I thought that a lawyer of years' standing, I did not say eminence, would have appreciated that because my hands are tied except in limited areas of intervention in Section 79.1 will never as a political Attorney General seek to use any political influence with the Commissioner of Police as to how he is to carry out his functions. So it is not all

lawyers who understand even the workings of their own constitution and the responsibilities of an Attorney General.

To the Honourable Member for St. Michael West, in due course I really will have to confess that we would want the computerization of the Registration Department to be completed before tackling the video tapes and so on. Of course, Honourable Members will understand that we are seeking funding also externally to help us do some of this modernization of the criminal justice system.

Mr. Speaker, I think that I have replied to all the questions and concerns of Honourable Members. I think the Honourable Member for St. Michael West made an important point about having more patrols in the poorer areas. I can only discuss that as a matter of policy but he will know that the parameters of Queen and Blackburn limit my area of influence with the Commission. At the policy level, he is responsible for operation and day-to-day matters.

There will be and I will be saying again shortly this afternoon a greater emphasis in the next few years on community policing. I think that law enforcement must depend for its effectiveness upon community support and the development of relations in the community. I think that Members can expect more community posts and expansion of the resident beat officer scheme as the accretions to the manpower of the Force permit

With those words, Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that this Resolution do now pass.

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

**ORDER NO. 1 - TO MOVE THE PASSING OF A
RESOLUTION TO APPROVE THE VESTING
IN THE BARBADOS NATIONAL BANK
OF LAND AT JAMES STREET,
BRIDGETOWN**

Hon. G. W. PAYNE: Mr. Speaker, this is a Resolution seeking to vest 1 725.7 square metres of land at James Street to the Barbados National Bank for continued parking. The history of this particular Resolution is that the Barbados National Bank had originally acquired two parcels of land to be used as offices for the proposed Barbados National Bank. Subsequently, the Government of the day had plans to build a Supreme Court Complex in that particular area. There were a number of parcels of land that were acquired as a result of plans by the Government then to build a Supreme Court Complex. That proposal was subsequently abandoned by the then Government and, as a result, the two parcels of land which were acquired remained with the Government. One of the parcels of land which was acquired at that particular point in time

remained with the Barbados National Bank and this particular parcel of land which is now being used as a car park is now needed by the Barbados National Bank for use as a car park. This Resolution seeks to vest the parcel of land in the Barbados National Bank. A survey of the site was done and it was found that the area of land which was formerly stated to be 1955 square metres is actually 1725.7 square metres. Under section 5 of the Crown Lands (Vesting and Disposal) Act, Cap. 225 no Government-owned land may be sold, leased, exchanged, assigned or surrendered without the approval of Parliament. Accordingly, Mr. Speaker, this Resolution is brought before Parliament seeking approval of this Honourable House for the vesting in the Barbados National Bank. 3.30 p.m.

I beg that this Resolution do now pass.

Hon. Dr. R. L. CHELTENHAM: I beg to second that.

The question was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

**ORDER NO. 4 - RESOLUTION TO APPROVE THE
VESTING IN THE NATIONAL HOUSING
CORPORATION OF LAND AT
CLARKE'S ROAD FOR
HOUSING PURPOSES**

Hon. G. W. PAYNE: Mr. Speaker, this Resolution seeks to vest 390 square metres of land at Tweedside Road, St. Michael in Miss Vivian Mayers.

Asides.

Hon. G. W. PAYNE: Mr. Speaker, there are a number of acquisitions before Parliament and this Resolution actually... My apologies, Mr. Speaker. This Resolution concerns the vesting of 1397.4 square metres of land at Clarke's Road, Near Hothersal Turning in the National Housing Corporation. When the ABC Highway was being built it was necessary to resite a number of houses from Highway 3 and, as a result of this resiting, a number of houses were placed on land which was not owned by the Government at the time. Four of these houses were actually resited on the wrong land by the past Administration. As a result...

Mr. B. M. TAITT: On a point of order, Sir. As I understand it, the National Housing Corporation is a corporation. The past Administration did not move houses.

Hon. G. W. PAYNE: As I was saying, Mr. Speaker, four of the houses were actually sited on the wrong land. This land belonged to Belle Farms Ltd. and as a result, Government subsequently acquired this parcel of land on which these houses were sited.

This Resolution, Mr. Speaker, now seeks to vest this land properly into the National Housing Corporation so that they could be given a clear and proper title. As I indicated in respect to the last Resolution under section 5(1) of the Crown Lands (Vesting and Disposal) Act, no Government-owned land may be sold, leased, exchanged, granted, assigned or surrendered without the approval of Parliament.

In the circumstances, Mr. Speaker, parliamentary approval is now being sought for the vesting of this parcel of land in the National Housing Corporation. I beg that this Resolution do now pass.

Hon. Dr. R. L. CHELTENHAM: I beg to second that.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I have a little difficulty with the presentation of the Honourable Minister. I am not sure what it is the Minister has said. He said that the houses were sited on the wrong land but the question is who owns the land. Who owns the land on which the houses were sited? It seems to me that if he has come with a Resolution to vest he must have authority to vest and therefore the Government must own the land. Is that correct? If the Government owns the land the Government cannot site on the wrong land. The Honourable Member is accusing me of not listening.

The Resolution says that he is coming to vest the land in the National Housing Corporation. The only way he can vest land in the National Housing Corporation is if it is owned by the Government. Failing that, he would be acquiring land from people and vesting in the National Housing Corporation so it has to be presumed by any normal person the land therefore must belong to the Government. I think the Honourable Member has a duty, and I do not wish to attack the Honourable Member, but he has a duty in these matters to spell out for this House the background of the ownership of the land, otherwise since as he is insisting a mistake was made in the siting of the houses the next thing you know the House would have made a mistake in vesting land that it does not have the authority to vest.

The Honourable Member should at least explain that the Government owns the land. If the Honourable Member said so... The Member in the back is uttering loudly which Your Honour cannot hear.

Asides.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: The point I am making, Sir, is if the Honourable Member is saying that the houses were wrongly placed when in fact it was the Government that was moving the houses and not the National Housing Corporation they could not be wrongly placed. They were put exactly where the Minister intended them to go because

the Minister had jurisdiction at the time, as I understand it. The Minister was moving persons from one place to another and, if I remember, I heard that Honourable Member in here - he is no longer here - pointing out the necessity to site these persons as quickly as possible.

Therefore, for the Honourable Member to get up and suggest that the past Administration wrongly sited houses on land that the Government owned, I think the Honourable Member should apologise for that. I know he will, Sir. He was properly schooled. I know that he will get up and indicate that that is not what he intended to convey, that he does not take any advice from those persons who are sitting in the back who do not.. Mr. Speaker, I think that the Honourable Member should be cautioned to be very wary of advice being given by those persons who themselves refuse to come and take responsibility for some of this action. They ought not to be giving any advice.

Mr. SPEAKER: Let us continue, please.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: As I understand it, it is necessary for administrative purposes to vest this land in the National Housing Corporation so that the National Housing Corporation has the responsibility for the orderly housing of the public sector housing in the country. The Honourable Member is seeking to dovetail these properties with such other properties as the National Housing Corporation should have or does have. If that is what the Honourable Member is saying we can support it. If however, the Honourable Member in his presentation would seek to give the impression that there was some ineptitude in the transfer of these houses to the appropriate places then if the land is owned by someone else whoever owns the land automatically owns the houses which were placed there.

We have no problem with this Resolution and we are going to support it I think the Honourable Member should indicate whether in fact they are not other plots with the same difficulty in the same area and to what extent steps are being taken to regularise the whole area. I think the Honourable Member should really indicate because if one looks at the property as it is described in the Schedule, it says "now or late of the Barbados Government on a road known as Clarke's Road and another road or however else the same may abut and abound as shown and delineated on a plan certified in 1991". The Honourable Member therefore ought to indicate as quickly as possible what are the plans for the entire area. 3.40 p.m.

As I understand it, this area was being identified as an area to relieve some difficulty in the St. Michael East constituency and there was a long list of persons waiting to move from the St. Michael East constituency on to these lands. The Honourable Member has not indicated in his presentation whether the vesting of this land is going to result in the ability of the persons who are now sited

on this land owning the plots on which these houses have been sited. This really is the gravamen of my intervention.

As I understand it, it was intended that persons would have been given the opportunity to own this land. I have not heard from the Honourable Member if, in fact, the vesting in the National Housing Corporation is a step towards facilitating the persons who have been able to move on this land. That is really the major question which I would like the Honourable Member to answer.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: Mr. Speaker, from time to time one makes mistakes in debates in Parliament. I do recall, Sir, a few weeks ago I castigated the Honourable Minister for introducing a motion relating to an acquisition giving the House no information.

Mr. SPEAKER: That is not allowed.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: I am not reflecting on it. I am just stating it as a fact. I am just saying that I castigated him for not giving any information at all at that time. He has responded to that request and has given information today, but I may have made a mistake because he has left me more confused when he gave information than when he gave no information, so I am not quite sure whether or not it was not a mistake on my part.

I think anyone listening to the presentation must be a bit confused. I myself require some clarification because these matters of acquisitions may appear rather simple but it is essential that people know precisely what they are voting for. My first reaction was that the Government is vesting land in the Corporation which it did not own and the houses on the land would have belonged to the person who own the land because if you build a house on somebody else's land then the person who owns the land owns the house.

Aside.

Mr. SPEAKER: Please, let us hear the Honourable Member.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: He did not say it was a chattel house. It appears from time to time I am required to give one or two lectures in law in this House and to quote precedence too. My recollection is that not so long ago in Barbados there was a case, Bailey versus somebody, where the lawyer took it upon himself to point out the landmarks of a particular place. A house was built on it and the man on whose land the house was built rightly claimed the house. I also recall, and this is now where the law comes in, the case of Gray Advertising versus somebody when Gray Advertising built its building in Third Avenue in New York. It was a skyscraper building and one side of the

skyscraper was about 2 feet over on somebody else's property. The man came there every morning and watched the skyscraper going up. After the skyscraper was completed he laid his claim. Unfortunately, there were photographs taken of him admiring the site going up and in law he was not allowed to make the claim because he saw the encroachment and did nothing about it. These two legal points I want to bring to the attention of the House for the benefit of those persons who do not seem to understand the law.

The point I am making, Sir, is that the Honourable Minister had a duty to clarify the situation. Quite clearly he has introduced some element of confusion in the matter. Therefore, I would sincerely hope that when he speaks before the vote is taken that everyone is clear and understands clearly what the House is being asked to do. Is this Government property, Government land on which the houses were built, therefore the Government would now own the land and the houses, and you are asking us to vest this in the National Housing Corporation? If that is the case then there is no problem. Is there any other owner of the land involved? Has Government got a clear title to the land? Otherwise, unless we have these facts we might well be expropriating people of their real property. Therefore it is a legitimate request for information that must be given. If the Minister does not have the information I would strongly suggest to him that he just defer the matter until later.

As a matter of fact, Sir, there was no reason for him to sit down there staring into the ceiling instead of getting up on a point of explanation and giving the information to the House. Then it would not have been necessary for me to speak or for others to have spoken in that vein. I can assure you that I will not be party to any Barbados Labour Party expropriating the land of people of Barbados by such a resolution. I will not be party to that. Therefore, I want to hear out of the mouth of the Minister that this is Government land on which houses were built and therefore they are now owned by the Government and the Government is now vesting this land to the National Housing Corporation.

Mr. Speaker, that is not too hard for anybody to understand. It is straightforward. What is the difficulty? I am sure not a single Member of this House would want to be involved in any possible expropriation exercise.

I thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. G. W. PAYNE: Mr. Speaker, I was minded not to respond to the comments of the Honourable Members who just spoke. I think that the Honourable Member for St. Michael West maybe was annoyed when I stated that the last Government placed these people on the wrong parcel of land.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: On a point of order, Sir. The Honourable Member is imputing improper motives to me to suggest that I would get annoyed for such a simple thing. I never get annoyed.

Mr. SPEAKER: I think the Honourable Minister has to withdraw those statements.

Hon. G. W. PAYNE: Mr. Speaker, I said he was probably annoyed but if you want me to withdraw them I withdraw them. It is fairly obvious that the Honourable Member for St. Michael West was not listening and I am surprised that the Honourable Member for St Michael South Central took his cue because I did say, if you were listening, that these people were placed on the wrong parcel of land. I mentioned that the land was owned by Belle Farms Ltd. 3.50 p.m.

I said that and I also said that Government acquired the land. You were not listening. Then I said that Government having acquired the land under the Land Acquisition Act these persons who, like the other persons who were cited on Government lands, are tenants of the National Housing Corporation. I did not mention the word tenants. That is not relevant to anything that the Honourable Member for St Michael West said.

This Resolution seeks to vest the land in the National Housing Corporation so that they could have a clear title. That is all. There is not anything else of substance that has been mentioned. If the Honourable Member wants to know whether or not it is Zone 1 or Zone 2 these are facts that are not relevant to the Resolution. I would hardly believe that Government would resite people in a water zone. I do not think any Government...

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Sir, I think it is important...

Mr. SPEAKER: Are you on a point of order?

Mr. B. M. TAITT: I am on a point of order, Sir. I think it is important that the Minister should give us the information as to what zone they are in. For him to say that he hardly thinks that the Government would do that, I have to remind him that one of his colleagues, as Minister of Education caused a school to be built in Zone 1 land.

Mr. SPEAKER: That is no point of order relating to the resolution.

Hon. G. W. PAYNE: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that this Resolution do now pass.

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

RESOLUTION TO APPROVE THE VESTING IN VIVIAN MAYERS OF LAND AT TWEEDSIDE ROAD, ST. MICHAEL

Order No. 2 was called - To move the passing of a Resolution to approve the vesting in Vivian Mayers of land at Tweedside Road, St. Michael.

Hon. G. W. PAYNE: Mr. Speaker, Sir, this Resolution seeks to vest 319 square metres of Crown land at Tweedside Road, St. Michael in Miss Vivian Mayers.

This land was part of a larger area which was acquired by the Crown from Blades and Williams for the purpose of constructing a school. At the time it was thought that this particular parcel was part of the land which was owned by Blades and Williams. It was subsequently discovered that the land was owned by Vivian Mayers and that that particular area was not actually needed for the school.

The land was however acquired by Government. It was not utilized and Miss Vivian Mayers has made representation to allow her to regain ownership of the 319 square metres of land for expansion purposes. The Ministry of Education has indicated that the area of land is not vital to the construction of the new school.

The House is accordingly invited, Mr. Speaker, to approve the Resolution by the Crown under Section 5 of the Crown Lands Act of 319 square metres of land at Tweedside Road, St. Michael to Miss Vivian Mayers.

I beg to move that this Resolution do now pass.

Hon. Dr. R. L. CHELTENHAM: I beg to second that, Sir.

Mr. SPEAKER: The question is... The Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: Sir, it would be quite remiss of me if I had allowed this occasion to pass ... I do not want to hold up the House too much. I have no problem with the Resolution. An error of the past is being corrected and I wonder whether or not this is an indication that efforts are being made to get the Carrington Village Primary School, a new primary school for Carrington Village in place.

I am quite sure that the Minister would be able to speak to his colleague, the Minister of Education and help to impress on her the need to press on with the promised new Carrington Village Primary School as soon as possible. The need is there and I think that the opportunity should be taken whilst this kind of land abandonment and

revesting is taking place to look again and try to bring forward the day at which there is a new primary school in Carrington Village.

The Minister has given me the assurance that this would be done in the not too distant future. I am very glad that I was able, on the Floor of the House, to bring to the attention of the people of Carrington Village that I am making every effort to make sure that the new primary school is available for them in the not too distant future. At the same time, I believe that the Honourable Minister recognizes that it is a pretty densely populated area and there is a very high yield in property taxation from that area of Barbados.

We have been having some problems with a well, not too far away in School Lane, and I sincerely hope that you will recognize that those persons who have paid those very heavy taxes during the month of November and are now scrambling to pay them will expect something to be done about the well in School Lane.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. G. W. PAYNE: Mr. Speaker, before I formally ask that this Resolution do now pass, with respect to the latter part relating to the well at School Lane, this was drawn to my attention a few days ago. I have alerted the Chief Technical Officer in the Ministry of Public Works and I am hopeful that Mr. Gill's plea to me will be answered,...

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: Sir, on a point of order. I have been in contact with the Ministry of Transport and Works on several occasions on the Sanitation Department and I would now make the suggestion that you should probably link it up with the sewerage system that passes along Halls Road.

Mr. SPEAKER: That is no point of order really.

Hon. G. W. PAYNE: I will give the Honourable Member the assurance that the relevant authorities will look into the problem of the well as soon as possible.

I beg to move that this Resolution do now pass.

Hon. Dr. R. L. CHELTENHAM: I beg to second that, Sir.

The question was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

RESOLUTION TO MOVE THAT THIS HOUSE
RESOLVE ITSELF INTO COMMITTEE
OF SUPPLY TO CONSIDER THE
GRANT OF SUMS OF MONEY
FOR THE SERVICE OF
THIS ISLAND

Order No. 8 was called - To move that this House resolve itself into Committee of Supply to consider the grant of sums of money for the service of this island.

The question that Mr. SPEAKER do now leave the Chair and the House resolve itself into Committee of Supply was put and resolved in the affirmative without division, Mr. W. C. C. CALLENDER in the Chair. 4.00 p.m.

COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The House is in Committee of Supply.

SUPPLEMENTARY RESOLUTION FOR
\$9 970 916 TO SUPPLEMENT
ESTIMATES 1994-95
NO. 3

HEAD 34 - MINISTRY OF EDUCATION
AND CULTURE - \$424 562

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Chairman, Sir, in moving this Head I wish to say a few words as to the purpose of this supplementary for \$424 562 for the commencement of a pilot programme from January 1995 in a diagnostic and remedial programme for 44 primary schools across Barbados.

Sir, the background to this matter rests really with the concern and the results of children coming out of primary schools in Barbados. We have seen unfortunately, Sir, a decline in the basic literacy and numeracy rate competency of many children coming out of the primary school. Indeed, Sir, we have had much complaint and much debate on this matter as to the fact that something needed to be done within the primary school system to ensure that we were indeed achieving the mandate of primary education, that is to provide children with basic numeracy and literacy rate competency and while at the same time ensuring that those same children are exposed and have the capacity, Sir, to build through future training and self-training on what they would have learned in the primary schools.

Indeed, Sir, the results of the Barbados Secondary Schools Entrance Examinations, commonly referred to as the 11+ would indicate that there have been substantial numbers of children getting below 40% when the year comes both in the English and the Mathematics programme and it has caused severe difficulty in the secondary schools who have found themselves in many instances seeking to implement remedial programmes to teach people things that they should have learnt when they were in the primary school.

In 1984, Sir, the Ministry of Education then under the direction of the current Deputy Prime Minister implemented a programme that led to the first training of teachers in remediation in Barbados at Erdiston College. This programme, Sir, was expanded throughout the eighties except, Sir, it never reached the situation where all schools and all children needing the benefit of this programme were exposed to it

We then met, Sir, with the unfortunate turn of events of 1991 and I certainly remember when the Honourable Member for St. James North was then shadowing the Ministry of Education when he made certain comments on the layoffs of teachers in this country which was vehemently denied. We then reached a situation where the 95 or so teachers who had been exposed to training in remediation found themselves being pulled from the remedial programmes and hence the remediation programmes to a large extent in primary schools grinding to a halt.

There were some 14 of the 95 teachers still engaged in remediation in the primary school system when I entered the Ministry in September. We determined that this area of primary school education is too valuable to the education process but equally to the development of this country for us to allow students to come into school and simply pass through the school system because they happen to have reached another birthday rather than seeking to deal with the fundamental learning difficulties that many of them have in primary school and which indeed needed to be dealt with, first by diagnosing what was in fact the cause of their inability to learn properly, and secondly ensuring that some level of remediation is brought to them to get them to the position where they can acquire basic numeracy and literacy functions, Sir. Indeed, Sir, we have found that if we do not implement this programme across the Board as we are seeking to do now, that the level of expenditure which we would be caused to spend at secondary level and more frighteningly at the level of the Youth Service and indeed in the Law Courts and other areas, other Ministries pertaining to the delivery of social services whether it be probation, welfare, health etc., would become frighteningly high because of the capacity of those children to be able to fend for themselves and indeed to

equip themselves with the skills that would allow them to provide for themselves later on in life.

As a result, Sir, we have determined that the pilot programme should be introduced which would be in remediation for English in 39 schools which have been chosen according to their performance in the 11+ exam over the last 5 years and 27 schools in the remedial mathematics programme also according to performance in the 11+ exams over the last 5 years. The total number of schools is 44 and you will notice that there is some overlapping where some schools will in fact have both remedial English and remedial Maths programme taking place.

As I indicated earlier, Mr. Chairman, one cannot seek to remediate unless one knows what it is you are trying to solve and hence the diagnostic aspect of the programme. I would wish to caution however at this stage, Sir, that there will be some children in some cases whose learning disabilities may be so intractable, Sir, that the remediation programme that we have designed may not be able to effectively deal with their disability. Those children, Sir, will have to be the subject of other special arrangements pertaining specifically to the issue of special education.

We are currently finishing the preparation for the announcement of a policy on special education. So that those would be currently outside the ambit of this policy. For example, Sir, on average there are about 40 or so children who do not sit the 11+ every year because of the total lack of ability and these may be as a result of reasons ranging from physiological reasons to some form of mental or physical retardation and indeed some forms of trauma. You may well find that with proper testing taking place in the primary schools, we would be able to determine who these children are and deal, Sir, more effectively with their needs.

I believe, Sir, that the Ministry of Education has a duty to ensure that each child that passes through the primary school is given the opportunity to learn according to his or her ability and that that can only be done by testing that ability so they will in fact, in addition to this programme, in some instances where the teachers doing the diagnosis in this programme have determined that this child has a problem that is more severe, for us to refer that child to a team of experts which would include medical doctors, educational psychologists, social workers, and indeed the teachers involved in the teaching of that child to determine how best we can seek to educate that child and to equip them for some aspect of activity further in life.

Indeed, Sir, we may find that while children may have certain difficulties they may still be able to match colours and they have to be given the confidence and the opportunities to be able to learn still because they will

well be able to get a job for example with Bartel with matching colours in wires because of the skills in those areas, for example, only require the basic capacity to be able to match colours while having a basic ability to read and add in certain areas, Sir.

However, in returning specifically to this programme, Sir, I would wish to add that this programme, to use the language of the Honourable Member for St. Joseph, is really the large programme in the primary schools under the educational system of Barbados and I would make bold to say that this programme has the capacity really to make the decisive difference in our ability to implement a successful human resource development strategy over the next few years and to have the capacity to influence Barbados' ability to remain at the cutting edge or to achieve economic prosperity in a way which all of us in here would like to see.

For example, Sir, we believe, and much has been said about Barbados partaking in areas of economic activity which are essentially knowledge based and skill intensive and which indeed are being favoured by the structure of the global market economy. However, to a large extent, we have been going after the areas of those industries with low value added, data entry workers *etcetera* who, while we require that type of work in that it allows us to create jobs for our people, at the end of the day we have not made significant strides in going after that area of activity that has the high value added - the area of design, the area of software development, the area of science and technology in a large way, the area of the creating and performing arts, Sir, to which all of those areas have attracted to them intellectual property rights which carry great currency on the global market economy now if we can establish the right distribution channels and indeed put the money in promotion and marketing of the products and services that we are seeking to distribute. 4.10 p.m.

We also feel, Sir, that that will also require a partnership in our educational system that will lead us to stop placing emphasis on learning by rote but indeed to place emphasis on allowing children's creativity to flourish so that they see themselves as creators and not merely consumers of goods and services passed to them either from within the region or in the national arena. So that this programme is essential to give these children whom we hope will charge forth with the development of our human resources development strategy and to also give them those basic skills that are necessary to keep them on the cutting edge of economic prosperity in this hemisphere.

The specifics of the programme, Sir, relate to the fact that there will be a number of materials that will have to be purchased in order to effectively implement the programme

in relation to both the remedial programme in Maths and in English. Indeed, there is a great use of computer hardware and software and the multi-active media in which there is the use of the CD Room in teaching these children and engaging first of all their attention to be able to teach them and get them back on stream.

I understand from the experts that it is expected that once a child has been diagnosed as having a problem he or she will be pulled out of the main stream. The remediation will take place and then they will be main streamed as soon as possible thereafter to ensure that they get back on line with the course that is being taught to the other children in the schools.

I would have indicated, Sir, that this programme would have come to a grinding halt with the lay-off of teachers in 1991. What we have found out is that with the use of multi-grade teaching and indeed with the cooperation of the Head of the primary schools and the teachers themselves that we are in fact able to re-introduce this programme in these 44 primary schools without the need for additional staff because there are many instances where they have a lot of small classes and what will happen is that some of these classes will be combined for some subjects while allowing therefore that teacher who would have previously taught that class to be able to deal with the remediation in respect to those children who are in need of it

Assessment, Sir, will continue to be an integral pan of the programme. As I said, there must be main streaming of these children as soon as it is discovered that they are responding to the remediation and, in fact, can respond to the average teaching that would take place in the normal classes.

Sir, I would only wish to say at this stage that this programme in itself cannot right the wrongs that may currently exist. To that extent, the basic education project which is currently sponsored by the Organisation of American States will have to continue and in fact be supplemented in the secondary schools, because there would have been a number of children who would have already passed out of the primary schools but passed out without those basic skills. To that extent also, we would like to intensify the remedial programmes in the secondary schools and in particular the junior secondary classes from Form 1 to Form 3 and also in the Barbados Youth Service which has made a specific request for remedial teachers because of the fact that many of the persons whom they have taken into that Service have not yet acquired those basic literacy and numeracy skills that are necessary in order for them to go out into the world and be responsible for their lives. I cannot underscore, Sir, the importance...

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member has only one minute to wind up.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Yes, Sir. I cannot underscore the importance of this programme. I believe, as I said, that it will make the decisive difference to a successful human resource development strategy being implemented by this Government I believe, Sir, that it will make the decisive difference to this country's capacity to return to a level of economic prosperity with which we would all feel far more comfortable rather than the structural and stabilization programmes which have become the order of the day because of the imbalances in our economy and because of the inability to properly prepare persons for those areas of economic activity that we believe that this country should be pursuing at this point in time.

With those words, Sir, I beg to move that this Head do now pass.

Hon. R. C. EASTMOND: Mr. Chairman, as I rise in support of this Resolution at hand, I would not only like to endorse the comments made by the Honourable Minister of Education and Member for St. Michael North East but would also like to observe that the principal purpose of any educational system is to ensure that its subjects be fulfilled. The principal purpose of any educational system is to make sure that those to be educated are indeed educated. If, Mr. Chairman, you consider the millions upon millions of dollars that would have been spent on education in Barbados in the last 40 years, you must be left wondering to what extent this investment in education has been justified and has worked and to what extent there are those in the community who still may have been left unfulfilled despite the heavy investment in education.

Mr. Chairman, I want to say that all Members of this Honourable House without exception would subscribe to an educational policy that is wholesome, reflective of the requirements of the economy and society but an educational system that at the same time gives everybody a fair break. The reality of the situation however, Mr. Chairman, is this. Overtime we have seen many people emerge and do well and even flourish under the influence of our educational system, but we have seen some too who have either fallen by the wayside or who have been left entirely unfulfilled. Every Member, Mr. Chairman, of this Honourable House is an active politician and every Honourable Member can tell you that those who come seeking the most direct material help including jobs are usually those with limited skills, few qualifications, limited on the job experience, and persons whom when you screen them, seem not to have benefited fully from the educational system. There are those in this community who never put pressure on politicians for jobs, for money or for anything, precisely because they have received a measure of self-sufficiency out of their education, but there are also those who despite the existence of a reasonably sound educational system have not been able to gain. When you put it under the analytical microscope, Mr. Chairman, the

reasons that the Honourable Minister has outlined become not only obvious, but entirely convincing. 4.20 p.m.

Let us consider her subject group and her target group. She is considering spending \$400 000 on 44 primary schools. If you look to see that some 44 primary schools have been targeted and \$400 000 allocated you might wonder how could she have achieved such a programme at such low cost. How could 44 schools be in consideration and contemplation and less than half a million dollars allocated? It obviously means that the Minister is proceeding with a sense of responsibility that is economic in thrust but at the same time serious in its aim.

The fact of the matter, Mr. Chairman, is this. Historically, in primary schools, many teachers have been confronted with reasonably large groups of children and as they have been so confronted many of these teachers were never trained to deal with slow learners and under achievers. The end result was that those who are brighter in the class seem to catch the teachers' eyes whilst those who are slow and who were under achieving, were somehow not necessarily ignored but did not progress at the same rate as the high flyers.

I know that every Member - and I am not speaking in any partisan way even though I am definitely supporting the Resolution - I know that every Honourable Member of this House, having seen the vagaries of Barbados, will tell you that there are those who succeed and get through whom teachers always praise while there are those who seem not to have been properly integrated into education, who lack skills, who are not fit for the marketplace, who have little to offer and who very often humbug and harass politicians for help not only because they need to survive but because in so doing they realise that they cannot compete in the marketplace and they hope that their parliamentary representative can find some miraculous solution to their problems.

The point I was making, Mr. Chairman, is this. Many a teacher has been confronted by a class... Some of the classes are large classes, some of the children in these large classes require individualised attention. In the meantime, the teacher is not trained in diagnosing learning difficulties and not trained in remediation. You have a situation therefore where the teacher seems to concentrate his or her efforts on those who are cooperating and doing well in the teacher's mind because the teacher is evaluating those who are succeeding and very often judging those who are not succeeding. Sometimes they judge them in terms of the disciplinary problems that they present. Sometimes they judge them in terms of their low motivation, their low self-esteem and such like.

The fact of the matter is this. Many a child in Barbados, even though in my respectful view not in the majority, is confronted by a problem of reasoning. I have taught all my adult life and I have heard children telling me "I woke up this morning therefore America invaded Libya". "Dr. Smith is a lawyer therefore Mr. Ince married Mrs. Ince."

I have seen in my teaching, children confronted with the problem of reasoning. My learned, distinguished friend, the Member for St. Joseph, will tell you that in his experience he has been faced by many a person who presents an obvious *non sequitur*. He might even go on to tell you in the same way the Honourable Member for St. George South could tell you that many a child will come to the law courts to read the oath where the oath merely says "I, Wendell Smith or I, Wendell Taitt swear to tell the truth" and that person cannot read it at all in this Barbados in this Year of Our Lord, 1994. I am very serious.

In addition to the problem of reasoning, there is also a problem of reading in schools. We cannot invest millions and millions of dollars in Barbados in an educational system and at the same time leave out people who are in obvious need of help and ignore them and leave them to the vagaries of the marketplace. Apart from obvious problems of reasoning in school, there is also the problem of conceptual errors where by not learning some children are unable to properly conceptualise and end up making conceptual errors. There are also problems of very poor expression and in recent times under the influence of other distractions like STV, like video and such like, a lot of slower learners in the impressionable state are hooked on these things and cannot then get back their attention to what is happening in school.

My experience as a teacher is that of a teacher whose career as a teacher has never stopped and still continues in the same way as that of another distinguished Member of this House of 23 years experience who has distinguished himself at the tertiary level in another place and has written many a good sound educational piece of material - I refer to the Honourable Member for St. Michael West, who even though he never taught at the primary stage, as far as I know, is a distinguished fellow at tertiary stage and he and I know that. We will not at this point enter into a discussion on the Floor of this House.

Getting back to the point, Mr. Chairman, when children always see themselves as failures they lose interest and they lose motivation. Indeed, many a slow learner and under achiever is the biggest problem in the school by presenting disciplinary problems. If you are in school at age 5, at age 6, at age 7, at age 8 and every year your yearly report is showing that you are a failure and you feel

that you are a failure - not you in particular, Mr. Chairman, but "you" used generically - if a person is feeling a sense of failure and a sense of under achievement, if a person believes that he is not succeeding, that feeling of failure can go to the person's self-worth. Ultimately if the Honourable Minister of Education is able to introduce a remedial programme that will increase the self-worth and the self-concept of a lot of children in schools, then we are going to have a happier generation for the future.

I don't like to tell you, Mr. Chairman, that many a boy and girl involved in crime and deviant behaviour is so inclined to be involved precisely because of having failed at school. Yet our society is committed to investing huge amounts of money in education. Yet our society over time has boasted about how literate we are. We have made strides and that cannot be underscored, but we need to achieve maximum results.

A system of remedial education will see a difference in this country. Once that system works we will see children suddenly change because as they now achieve they will not be distracted into bad behaviour, bad discipline, lack of motivation and such like. As they see themselves now being targeted for special attention they are going to feel wanted and loved.

Don Grazette who was gunned down in Trinidad in recent times told me clearly that he failed in school and he lacked love and if you knew what was happening in his life he was given all the things that was given to a normal person; but he said he lacked love and nobody was interested in him. Precisely because he failed in school.

I am saying, Mr. Chairman, that once a system of remedial education gets off the ground such a system must aim at the following objectives. It must first of all ensure that all students get an education, not just the bright ones. There are several Honourable Members in this Chamber who would have been gifted in their time but who would have come away from school saying that they had a friend somewhere in school who had ability and still did not succeed.

What is very konic is this. A lot of the under-achieving students in school have street commonsense. Send them to shop in Swan Street, send them to Broad Street. They have street sense which means that they are not hopeless. Yet in terms of absorbing education and developing skills they have failed. I welcome the Minister's proposals, Mr. Chairman, to make sure that under-achievers get a chance to achieve something in school. I would believe that in addition to ensuring that all students get an education that the programme should identify those in special need. It should also look for those who are particularly under-privileged. 4.30 p.m.

In Barbados there is a definite link between people of under-privileged socio-economic standing and failure in school and to some extent we as policy planners and politicians are going to have to consider that. I repeat there is a definite link between those in lowly socio-economic conditions and those not achieving and this has implications for the educational system.

In addition, Mr. Chairman, I would want to mention that historically, even though we have embarked on good systems of teacher training, we have to some extent been guilty in Barbados of training the teachers as generalists and not being specialists. There is a crying need for more people to do special education. There are those in the educational system prepared to undergo specialist education if given a chance. A lot of Barbadian women with that natural maternal Barbadian instinct are prepared to go beyond the call of duty and, if given a chance, to train as specialists in dealing with slow learners and would willingly undergo such training and come back and assist.

I, therefore, Mr. Chairman, as I rise in support of the proposal by my colleague, would want to say that the time has come when after so many years of millions upon millions being invested in education for us to reflect what we have got in consequence. You know from experience that part of the unemployment problem in Barbados - I am not saying that the whole unemployment problem is in any way the result - but what I am saying is that part of the unemployment problem is that some of our people have no marketable skills. The Honourable Member for St John will tell you that. As Minister of Finance and as one of the chief planners in Barbados the Honourable Member for St. John, if he gets a chance to speak will tell you that part of the problem in Barbados is that a good 5% of the working force have no marketable skills whatsoever.

I do not want to see poor Barbadians only as raw labour. Sir Arthur Lewis many years ago said that there is such a thing called a raw pool of labour. I do not like to categorize human beings as a raw pool of labour but you will get such a raw pool of labour in a situation where people have not benefited from the educational system and a system of training that will give them skills. You understand what I am saying, Mr. Chairman?

The point I am making is this that these under-achievers who have not been diagnosed as under-achievers, and who have not been helped, will come out of the primary and secondary schools with no skills. Indeed, what is very frightening is this that there are children who go to the 11+ at age 11 who had been doing so badly up to 11 that if you risk putting them in a secondary school they go into the secondary school and learn nothing.

I taught in a secondary school one time and I remember asking a fellow the Spanish for an exercise book. The fellow looked for the physical exercise and the physical book, joined the two together and came up with a combination that I am not permitted to say because the procedures of this Honourable House cannot be conducted in Spanish but have to be conducted in English. These difficulties come to students whose concepts of things are disarranged, to students who have been poorly motivated, to students who have under-achieved. At the end of the day we must have in the past 30 or 40 years produced a good 20 000 people in Barbados who if they were diagnosed as being persons requiring remediation could have made a better contribution to their families, themselves and to this country.

I believe the whole House on this occasion this evening would welcome any move to ensure that the average Barbadian gets a chance to see education as a chance for self-fulfillment, to get skills, to get trained, to develop knowledge and to develop in the community and not to be a failure, nor to be deviant and not to have gone astray. I believe the measure therefore requires our attention and support for these reasons.

Historically both parties have placed a great amount of attention on education. The parties have previously seen the physical plant and the infrastructure as necessary, but we have come to a point now where I believe we are going to have to look at the technical aspect and the in-plain situation in the schools to see how best we can improve our educational plant further.

With these few observations, Mr. Chairman, I am deeply obliged to you.

Hon. Dr. R. L. CHELTENHAM: Mr. Chairman, I rise to make some comments in relation to this supplementary before the House dealing with the attempt to correct what is a very worrying problem with respect to the learning difficulties being experienced by a large and a growing number of fellow Barbadians. I want at the outset to compliment the Honourable Minister of Education on her exemplary speed of action in addressing this problem and in the correctness in her focus and emphasis, that is to say at the primary level and at the base of the educational structure. I think that too much attention has been paid in recent years to the secondary and tertiary levels while forgetting that the real strength of our educational system has traditionally and will, in my view, remain at the base, and if you neglect the base you, in effect, tamper with the strength of the secondary and tertiary level. We see this problem manifested every day around us in the inability, as has been pointed out, in people to read a simple oath, in the inability of people to reason logically or at all, or in their difficulties in filling out the simplest forms.

What I am concerned about, Mr. Chairman, is the tampering with the educational system over the years that has resulted in what is now being called a misdiagnosis of this difficulty. When I was a boy in Elementary School 40 years or more ago there had then what was called every two years an Intelligence Quotient Test. The American Army test which was perfected during World War II was very much used, also a test perfected by the French known as the Binet Test. Every two years the Ministry of Education used to conduct these tests across our primary schools so much so that if a person was a high achiever in terms of the IQ test but was not doing well at school the Headmaster was immediately put on alert that something was wrong, that here was a boy or a girl, as the case may be, with a high rating in the IQ Test consistently and at the same time under-performing whereby the Headmaster paid a visit to the family, investigated what was going on and unless there was a situation of a physiological or psychological difficulty he knew that something was wrong outside of that which he had to address.

Over the years in my submission, there has been too much tampering with the educational system. Those tests went by the wayside. It is now 30 years or more in this country since they have not been carried out and we have in other respects tampered with the system to our disadvantage. We no longer teach children the role of words in the sentence structure. It seems to me, and I do not care what fancy arguments are submitted, that it is vital that people must know the role and function of words in sentences. They do not know it at the tertiary level or at the secondary level, and it is not taught at the primary level.

In addition, people are no longer taught sound drill and that too is a departure from the past which has resulted in a lot of mispronunciation and an inability to recognise words of similar sounds. The notion of S-A-T - sat, and C-A-T - cat, and M-A-T - mat, and so on, are very essential if people are to understand the rhythm of language. Other things have happened which are also very worrying. This now is a direct result of the pre-occupation with the 11+ examination and the fact that slow learners, certainly in the 9 to 11 age stream are deliberately ignored as every teacher tries to score high marks in the 11+ examination. These are some of the factors which have resulted in the problem to which we are alluding and even though I am not attempting to anticipate the results of the diagnostic enquiry I think that those who are involved in this diagnosis process can be well advised to focus on the role that some of these factors to which I have referred, the role that they have played in this very worrying problem to which reference has been made today. 4.40 p.m.

It is also true to say, Mr. Chairman, that there has been a considerable amount of misteaching. There is no

doubt about that and it worries me from this viewpoint that we now boast in Barbados, that we have pretty well-trained teachers at the primary schools. Yet there is such an enormous incidence, such a high and growing incidence of problems resulting from misteaching in basics, in how to count, in how to add, the relationship between adding and subtraction and division, how to read.

I look back, with great pride, on what people like my old man and others of that age group were able to do for children of varying abilities and with great success. You cannot beat the teachers of that generation in imparting reading skills in children. But with a wide range of IQ they are able to take them unto their care and to make sure that they can read.

The great problem is, Mr. Chairman, that unless a child can read reasonably early, by age 5,6 or so and able to cultivate the habit of reading that child, for the most part, will turn out to be an under-achiever. Reading is important in terms of accessing knowledge, in terms of giving a child confidence, in giving it motivation and self-respect, in causing him to appreciate his role in the world. If you start out by having reading difficulties and numeracy difficulties, if you are not careful, you are lost *for* life in the sense that you will not realize your full potential.

This is an important issue that we are talking about, it is an important initiative that is being taken by the Minister of Education whom we must compliment. It is a pity that we are hobbled by the time constraint, this supplementary being part of an omnibus Resolution whereby there is a time restriction on the debate itself. It might be that we can get an opportunity in the course of the Estimates to return to this issue. I very much feel, Mr. Chairman, that again in Barbados the focus has got to get back to the base of the educational system, the primary school level.

The problems that we are seeing reflected in our educational products, throughout the system, reflect from a poor base. I feel too that the Minister would be well-advised as a young Minister to resist and reject all the pressures being put on you as has been put on successive Ministers of Education over the last 30 years to experiment with team teaching, look and see, abandonment of sound drill, reject that and let us rely on the proven techniques that have served us and this country so well in the past

I am ashamed of what I see even among the graduate class. I was not surprised that Professor Hall who has served the University with great distinction for many years as Professor of History was moved to say, in the course of the last graduation address here that the graduates of today from the University of the West Indies cannot be

compared with the graduates of the 60s and the early 70s. You are not dealing with comparable entities. In effect he was saying that these are low level graduates of this generation. He made no joke. He said it was important enough for him to make it the subject of a graduation address.

My point is that a lot of the problems that we are seeing among the graduating class, people at the level of tertiary, secondary level now, is really a regret of the fact that we have ceased to strengthen the base. There are too many weaknesses at the base of the educational system.

Sir, I want to say in conclusion that I think that the case has been made for the continuation of Erdiston, as the teachers' training centre particularly to do retooling and to do remedial work. There was a debate in this country 5 years ago and ever since with virtually 100% of our primary school education teachers trained that Erdiston had virtually come to the end of its usefulness. For I think that what this has demonstrated is that there continues to be a role and a purpose for Erdiston in our educational system, a changing role and focus but one that remains nevertheless.

I think it is a matter of deep regret that ever since my distinguished colleague took an initiative in this matter, the now Deputy Prime Minister in 1984, that the matter was not pursued with vigour and seriousness and that it has taken almost 10 years for a Barbados Labour Party Administration to return to this matter. I hope that the Minister would continue to give it her consistent attention so as to ensure that progress is made in trying to tackle, successfully, what is a frightening and growing problem in our society.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Mr. Chairman, Sir, one would not have thought that this omnibus Resolution seeking \$9 million that has a content that is not immediately apparent under Head 34 would have led to the beginning of a major debate on education. I really participate in the debate primarily to make the point that we must be careful that we do not have a half debate on education on the basis of this Head. I think the parameters should be established where Members to be assured that there was going to be a discussion of this nature, Members would have been in a position to research the issue and speak with a lot more certainty as to the facts of the situation with regard to remedial teaching in Barbados.

This is a Resolution which we, on this side, are accommodating the Government in doing in all of its stages on very short notice. Therefore no one on this side is in a position to refute and/or determine details concerning remedial teaching. But I do not think that this debate must take on aspects, even though Honourable Members have

said on the face of it are true and while the points being made are valid, this debate must not now take on some gargantuan aspect of our national life which suggests that remedial teaching has been put in abeyance since 1984. That is simply not true. The suggestion that no remedial teaching has occurred in Barbados since 1984 could only lead us down the path of unrighteousness.

Aside.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: The Minister has not said so. I am sorry. I want to make sure. I am not accusing the Minister of this but the impression - there is at least one Honourable Member in this House who would tell you that impressions are very strong forces. I do not wish the impression to go forth that since 1984 remedial teaching has not occurred.

I wish to accept and I do not wish to quarrel with concepts and positions which have been taken by Honourable Members but, at the same time, I think those positions have to be taken in the context of what is.

If one were going to be engaging fully in this debate, one could point, for example, to a Report which has been prepared by Dr. Allsopp for the University on the Use of English of University students over a sustained period of time in which the conclusions are devastating. Those conclusions suggest that our problem is much more fundamental than a failure to deal with remedial teaching. I take the point that there is need for remedial aspects of our teaching to be enhanced.

But the issues which have been raised in educational circles are much more fundamental and therefore require, from us, a much greater and a much more in-depth examination of our educational system. And therefore, Mr. Chairman, I am suggesting that we must take this particular debate this afternoon in perspective. We just had a distinguished United States educator addressing the University fraternity in Jamaica and indicating that the system of education in the Caribbean is superior to the system in the United States. He urged that they must not change the system that they have in pursuit of the system in the United States. 4.50 p.m.

I do not in any way gainsay the point made by the Honourable Member which is very valid. One of the things about the Honourable Member for St. Joseph is that when he is making points that are valid he has this tendency to contaminate them with political invective. That is the problem. If he would speak sometimes to the pureness of the point one could follow him with applause but he has this almost cultural necessity to put a little political invective in. Otherwise I would have been able to endorse what he said. For example, I accept that the change

in teaching apparently has affected people. We do not have to go too far to discover that there is illiteracy in the system continuously. If you listen to the news tonight, if you listen to the radio, if you listen to people talking you hear talk about "at this point in time" - and Honourable Members themselves, well-educated and well-trained for them to lapse into this issue of "at this point in time", as if it is possible to have a point out of time.

These are small issues but that is illiteracy. That is not miseducation. The problem with Allsopp and Hall and all those people who address the major issues is that the issue we are now addressing here is not peculiar to Barbados or is not peculiar to the Caribbean. This is a problem where educators across the world are pulling their hair out trying to discover why such a large section of the population is falling between the cracks. One answer which has been given by the Teachers' Union in the United States is that the pace of development is so rapid and the patterns of development so set that there is really no place for the marginal people. And unfortunately in our society we have tended to accept lock, stock and barrel, systems which come from elsewhere.

What the Honourable Member is addressing about how they used to do parsing and how they used to make sure that those persons who were in school and who were slow learners had some kind of buttressing, does not address the point that only a small number used to be in school in the first place. There was a large number outside who were not slow learners. They were no learners at all. So once we are dealing with the issue we have to address the issue in a much broader context.

It is a fact that we have some slow learners but I want to suggest that until we start approaching that particular issue as a multi-disciplinary issue and not only as an educational issue, we are not going to solve the problem. Many of those persons who are slow learners are slow learners for reasons which have absolutely nothing to do with education *per se*. It has to do, for example, with the inability to have conditions at home that are commensurate with growth and development. It has to do with poor health conditions. It has to do with poor diet. It has to do with an attitude which they leave home with, which is brought about by the environment in which they exist. Can this society, or should not this society when looking at the question of slow learning address it across the board and look at it as a multi-disciplinary issue?

Honourable Members, the Minister for Health, the Minister for Education, there are a whole lot of areas in which these issues have to be looked at at the same time. There are some of us who are looking at them on the global level and perceiving that poverty *per se* is the major factor behind the ability and inability to learn.

In Barbados it does not apply to the same extent because the society is sufficiently small and because of some fundamental policy decisions that were made long before our time we have not fallen prey to the same kinds ^ of skewed society that we have seen in other larger societies.

In Britain for example there are 3 000 000 people who are completely outside the mainstream of development. In Barbados the numbers are relatively small. In the United States, homelessness has become a massive issue. In Barbados it is still in manageable proportions and is still capable of solutions. When we are addressing these issues which on the face of it appear to be on periphery we need therefore not to give the wrong impressions because it is still true that the vast majority of teachers in this country are dedicated and committed. It is still true that there are teachers in all of the primary schools in Barbados exactly like the ones described by the Honourable Member for St. Joseph who seek out slow learners and who assist them sometimes in their own time. It is still true that if you take a bell-shaped curve of schooling in Barbados you will find that those who are on the lower end of the bell-shaped curve are still a relatively small number.

The vast majority of the children who go to school in Barbados get a more or less adequate education. It has therefore to do with our approach to training. And I take the point the Honourable Member made that there is a place for Erdiston College but the Barbados Labour Party must remember that they in fact developed a blueprint for the closing down of Erdiston College.

Aside.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: I have to put it in the same political invective because our resources are measured by the same people and without some political invective they might go away believing that it hangs on only one side.

Let me put it another way, Sir. The Democratic Labour Party never had any blueprint for the closing down of Erdiston,

Aside.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: I withdraw that. Even the Honourable Member for St. George South who has supported what I am saying up to now wishes to resile from that particular statement. The Democratic Labour Party has accepted the same advice that the Barbados Labour Party got from the technocrats on these issues. I think they will agree with me now.

The Democratic Labour Party finally was able to find a methodology by which Erdiston could be saved that would not create confusion.

Now what I think we have to do, and I accept that this is a step in the right direction, is now to bring Erdiston College into the area of specialisation. It must no longer be a place for the teaching of generalists. We must make Erdiston College respond to the specific needs of the society as identified by the professionals in the Ministry of Education and elsewhere.

The University has a responsibility and some of the so-called educationalists in Barbados instead of trivialising foolishness in the newspaper every week or plagiarizing themselves, if that is possible, they ought to address some of the serious issues so that we could have an agenda. What we require is an agenda that is acceptable across the Board so that the slow learners and the other people who can be described as either the fringe groups, or the disadvantaged people, for they have various names for describing them. 5.00 p.m.

Mr. Chairman, what we require is to give those persons an opportunity. Now recently at the St. Leonard's Secondary School.... because slow learning in the primary schools is a feeder into slow learning in the secondary schools. We talked about those who missed the 11+ Exams, but we also collectively have prepared a graveyard for those who barely made it. They go into the secondary schools and they are bunched together because the system we have no matter what rhetoric we use still recognizes that high-flyers should be separated from the rest. We bring a number of either barely made it or mediocre people and we put them together. We then require the teachers of those schools to perform at a higher level than the teachers of the schools of the high-flyers and we rely on the goodness of those teachers to produce in the schools. I here make no distinction between the political parties because the system sometimes subsumes the political parties. But that system causes a lot of people even in the secondary schools to be bunched together and they are divided very early between those who will and those who will not. I think the Honourable Member for St. James North alluded to it at the primary level.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member has one more minute.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: It is a result of that that we see the kind of illiteracy to which the Honourable Member referred. We hear the foolishness that is talked when you can turn on your radio and hear a big person who went to school after 1955 talk about "I does and I goes". There is absolutely no reason why anybody in Barbados today should be saying "I goes and I does". We have television in this country. It should be used to assist in the remedial training of ordinary citizens. We have all kinds of money being spent and still...

Aside.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: But I do not like when they try to speak English and then start saying "I goes home" and "I comes". Mr. Chairman, I hope that I have managed to bring the debate on a different frame, but I agree with the Honourable Member that when the Estimates come we really ought to examine some of these issues in a lot more detail and that we can examine them at the level from which policy of a serious nature can continue to emerge.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: Mr. Chairman, I am glad that the Honourable Member did interject in this debate to indicate that on this side we were particularly concerned by the impression that was given that the diagnostic and remedial education programme in reading and mathematics, according to the notes, to be implemented for 1995 period in January. This seems to suggest that at no stage in the past that this kind of reform was taking place in the primary schools.

Sir, I did not hear the Minister in her address but I sincerely hope that the funds that are allocated to the primary schools would be directed at those programmes that are existing within the schools that have started and have been progressed by teachers who are committed to assisting slow learners. They have gone about implementing these programmes with the assistance of business houses and individuals where they have from time to time running around Bridgetown asking friends and other associates if they would allow them to have some funds so that they can attend overseas conventions where they are able to develop new techniques in remedial learning and so forth.

At the St. Giles School, there are a couple of individuals such as Mrs. Gracelyn Wiles and some other members of the community in the primary schools of Barbados who have formed themselves into a committee. I think that they have been doing a wonderful job in trying to bring attention to this area of deprivation in Barbados. I certainly would like to compliment them for the work that they have been doing and I am hoping because I did not hear the Minister in her remarks - that funds will be specifically directed at these groups within the primary schools so that they can expand their programmes and we do not have them running around Bridgetown begging for assistance so that they can get technical assistance for the children.

The debate also brings me to the whole question of a number of children who as the Honourable Member for St. James North and certainly the Honourable Member for St. Michael West indicated are filtered into the St Giles Senior School. They have missed the boat at the 11+ level. They have gone into what they call the senior school

and they are engaging themselves in the learning of crafts, trade and so forth.

I have had the occasion to visit this school on a number of occasions and what is very noticeable is that almost all of these students have a very bad complex, as if to suggest that the whole system had discarded them. I believe that the Ministry will have at some time to embark on an exercise to assist in the development of the mindset of these particular children. They must not be allowed to feel that because they have not made it into the system that they are rejects or that they are useless or will serve no future purpose in the society. I have tried along with some of those teachers to talk to some of those students from time to time even though it is true to say that many of them come from broken homes or homes where there is neglect by both mother and father, there seems to be an attitude that it does not really matter what happens to me. I am here and I have to survive. I think that we really have to participate in some meaningful exercise where we try to assist them in thinking that they too can play a meaningful role in the development of Barbados.

In terms of the priority in setting this agenda, I will not quarrel with that. But I certainly would have liked to see the Ministry try to enhance the Technical and Vocational Programme as soon as possible by a further injection of funds into that programme because the current budget for the National Training Board is somewhat low and almost non-existent. I am concerned that at this time in our development where we are trying to find jobs and where a lot of the persons who are seeking jobs in the community are untrained people, many of them have just gone to second or third form, and they have no formal training in any discipline. I think that we are going to have to spend some more money in this area. In terms of prioritizing where we spend our money, I am going to ask the Ministry in its planning for the coming financial year to think seriously of injecting some funds into that programme to assist with the vocational training of students. Apart from that, Mr. Chairman, I have no difficulty in supporting the programme and I would certainly like to place on record that the programmes are indeed existent within many primary schools, if not all, right throughout Barbados, and I certainly think that the Government should be commended for trying to enhance it at this stage. Thank you. 5.10 p.m.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: Mr. Chairman, I would make a rather brief contribution on this matter. I think that it is about time that legislators in this country recognise that the education system that we have today has been a major failure for the majority of people going through that system, especially the poor and disadvantaged in our society. At the end of the day, if you look carefully and you see what is coming out of that system we all know that

you get a significant percentage who do reasonably well at the top but when you go around Barbados the people whom you see under the trees from day-to-day, the people who form the majority of the unemployed, the people in the prisons in Barbados today, the young people before the Courts day after day are the people who have been the failures of that system.

We have spent a lot of money on structures and in formatting education in Barbados over the years and we do not recognise the extent to which the system has failed this country. I was alarmed to discover the very high percentage of people who had gone through secondary school in this country and could not read or write. There is something fundamentally wrong with a system at all levels where you can have large numbers of people going through that system and nobody even recognising that they cannot read and write. Something is very fundamentally wrong.

I find myself today almost folly in agreement with my right wing friend, the Honourable Member to §t« Joseph, on the merits of the old primary education system. We need to look and see what we have abandoned in favour of what we have adopted. There can be no question whatsoever that if you take any hundred people who have gone through our primary education system that existed in the past and those coming out of secondary schools now you will find much fewer among those who went through 7th standard -1 doubt you will find any who cannot read. You would not find any who could not write. You wouldn't find any who could not reason and you couldn't find any who were not able to make reasonable judgments based on information before them.

If you look around Barbados today a lot of the contractors, a lot of the successful businessmen, a lot of the successful politicians of the past are people who went through that system and did so successfully. That system was the bedrock on which this country was built, not the few that went to the secondary system that we had in those days.

We have expanded opportunities at secondary schools and at the same time the fundamentals in our educational system have certainly declined drastically and it is not a simple academic problem. It is not merely an economic problem. It is a major social problem. Today the victims, I must say they are victims. Many of the victims of that system they want to hang, they want the "cat" for them, they want longer periods of imprisonment for them, people who have been entrusted to the care of a public school system and come out without the capacity to read, write, make a living, born in abject poverty, and they end up on that side of the law in Barbados.

We must think very carefully what we have done over the years with our education system. The United States,

by the way, is no model to choose from. I think I read somewhere that they have like 35 million people who cannot read and write in the United States and they have a disastrous primary and secondary education system in that country. What we had here was suited to Barbados in many ways and what we have allowed to happen is that we have allowed our primary education to decline in emphasis. Something has gone very wrong with the entire system and something really needs to be done about it and we just cannot continue to say that we have 97% literacy and all this kind of thing.

Aside.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: I agree with you. That is a myth when you realise what is happening to these children on the street. We cannot start thinking in those terms when you are dealing with the question of crime, the majority are to be found there. You will find some among the middle classes too. But those who are from the middle classes, let me tell you what happens to them. There are one or two, there are a percentage that have identifiable defects of a physical nature that have not been identified. That is one kind of problem.

The second thing that happens to them is that even if they come out of the system illiterate they fall into a certain structure where somewhere along the line they manage to remain by and large on the right side of the law. They manage to go into some kind of family business or something like this and there are some protective elements in the social structures around them. It is the other ones, the poor ones, who do not have those kinds of protective mechanisms around them and something has to be done. By the way, you have to remember too that when you are talking about remedial education in the context of Barbados those that have some physical problem would constitute a minority of those requiring remedial education. There are thousands out there requiring remedial education and that is where the focus has to be along with those with some physical defects.

My plea here to the new Minister of Education is not to follow her predecessors in office and continue to believe that by putting up more and more structures and so on or by trying to impose all kinds of innovations within the educational system that you are necessarily improving the situation.

When I see the maths that people who cannot read and write are asked to do, I cannot do that maths. I did "O" levels. I did Advanced Levels in Maths and there is no way that I could even attempt to do the kind of maths now that they are asking children who cannot read and write to do and who didn't pass the 11+ to do. I mean it is crazy. Remember the same children cannot add, cannot subtract,

cannot multiply, cannot divide. They cannot do any of those things.

Asides.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: The point is this. There was a time when the majority of people that went through our system could add and subtract, multiply and divide and had a good working knowledge of English and things like this. Something needs to be done about it. The problem is the teachers that came out of that system over the past 20 years whom I presume will today constitute the majority in the system. What are we going to do about that? 5.20 p.m.

I think that we have to get the teachers to reinforce in the schools, as a matter of policy, the importance of making sure that our children can read, write, and reason and do some basic arithmetic. That cannot go wrong. You can build on that. You can do anything after you have got those basic skills. If you do not have those basic skills you have a major problem.

When you talk about further training of teachers and so on, I think that Government needs to set a policy. There has to be a major shift in educational policy that says it is wrong to have a system where the social consequences we are seeing today are the end result and that this can be remedied. It has to start at the primary level and make sure that those children have those basic skills when they come out of primary school.

Now I do not think that \$400 000 for 44 secondary schools, that is less than \$10 000 a school, is going to do much beyond dealing with those people who may have some identifiable defect or something like this. It would seem to me that you require a lot more resources in order to turn this thing around and it has to be turned around otherwise we will continue to short-change the children of this nation. We have done so for many years and I think it is time that we abandon a whole lot of this fancy educational theory and get back to what has worked for Barbados. It has worked for Barbados and it will again for the future. Do not let us get lost with all kinds of educational theories and then you turn out a whole lot of people out there, without education.

As a matter of fact, some one mentioned to me that 50% of the children that come out of our secondary schools either get no certificates at all, get one or two and a lot of them still cannot read or write, and 50% are not really prepared for anything in the work force. What kind of educational system do we have? That is rubbish and it has to be changed. There is no question about it. What kind of system is that that can produce that kind of result? Now

if that is the case, I believe that a new Government under a new Minister of Education has an opportunity to come forward with major policy changes, to set specific goals over the next few years so that we know that this is the major objective in education which will be achieved at the end of that period.

What is quite clear to me is that we cannot continue as we are going now. That is crystal clear to me. You are just asking for more and more trouble. You are being unfair to a whole lot of underprivileged people in this country and then you bring a judicial system that further destroys those who go on the wrong side of the law with all kinds of unconscionable penalties and these kinds of things. What kind of society are we creating? We do not recognise and many of us continue to fail to recognise that apart from the family that the educational system is largely responsible for this situation in respect of our young people.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member has one more minute.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: There was a time when our education system was able to absorb and help turn around a lot of our children who had problems in the family situation. This is no longer so, apparently. There was a time when on getting a kid into school the influence of the school would turn around the majority of the children who had problems at home. It would appear that this is no longer the case that the school just seems to compound the atmosphere within the school.

I, Sir, have never been one to go into details on our education system. It is one of the areas of public life that I have never analysed in significant detail. But when one sees the results there can be no doubt about the results out there. There can be no doubt about the fact that you have children going through primary and secondary school and then ending up in that kind of state in terms of their intellectual and academic achievement. Something is wrong. I think it is wrong at all levels. It is wrong at the level of the Ministry, the policy-makers and it is wrong at the level, I believe, of the administration. I think that teaching has to be re-organised. We have to focus once again on what informed the very fundamental desire for education in Barbados, to focus once again on our children. If you deal with that and correct those things I think that Barbados will move forward in the future. It is a great opportunity.

Before I sit, Sir, I want to caution the Minister of Education. You have a great opportunity to make a significant contribution to the people of Barbados. Do not be afraid to take bold decisions and if you just take one decision to make sure that the majority of children leaving

our schools can read, write and reason, and have some kind of moral values instilled in them, you would go a long way to turn around this nation.

Thank you.

Hon. Miss H. E. THOMPSON: Mr. Chairman, my heart is gladdened by this Supplementary Resolution being brought before this Honourable Chamber by the Minister of Education. Twice in my adult life I have been a teacher. On the first occasion I was shocked and appalled to witness some of the very gymnastics of reasoning of which the Honourable Member for St. James North so eloquently spoke. Indeed, there were many students who had no notion of grammar who, apart from being unable to reason, could not spell. There were large numbers who, even when they grasped the concepts which you were trying to convey, because they had no command of English at all, as a teacher, I recognised that they had no hope of passing the exam simply because they did not have the tools to reproduce the concepts which they had grasped.

I watched this being repeated in the school system and at the tertiary level with tremendous concern when I started to teach at the University because even though the people there had gone through the entire secondary system and, in fact, had "O" and "A" Levels, one saw often that they were unable to communicate effectively. What we are witnessing here today marks an attempt to correct some of the wrongs that are causing so many of our young people, and the older ones too, to be unable to make a meaningful contribution to society.

Many of us in this Chamber, and in wider Barbados, have used education as the tool of upward, social mobility. It is through education that we have been able to move from abject poverty in some cases to positions where we are professionals, where we enjoy positions of respect in our communities and where we have been able to achieve some measure of success. Unfortunately, because of weaknesses in the school system that opportunity is now being denied to several of our young people for whom the educational system has no meaning and no relevance. 5.30 p.m.

Indeed I think that the Honourable Minister must go beyond the measures she proposes now and ask herself what relevance the current educational system has for modern Barbados and whether or not the system has not reached the stage where it should be restructured, not after the American model but where it can be made more meaningful to the lives of the people who must pass through the system. For what, after all, is education if not a tool for equipping us for life? If the educational system has no meaning to those people who pass through it, if it cannot be effective for the consumers of the system and

if they cannot derive benefit from the system then they cannot develop in their lives and they cannot go on to make a meaningful contribution to society. We are witnessing the resultant phenomenon of this very factor when we look around the communities and see so many young people, particularly boys and men on the street day after day, having derived no benefit from the educational system.

The fact is, that not only are these people unemployed but their basic educational skills are so weak and so deficient that they are unemployable. They are unsuited for work except of the most unskilled type. We have to ask ourselves if in modern Barbados a community which has benefitted so tremendously from its educational system, whether or not we are not doing an injustice to our people by failing to capitalize on our greatest resource, our people by continuing to ensure that they are all properly educated.

We have long recognized that Barbados has no natural resources other than its people. We have long recognized that Barbados has none of the other resources available to many international and even regional countries. We have to invest in our people. If our educational system is not meeting the needs of our people, if our educational system is producing people who, because education has no meaning for them that they become so unfit for coping with the rudiments of day-to-day life then, in fact, the system is failing them and we are failing to develop as a society in the direction in which we would want to go. I am of the view that a lot of the anti-social behaviour evident in modern Barbados, particularly among young men, come from the fact that these people, by reason of the system having failed them, are unable to make a meaningful contribution to the society.

Let me go back and make the point. Some of us recognized early in our lives that through education we would have become somebody, that we would go somewhere, that we could get recognition as people because we learnt and used our education to pull us upward. For many of these people for whom education has not had any meaning, their only avenue for attention and recognition is through anti-social behaviour. Hence they will curse, they will attack with cutlasses, guns and knives because that is their way of becoming somebody. In the community there is a whole culture now that is anti-social in its very nature where these people for whom education has had no meaning are seeking attention through further anti-social behaviour. A lot of this behaviour is violent, aggressive and aimed at causing harm to people not only in their small communities but at the wider communities.

If we are to curb the social ills that we are seeing in modern society, if we are to stop the decline in society of which we so often speak, then we must go back to basics

in our educational system where we offer to people a system that is meaningful, a system through which they can develop and a system that they can once again use for upward social mobility.

Our current system is ignoring large numbers of people. It may be an exaggeration to speak of large numbers of people without having precise figures but certainly, Sir, from casual observation as a teacher, and as a young person, it seems to me that there are some large numbers of people who the system has virtually alienated from the rest of the society. We cannot have a society and it has not been part of our history and development, to have a society where we write off people, where we ignore and fail to cater to the need of large numbers of members of this society.

Too many people are falling by the wayside and we now, in my view, have to start to pull them back into mainstream society. The way to do it is through this initiative of the Minister and I commend her for it, but it has too, to go wider and to ask ourselves whether or not we do not need at this time to review the whole educational system and ask, "Where is education taking us? How is it relevant to modern Barbados? And how can we make it relevant for all members of the society?"

I should like, Mr. Chairman, to urge the Minister to see this only as the first step. I know that she has the courage and the ability to make the other steps that are needed if we are to effect social harmony and reconciliation by saving those people now disaffected by the gaps in the system.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: Mr. Chairman, I rise to support the extension in this Head. Certainly, Sir, we must understand that any money spent on education is well spent. After all, the human resource is still our most valuable resource in this country.

I have heard many Honourable Members speak this afternoon about the problems associated with education. Certainly there are a number of problems which we all agree are associated with education. But I should like to say that we still have the best education system in the Caribbean, we still have the best trained teachers in the Caribbean. I believe that we can say that Barbados is still the mecca of educational attainment within the Caribbean. However, over the last 30 years or so we have seen a decline in the role of the primary schools. We have seen a number of students scoring between zero and 30 marks in the Common Entrance Examination. We want therefore to find out what we must do to uplift the standard of education within the primary level. As I said before

money spent on education is money well spent. We have to come up with a system. The teachers work hard we agree. We agree that within the whole educational system a lot of money has been spent in secondary education and tertiary education. But, to my mind, to my understanding and to my knowledge as a teacher in the system, the primary education has been almost left out

Today we see that at the secondary level tremendous money is spent on the textbook system for students' education. Not so in the primary schools. When I was at primary school, we used to get free books from the schools. The schools provided the books for students. Today many parents have to pay for them.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member is asked to stay with the matter under discussion.

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: I beg your pardon, Sir.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member can please relate what he is talking about to the matter under discussion.

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: Mr. Chairman, the point I am making is that within the primary education system textbooks help to provide meaningfully to formal and informal education so that students, at that level, can develop meaningfully.

I am also saying, Sir, that because of lack of textbooks within the school system a number of students between class one and class four have fallen by the wayside since they have little to read. There is a number of parents who cannot buy textbooks because of cost. There are parents who do not buy textbooks for their children. This behaviour causes reading problems.

I also believe that the physical plant at the primary level has caused problems to such an extent that children suffer for space and environmental hazards whereas Government has been spending lots of money at the secondary level, in testing and so on, they have not done so over the past 30 or so years within the primary level. Despite the fact that you have a situation where studies have been carried out, studies based on American concepts and so on, no study has been done within the Caribbean for our people.

I hope that the Minister of Education would look at devising a system that will be meaningful to the Caribbean students bearing in mind that today there are over 4 000 students from other Caribbean islands within the primary education system. I believe that a concept, a measurement test, diagnostic test, if you will, should be carried out based on studies within the Caribbean so that this will more than help the students within our system. 5.40 p.m.

We have found that when tests from the USA had been applied in the schools, it had not only a cultural impact from North America, but we found that students did not perform as well as they should. I believe that we have trained personnel within the present school system and this will help to alleviate some of the problems that now exist.

I also believe, Sir, that skills such as book-binding, basketry and so on should be taught at the primary level. I ask the question, how do we know that this child or that child is good for nothing? How can we say that a child cannot cope? How can we say that a child is not academically minded? Maybe the child is not good at Arithmetic, English or Maths but I believe that this child could shine in skills such as basketry, woodwork and so on.

Then again, Mr. Chairman, we have found that when these skills were taught in schools children were able to pick up things that are related to English and to Maths and to Science and this helped. Today I believe the emphasis must be placed in the primary level and the Government is on the right path. We want to compliment the Minister for bringing this supplemental here today so that we could improve at least primary education in some ways. Diagnostic testing is important. Measurement and evaluation is important, so therefore, Mr. Chairman, I think if we are supposed to move forward in education the way forward must be at the primary level. The way forward must not only be at primary level but also in the kindergarten. We must teach skills at a very young age and money spent in the primary years of a child is very important.

As we go forward, Mr. Chairman, I hope that the emphasis would not only be to develop language skills but would also develop the physical structure for the child. Too many times the physical plant at the primary level has been left undone.

In many cases, certainly at primary schools, especially in the country area, toilets, windows and doors, all of these things are broken down. We need to concentrate on the primary level at this stage. Mr. Chairman, I thank you.

Mr. L. R. TULL: Mr. Chairman, Sir, I am not going to be very long because the debate has ranged far and wide. I learned years ago, Sir, when I was Minister of Education that everybody in Barbados is an expert in Education and it taught me at that time to be a little bit careful about a number of pronouncements that so easily fall from the lips of people speaking about education. I understand from the contribution of the Front Benches and the intermediary bench that there is a great deal of enthusiasm about reforms that are necessary in

education. Indeed, Sir, some of the contributions were extremely articulate, fluent and ...

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member is asked to address the matter here and I would prefer if he did not get into dealing with other Members' speeches.

Mr. L. R. TULL: No, Sir. What I really want to talk about I will talk about. I am making the point, Sir, that a number of the speakers on the Front Bench have spoken eloquently about the question at hand and therefore I feel comfortable, Sir, that much of what is required in education, including remedial education will be all met by the Government over the next 4 or 5 years.

There are two or three things I want to raise specifically. I see that the Resolution relates to provision of the sum of money for diagnostic and remedial work. I am a bit concerned about that, Sir, because what I have discovered by listening to the debate is that the problem in schools in relation to slow learners and persons with general learning disabilities is one of great magnitude. This covers a whole range of people both in the primary and the secondary system.

This pilot project we have been hearing about relates only to the primary school. There must be about 25 000 children in primary schools in Barbados and I am a little curious to know to what extent the provision of 6 teachers in a pilot project who will fan out across the country into the 44 primary schools and leave the other 40-odd primary schools unprotected...

I also want to know, Sir, how these six teachers will be able to manage even if they are doing the training of particular teachers in the primary schools how are they going to deal with the masses of numbers who require remediation. It seems to me, Sir, that it is the cart before the horse. Now, what is required at this stage is massive programmes of training of teachers in the primary system to be able to do diagnosis which is necessary first of all, Sir. The OAS project that was started some years ago, I understand from the Minister, was discontinued or slowed down after 1991. I understand that that programme involved about 70 teachers and that many of them are not currently working in the area of diagnosis. But it strikes me, Mr. Chairman, that we have to put far more resources and emphasis on the first phase, the diagnosis that I am currently hearing about. This is not meant to be a criticism of the Minister. I understand that these figures are only for the period-January to March 1995 but we have to look back because this is not a new problem and we have to be careful in these debates not to try to re-invent the wheel.

The question of remediation for children in the primary school is an old one. I have heard about it for at

least 30 years and at one stage there was an effort to put in the schools a number of non-teaching professional specialists like school psychologists. I believe the first school psychologist was first put in the system about 16 years ago and up to this point, Sir, there has not been a second one appointed. So there is one school psychologist that is catering to the needs of 50 000 students approximately. But what we need is more of that type of person because if we are going to do diagnosis, if we are going to look at an early stage for learning disabilities and the problems that need remedial treatment then we have to provide the skills in the school.

I was recently, Mr. Chairman, enquiring for a young Barbadian woman who wanted to study psychology at a University in the United States, whether she qualified for a loan from the Student Revolving Loan Fund. When I checked the Fund I understood that psychology was not one of the listed subjects of priority, and, therefore, did not fall into the category for loans from that particular fund. We are dealing with the moral aspect of it. When we need those particular skills in the schools, psychology is not even included in the Student Revolving Fund Programme. I also want to mention, when I hear the Honourable Member for St. Michael West speaking so forcefully, that the question of remediation is not something that you turn on and off like a tap. In 1991, the then Government introduced a number of measures that severely hampered the promotion of the programme to attack the problem of learning disability. I would hope that we will never get back into that situation again. Other Honourable Members have spoken about the great investment in human resources in Barbados and the need for such resources to move this country forward. We cannot take one step forward and two steps backwards with something as critical as this area of learning in our schools. 5.50 p.m.

I also want to raise finally, because I really do not want to get into a wide-ranging educational debate at this stage. That will come later on. I want to raise the question of the relationship between the professionals in the Ministry of Education and those in the schools. I know that in the past there has not always been a happy relationship between the professionals in the Ministry of Education such as the Education Officers and the administrators and teachers in the school system. From that I have heard that there have been problems of cooperation which work to the disadvantage of the children. There are several reasons that have been put to me, but I really do not want to get into those details at the moment. But I would like the Minister in her reply to give us the assurance that many of those problems which plagued the system and this society for so long have been alleviated and that there has developed cooperation between those two important sectors of the educational system.

I did say, Mr. Chairman, that that was going to be the final point. I will however deal now with another one very quickly which relates to teacher training at Erdiston Teachers' College. It is a fact that at one point in recent times there was consideration of the closing of Erdiston Teachers' Training College. I am glad that on reflection that that decision has not been taken because, as some Honourable Member made the point, Erdiston can and should meet specialist needs.

Aside.

Mr. L. R. TULL: Well, I am glad you made the point. It is the only point that you made which you are competent in. Now we had a situation where there was Erdiston Teachers' College and there were at least three departments at the University that were involved in teacher training, but there was very little coordination between these various courses. I believe the University's education programme meets a specific need and targets a specific group and I believe that Erdiston Teachers' College should be used as an institution for assisting in the identification of the problems such as we are debating today and in the training of teachers to meet those problems on an ongoing basis.

We have had the situation where a number or perhaps all the teachers I gather in the primary school system have been trained at Erdiston or at some other institution in Barbados. We have the situation where Erdiston seems not to have programmes for continuing training. Regarding the area of remediation, from what I have heard and I bow to the superior knowledge of persons as skilled as the Honourable Member for St. James North who has been a teacher for all of his life and the Honourable Member for St. George North who knows about these problems. They know about the problems better than I could ever know. But the Erdiston Teachers' Training College has this important role to play and that is constantly changing its programme, looking for needs in association obviously with the Ministry of Education, and meeting those needs through a process of constant targeting, and bringing other difficulties to an end.

I do not share the view, Sir, of many of those who spoke in very gloomy fashion about the level of the education system in this country. When I was going to school, there was less than 25 per cent of all children of secondary school age who were going to secondary school. I may say, Sir, it is anecdotal but it is true that when I left school I worked for about three months in the Auditor General's Department before I went overseas. I used to deal with the pay sheets for the Ministry of Transport and Works or whatever it was called in those days. What struck me very forcefully in those times, Sir, was the large number of persons who signed their pay sheet at the end of

the week with an "X". In fact, it was the vast majority that signed the pay sheets with an "X". That was a period when we were boasting of 98 per cent literacy in this country. When I was confronted with the brutal reality of that, I realized that we were living a myth. I mention that only in this context to say that those who think that our education system has failed and that children are doing far less well than what they were doing in the past are misunderstanding the reality. We must not rest on our laurels and I am not suggesting that. But like the Honourable Member for St. George North, I am of the view that our education system is still a good one. It has faults but, as the Honourable Member for St. James South said, we must become more relevant. That is an impression that we use easily. But I really think that we should not go overboard in knocking our system or in thinking that we are sending out of our school system large numbers of persons who are illiterate, uneducated and unable...

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member has one more minute.

Mr. L. R. TULL: Thank you, Sir...and unable to make their way in the world. A lot of reference is made to the people around the corners and in depressed areas. Those persons to a very large extent are smarter and better able at the art of survival in this community than those who are better lettered. If the aim of education is to prepare people for life and to meet the problems and challenges that confront them on a daily basis and when thrown from a building and land on their feet, I think that perhaps we are looking in the wrong areas to see where the system has failed if indeed it has failed at all.

Thank you, Sir.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Sir, I would like to thank all of those who contributed so far in the debate of four speeches that I believe to a large extent were geared and offered some measure of constructive criticism in respect of the educational system in Barbados and I wish, as I said, to thank them for their comments. There were one or two queries which I would wish to address perhaps starting with the last in respect of the Honourable Member for St. George South who may have been concerned that the level of diagnosis in the initial stages would not be sufficient. May I say at this stage, Sir, that in the pilot programme what is contemplated is that the six persons who were pulled out from the teaching system into the Ministry who received further intensive training in diagnosis will assist in the supervision of the teachers in those 44 schools. Many of these teachers have been exposed to some level of diagnostic and remedial training already. So it is not an instance or a case of those six having to cover 44 schools. 6.00 p.m.

There are teachers on the ground there. They will be assisted in the test and supervised by the six, plus the two curriculum officers from within the curriculum section of the Ministry of Education.

The diagnostic process will be as complete as possible because at the end of the day, Sir, the real rationale behind the introduction of this policy as a policy of this Government is that we believe that each and every child passing through the primary school system deserves the right to be able to learn according to his or her ability and to the best of his or her ability and, to that extent, one cannot simply put them in a class, expose them to a teacher and hope that they learn or hope that they pass an exam. We believe that we have a duty over and above that and, to that extent, we need to understand or to determine why it is a child may not be learning, and if it is a reason that we can deal with, bring them out of the mainstream, correct the problem and then mainstream them. If it is a problem of far more fundamental proportions, once you finish your diagnostic process, then there will be need to refer them for further testing to a team of experts including doctors, educational psychologists etc. So the diagnostic programme is as complete as it can be in those 44 schools.

In respect of the other 40 schools, it is hoped that the pilot programme will last for the two terms which will run from January to July and that whatever modifications need to be done as a result of what we have learned from the pilot programme that we can introduce across the board in all 84 primary schools a level of diagnostic and remedial teaching from September of 1995.

The cost associated with this may seem small, Sir, but to a large extent, as I have indicated, we have been training teachers in Barbados since 1984 in this discipline. The problem is that the programmes had stopped. Erdiston, however, since it has resumed in full force again, part of its new mandate has actually been the construction of courses specifically geared to diagnostic and remedial training as well as other specialist areas like values education and other areas they have gone into which we believe will assist in ensuring that those who are currently in the teaching system have access to better training.

It is not a question of running in haphazardly. The \$424 000 odd is primarily going to be spent in the acquisition of materials and hardware in order to assist in the diagnostic process and the remedial teaching. To a large extent, a lot of the basic material is cheap. However, we do require some computer hardware to assist in the process and the remedial teaching.

In respect of other concerns raised by the Honourable Member for St. Michael East as to the request for our support for existing programmes, as I indicated in my opening remarks, the truth is that there were very few

remedial programmes left in the primary school. These would certainly be integrated in the total programme that we are going to do in the 44 schools which are starting in January and we would hope to see this extended in September to all the schools.

The rationale also, Sir, speaks to the question of the need for good developmental teaching. To a large extent, part and parcel of the role of Erdiston is going to ensure that teachers have the capacity to go back there for ongoing training so that we deal with the question of ensuring that all teachers within the system are those who have been exposed to a level of this developmental teaching and can impart the same to the students.

I have heard a lot of Honourable Members in here today speak of the glory of the old primary school system and I agree to the extent that certainly, distinguished ladies and gentlemen whom I know, who only spent up to 7th standard had a capacity to learn and indeed to deliver of themselves in a far superior manner to some who have had university education in recent times.

May I caution also that I think a large part of that also has to do with the level of teaching that you had available to you in those days in the primary schools where perhaps the opportunities for persons in Barbados and certainly black Barbadians were not as vast as they are today and therefore there are other competing professions which take up the attention of those who have the capacity to teach but who may otherwise be sidetracked for whatever reason or another professionally.

In respect of the remarks by the Honourable Member for St. Michael West, I would just wish to say I have already addressed his concern in respect to Erdiston. In respect of other areas of other avenues to be used in the process of remedial teaching, we are trying to resuscitate educational T.V., the T.V. unit there in Government Hill. Unfortunately, Sir, much of the equipment is down and needs repairs and maintenance and I believe we would have to wait until the next financial year to be able to deal with that problem. It is a problem that we found and one that we will have to wait until next year to deal with properly. But, we do recognise the potency of using television to assist us in this general remediation programme.

Before I sit, Sir, I just want to underscore the point... One last point in respect to the senior and composite schools raised by the Honourable Member for St. Michael East. As I indicated once again in the opening remarks, we will be announcing, once we have completed the framework for it, a policy specifically geared to special education in this country that would encompass those

who suffer at the moment from various handicaps, whether they be physical or mental, those who have other learning disabilities that are so great that they cannot be encompassed by this general diagnostic and remediation programme that has been started. To that extent, we may well have to look at the further rationalisation of the senior and composite schools with those institutions that currently engage in the process of special education in this country so that I would not wish to jump the gun on it; but you can be assured that the Ministry is currently looking at it and we will deal with the matter in good time, meaning more sooner than later.

Like the Honourable Member for St. George North and the Honourable Member for St. George South, I basically believe that we have inherited potentially a good basic structure for our educational system. There are difficulties in it and there is a level of inequity that has been allowed to creep back in, particularly with the removal of partial zoning, particularly with our incapacity to deliver the level of educational services in the same manner that we would have wished to have delivered according to a child's ability. Hence our difficulty would be cut back in remedial programmes. 6.10 p.m.

We believe, Sir, at the end of the day that you must address yourself to equipping a child with certain basic skills, as the Honourable Member for St. James pointed out with the ability to read, write, reason and essentially to understand. Equally as important, to be able to express themselves because you would notice that a lot of the problems that a lot of young persons get into today are as a result of an inability to deal with conflict effectively. They do not know how to express themselves. They do not know how to think things through. To that extent what happens is that they resort to some sort of emotional reaction whether it be violent or otherwise. These are things that are currently engaging our attention. Indeed, the whole question of confidence building and conflict resolution must become part and parcel of the curriculum of the primary school without it necessarily being a separate subject, but we must address these issues of children at the primary school level. We would hope to be able to do so during the course of the next academic year.

It would be remiss of me also, Mr. Chairman, without making this one last point that to a large extent the success of this programme really depends on the cooperation of the parents of these children involved. The parents must be part and parcel of the process to assist in getting the children to the point where they want to learn, where they understand that they may have a difficulty, perhaps, in learning but it is not unconquerable and that indeed they can respond but that the environment must be favourable to their response.

I believe, Sir, you in your other capacity would be well aware of the importance and the critical role that the parents through the parent/teachers associations can play in the success of programmes such as these. To that extent we have been discussing these issues with all of the relevant persons and sectoral interests in education. This is not something we have simply just pulled out of a hat and come with here. We sat down and have discussed it with the Heads, the Teachers' Unions, the National Council of Parent Teachers Association and the Forum on Education. We have discussed it with everyone before arriving with the final problem.

I must say, Sir, that there is perhaps total consensus across the board in the need to ensure that a thrust is placed back in our delivery of primary education in this country to ensure that persons coming out of it simply are not being passed through a conduit and being pushed year from year as they reach a new birthday but are, in fact, benefitting from what we have set out to give them, that is, the ability to read, write, reason and comport themselves in a manner that is acceptable not only in terms of their moral and ethical behaviour but indeed in terms of their capacity to want to excel in other areas of learning and activity in this country.

With those words, Sir, I would beg to move that this Head stand part.

The question that Head 34 stand part of the Resolution was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

HEAD 37 - MINISTRY OF THE ENVIRONMENT, HOUSING AND LANDS - NATIONAL CONSERVATION COMMISSION

Hon. Dr. R. L. CHELTENHAM: In moving that Head 37 stand part of the Resolution, Mr. Chairman, I would wish to indicate that this issue is far more posit than the one on which we have just been focussed. This is really a Resolution for the sum of \$894 605 to supplement the Estimates which was provided earlier in the course of this financial year to the National Conservation Commission.

In fact, the House will recall that this is the second supplementary estimate in two months for the NCC because in October this year, just a matter of a month and a half or two ago, this House approved a supplementary estimate of \$1 452 455. The fact is that no parastatal institution has suffered more acutely than the NCC from the Structural Adjustment Programme. That is reflected in several simple facts.

At the beginning of the financial year the NCC sought the sum of \$12 million approximately for its

current expenditure. It was only given \$5.9 million or approximately 50%. An additional fact is that the NCC between October 17 and November 15, 1992 laid off 528 persons. On January 6, 1992, a decision was taken to place casual and general staff on a three-day work week. Thus far the NCC has defaulted in its payments to the Commissioner of Inland Revenue and the National Insurance Scheme to the sum of \$3.3 million. Those simple facts state the extent to which the National Conservation Commission has suffered and has been a victim of this Structural Adjustment Programme in recent years. The sum which was approved in October for \$1.4 million was essentially to pay wages until the end of January 1995 - current wages with current staff. The sum which we are seeking today is really to give us the opportunity to employ additional staff of some 177 persons in order to address the urgent need to debush and beautify the country, both for locals and visitors, in preparation for Christmas and the start of the tourist season.

The Minister of Finance has rightly indicated that as much as possible these persons should be recruited in relation to specific projects rather than just bringing on hundreds. The following specific projects have been identified - Hackleton Cliff where we will be acquiring a portion of land for a car park, a gift shop and an information centre where a barrier will be erected to protect locals and visitors from the steep escarpment. We are also attempting the development of a nature trail below the Cliff which will extend to Joes River Forest. Honourable Members will know from Hackleton Cliff on a clear day you can have a very extensive view of the East Coast right down to Teneriffe. Many visitors are carried there. There is a great danger that they can slip over the very steep escarpment so we need to put up a protective wall. We need to provide facilities such as I have identified in that area.

Another project relates to Jack-in-the-Box Gully where there will be the cleaning of a nature trail, the mapping of the gully, the identification of flora and fauna and the provision of adequate security. Work will also be done at Bath. There will be the landscaping of the gully and the waterfall along its course from the Bath Plantation to the sea and the provision of a trail in the area contiguous from Bath to Martin's Bay to Consett Bay for bird watchers and nature walks. Bat's Rock is the last remaining woodland. The conservation of this area is important to prevent soil erosion and coral reef degradation. 6.20 p.m.

It should be noted that this project is being undertaken in conjunction with the Rotary Club of Barbados. Work will also be done at Gun Hill which, as you know, attracts thousands of visitors and locals per year. There is a proposal for the upgrading of the steps and the

hand rails. There will also be the debushing and the upgrading of the grounds.

At Long Pond, Walkers in the parish of St. Andrew there will also be work undertaken by the NCC. The Long Pond, Walkers Beach areas provide quite a unique sand dune system with associated vegetation. It is also a haven for migratory birds and occasional of the hawks bill turtle which, as all Honourable Members know, is an endangered species. The area has been affected by the diversion of the river course which has brought a sizeable amount of debris on to the beach which needs to be cleaned. It is that work of cleaning the beach in particular which will be undertaken by the NCC.

Six Men's in the parish of St. Peter represents one of the few remaining open areas in the west coast and provides a window to the sea. The work here will focus on the cleaning of the area and the removal of derelict buildings. Work will also be done in landscaping the area and the development of chattel kiosks and the establishment of a lifeguard station. It is proposed also to upgrade the fish market and to do some work concerned with the retention of the boat building. NCC Headquarters at Codrington needs to be upgraded and some of this money will be spent for that purpose.

Among the staff which we will be recruiting this week, I think recruitment did start on Monday, yesterday, will be additional rangers. The Commission currently employs 74 rangers which is a reduction from the high figure of 106 which we had in 1991. It is felt that the figure of 74 is totally inadequate to provide law and order on the beaches. In fact, the opinion from within the Commission is that 114 is the minimum requirement and that this will help to deal with the increase of vandalism in play parks and the harassment on the beaches.

I am concerned, Mr. Speaker, that we have not received a larger supplementary because the one that was approved in this House in October will carry the existing workers until January. Some juggling has got to be done in order to make sure that we can carry the same level of staff to the end of the Financial Year. I thought I should emphasize that because Honourable Members should not be surprised if circumstances force us to have to come back for some form of supplementary. I hope not but they are the facts and I thought I had a duty to speak candidly to the House with respect to the financial position of the NCC.

Just let me say that the union has been concerned that we should restore the 5-day week and I have indicated to them that although the Government continues to be committed to the restoration of the 5-day week, it seems to me that the earliest point at which we may be able

to do that would be the beginning of the next Financial Year. In addition they were concerned that we should recruit those who have been laid off first of all rather than bring on any additional workers. Some of those who have been laid off will find employment again. The view from within is that not all of them that have been laid off merit re-employment at the NCC in terms of share level of output and the work attitudes and so on.

I am hoping that there will be better days ahead for the NCC and that we can return to the high numbers or near to those which we have had in past years because there is no doubt that the country is not as well maintained as it used to be plus the NCC has a responsibility to help us to develop new touristic attractions such as some of the ones I have mentioned here. There is a real role, an identifiable role for the NCC in the beautification of the country and in helping us to develop new tourist attractions. We are very much hoping that we can make a brave beginning here with the supplementary which is being provided for us.

With those few remarks, Sir, I move that this Head stand part of the Resolution.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: I beg to second that, Sir.

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: Mr. Chairman, I join this debate with some degree of concern that several Barbadians over the last couple of months have been led to believe that they would have been in fact a substantial number of persons being employed before Christmas as was stated very eloquently by the new Chairman who publicly indicated that by Christmas some 500 jobs would be provided. He stated it in the newspapers and he also said it on television.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: I thought you were not supposed to use those reports. Anyway, continue.

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: He said so publicly.

The last Administration was very careful to indicate to the public that we were indeed experiencing financial constraints and we found significant difficulty in re-employing people during the austerity programme and we literally said that we were not in a position to rehire. The canvass of the Barbados Labour Party was basically one, Sir, of jobs where they said that job No. 1 is jobs. I understand the pain that the Honourable Members are going through because the Honourable Members gave the public the impression that they had the answers. Indeed the Honourable Minister who just took his chair indicated that in a very short period that they would be able to provide 7 000 just like that with the advent of the Barbados Labour Party. He indicated that overnight they would be able to employ 7 000 people with the snap of the finger, Sir. And

maybe, Sir, the power of reasoning in Barbados needs to be addressed as we discussed under the last Head because we certainly were not able to convince a number of Barbadians that they were talking foolishness at the time and were being unrealistic.

For the last 5 or 6 weeks every week the Members on that side of the House have been sending their constituents *en masse*, babies in hand, umbrellas, snow cones in the hot sun right down to the Stadium ...

Aside.

Mr. J. O. TUDOR:.... giving them the impression that they are going to provide employment for them when they know that the NCC is not in a position...

Mr. H. deB. FORDE: On a point of order, Sir, the Honourable Member is deliberately misleading this House. I have sent no constituent. He said Honourable Members on this side have been sending people. It does not matter, Sir. The point is that the Honourable Member is making... I am on a point of order, Sir. The Honourable Member cannot make blanket statements that Honourable Members on this side have been sending their constituents *en masse* in the hot sun and I hear *sotto voce* "It is a disgrace."

Aside.

Mr. H. deB. FORDE: Sir, I would appeal to you to teach the Honourable Member a little bit of manners and he will understand the Rules of the House that as the Leader of his Party he must need some discipline and manners for a start

Asides.

Mr. H. deB. FORDE: I am on a point of order, Sir. I am appealing to you to teach the Honourable Member for St. John to learn manners since he has not had any so far and not to interrupt.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member for St. John is asked to speak in a lower tone.

Mr. H. deB. FORDE: I am on a point of order, Sir. The Honourable Member and I am finishing my point of order is misleading the House in suggesting that Honourable Members without specifying have been doing disgraceful acts by sending people knowing that there are no jobs available to line up in places. That is the suggestion.

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I am concerned with the point of order where the Honourable

Member seeks to suggest that I deliberately mislead. I think that that is unparliamentary and he should not say that I deliberately did it

My understanding is, Sir, that Members on that side have been sending constituents to the NCC for jobs. I understand their difficulty because they had promised the Barbadian public that they will be providing jobs to them immediately. Job No. 1 is jobs, not job No. 2. They have no jobs to provide the people with and come into this Honourable House this evening to provide 177 jobs for 3 months. I am quite clear. I never said that the NCC would provide all the jobs. 6.30 p.m.

Aside.

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: At least I have provided more jobs than you all.

Mr. Speaker, we have to take the NCC. The mandate that has been given to the Commission is certainly one where they have to conserve the natural beauty of Barbados and they have to develop the topographic features and, as I understand it, they are involved in the preservation of historic building sites and other monuments and so forth.

My concern, Sir, is that there are a number of persons who have acquired experience, who previously worked at the NCC and I understood the Minister to say they were embarking on a policy where they were re-employing those persons who were previously employed. I sincerely hope that that is a serious comment because my understanding is that that is not the practice that is presently happening with the ones who were recruited yesterday.

I understand, Sir, that there is no policy that the last off are the first on on this occasion and that they are special selectees who are in fact coming on stream and some who are not in any way trained or competent in the areas that the NCC would require.

Aside.

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: I am not sure. I would like to find out.

There are many sites, Sir, around Barbados that are in desperate need of repair. There are a number of sites that are in total neglect. The Bathsheba area as you come down Cleaver's Hill and go into the beach area that used to be very popular there is a very unsightly boat that has been abandoned and left as scrap and one of the duties of the NCC is to remove that. I noticed recently that that boat was left lying around the beach and it is very untidy.

Along the West Coast in Barbados there is a significant amount of debris that is being left on the beaches. I do not know why that is happening but there is a significant amount of garbage that is being left on the beaches all along the West Coast.

On Long Beach and on the East Coast there are serious problems of oil slicks and Long Beach is a very popular area. Many visitors travel up there because Long Beach is becoming a tourist attraction to some extent because of the road infrastructure that has been put in. The beach there is in a terrible state. There are dead cows, horses, chickens. Somebody seems to be dumping all kinds of dead animals and garbage on the beach below the police station and they are washing up all along Long Beach.

I have brought it to the attention of the NCC and it seems to be a problem that has been recurring because every week you are having this same problem with garbage being thrown into the sea by the police station. So I am going to ask that the Ministry spend some time and look at the garbage.

There are a number of people as well, Sir, who are taking boulders and blocking off areas around this coastline. I reckon they are doing it illegally, trying to block Barbadians from accessing the paths that go along the coastline. And in your constituency, Sir, there is a particular problem that has to be addressed because the residents in your constituency can no long walk along the coastline because of a blockade that has been put in place illegally by the owner of a property in that area. This is a matter that has to be addressed.

Aside.

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: I have opposed it and I will still continue to oppose it because it has not been corrected as yet and it has to be corrected. That is indeed a problem.

Sir, I just want to finally deal with the question of the 3 days and 5 days work week. I understand the difficulty that the Minister has and I would hope that he would have been given a bigger supplementary so that the 5 days work week can be restored as promised and that the staff who are conning on from this week would also be given 5 days because if you have indeed made pledges to the people I think you have to carry out those pledges.

The Honourable Prime Minister who is not now in his Chair made his promises that he would provide some 30 000 jobs and he must have been aware of the financial background against which he could have made those promises and surely he would recognise your difficulty and seek to provide a larger supplementary for you because I think you are indeed in pain knowing that you have

not been able to satisfy the promises that you have made to the public.

In fact, Sir, I think you should ask the Chairman of the NCC to resign for making a very careless and callous comment which deliberately misled the Barbadian public into believing that they would be given jobs prior to ...

So, Mr. Chairman, I will return and I hope that the Honourable Minister will respond to some of the areas and I sincerely look forward to an improved Barbados with the advent of additional staff and I am going to be monitoring areas that need to be upgraded around Barbados and I sincerely hope this will go at least a little way in alleviating some of the difficulties presently being experienced. I thank you.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Mr. Chairman, about two months ago this House approved the first of two supplementaries. The Opposition has not objected to this particular Resolution even though it came very late in the day and certainly we were not privy to the proposals which the Honourable Member for St. Joseph had regarding the National Conservation Commission. I must say that having heard myself on previous occasions when I was sitting on that side criticisms about financial disorder, recklessness, indifference, lack of financial planning, confusion in the Ministry of Finance that it was a shock to me that this particular measure would have been brought to the House in the way it was brought. But we agreed to participate in this debate only having received the documentation this morning.

That was the first shock coming from the most pious group of politicians when they were on this side, who have shorn themselves of that rectitude which they wanted others to observe. So this is a new scenario that we have. But the Honourable Member for St. Joseph, in my view has a gall to come in this Chamber, at this time, for a supplementary to employ 177 people at the National Conservation Commission and deliver the kind of presentation which he delivered by saying in an off-hand manner that he is advised by the National Conservation Commission that of the 500 people who were laid off and who they consistently asked the Democratic Labour Party to re-employ are not suitable for re-employment in large numbers. In other words, out of those 500 people who are presently unemployed, who have children who expect to be re-employed based on the assurances which the Honourable Member's Chairman gave to the people of Barbados, he is now saying that they are unfit for re-employment in the National Conservation Commission. 6.40 p.m.

Hon. Dr. R. L. CHELTENHAM: Nobody said it and certainly I did not say that there were 500 persons and that

not all of them would be re-employed because some of them are not fit, not all of them but most of them. That is true of any organisation that has laid off.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Mr. Speaker, that is inadequate for the simple reason that by that statement the logical implication is this, that he cannot even find 177 of the 500 who were laid off who are suitable for re-employment in the National Conservation Commission. Do you understand what message is being sent to those people who a week ago or two weeks ago were lining up in the hot sun on the understanding that they would have been re-employed? I heard all that you have said about that statement being of doubtful...

Aside.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: No, he did not say third degree. If he said that, he would not be referring to the statement. The source of the statement was doubtful. Well, then the Chairman should have denied it. Do you know why I know that it is not doubtful? Because several of my constituents went to the National Conservation Commission and were told quite rightly so...

Aside.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: That is the usual talk from politicians. You know that we do not have any money to re-employ anybody at the National Conservation Commission and they came back and told me what was said. Anyway, I have a list and I am going to present that list to the Minister. I am not making any sport on this. I want you to tell me that those people are unfit for re-employment in the National Conservation Commission and I am going to give you that list sometime next week. Because these are Barbadian citizens. They are not my friends. I am not asking you for any favour on their behalf that they do not deserve as citizens of this country and, therefore, I expect you to extend the courtesy to them so that they can enjoy the full incidents of their citizenship.

There is nobody in this country who could believe that an administration which touted job number one is jobs were it not for the fact that somebody reminded us that job number two was victimization and on this occasion I thank the Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central. Were it not for that, I would not have had an inkling that that administration could be so callous and indifferent. It is a shameful act for the National Conservation Commission to employ those additional persons without addressing the issue of the five-day work week which the Barbados Labour Party consistently raised in this House and pilloried the then Honourable Member for Christ Church East Central over and other members of the Barbados Workers' Union. Now the Honourable Member for St. Joseph

can with a level of indifference that I have yet witnessed from the Barbados Labour Party until today, give the impression that that is some kind of joke submission which he will consider in the fullness of time. The Honourable Member for St. Joseph is the only person in Barbados who believes that come Estimates time even he will be getting a larger supplementary. If he believes that, then he should come under the tutelage, not of the Acting Minister of Finance, because I do not believe that her knowledge would extend to such matters, but to the substantive Minister of Finance. He should sit down and bring the Honourable Member for St. Joseph to Christian understanding about what will happen come March 1995 regarding the mad scramble which the Barbados Labour Party is now going through to seek to pull this economy back on course once again. So we make a plea. I want to say that it is utter foolishness, Mr. Chairman, for the chairman of any statutory corporation to make a statement that efforts are going to be made to re-employ persons who were previously employed in that statutory corporation and give them the impression that they will be given priority to be so callously overruled by the Minister in relation to this matter. You said that they should be re-employed but you have forgotten what you said. That is your problem all of the time. You jumped up in here hot and sweaty week after week in this House saying that those people, all 500 of them, should be re-employed. Now you can sit down there callously and ask me how can I raise that. That is the kind of people you are dealing with in this Chamber now.

Aside.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: The Honourable Member for St. John is behaving as though on this side we are not sticking to our promise. We are hiring people and they are quarreling about that. We are hiring people who are Barbadians and they are quarreling about that.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Let the Honourable Member misunderstand me. I want you to hire all 177. I want you to rehire all 500 and I want you to provide the other 29 500 with jobs which you told the public of Barbados you would provide.

Aside.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: That is my job. So employ all 177. Give an undertaking unequivocally that you will restore the five-day week. Give an undertaking that you will re-employ those 500 people. But the Honourable Member for St. Joseph cannot even give any of those undertakings. We know his style.

The Honourable Member for Christ Church West got up on a point of order as usual without the benefit of information. The Honourable Member may not have sent

anybody to the NCC, because the kind of constituents he has would not be trekking up to the NCC to stand up in the sun to be re-employed, nor are they going to ask the Honourable Member to send them to the NCC. So let us understand that he does not locate himself in the same position as persons like myself who represent an exclusively working-class constituency, large numbers of whom were employed in the National Conservation Commission. 6.50 p.m.

The second point that has to be made is that there are Members of the Government who sent people to the National Conservation Commission to find jobs consequent on the statement of the Chairman of the National Conservation Commission. If I can get hold of those letters I will send some to the Honourable Member for Christ Church West who has not yet come out of his political hibernation. I thought when he joined the hustings in 1994 that he had returned. He does not know what is going on. Therefore, I say that that point of order, in my view, is another one of those callous acts because I would assume that one of the first things that representatives elected to the House of Assembly in traditional form would do would be to seek to look for jobs for their constituents. What the Honourable Member for Christ Church West is telling me first of all that he didn't do that and the look on his face suggested that he would be surprised if he were to discover that there were other Members on that side who sent anybody to the National Conservation Commission to find a job.

Mr. H. deB. FORDE: The Honourable Member is attributing motives to me which I never suggested. For the benefit of the Honourable Member, I have told his constituents not to waste time with letters that he gives them that they know will get nowhere.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: But, Mr. Chairman, I wouldn't be surprised that under a Barbados Labour Party Administration my letters have no value. That does not surprise me to know there are no jobs. So the fact that you are now telling them all of that is not surprising. I will now send them to you since you are looking for people to write letters on their behalf for them to have value. I will now send a few to Society, St. John.

I want Mr. Chairman, not to let this debate get sidetracked. We had a lot of fancy talk about education but I was waiting for the substance of the issues in this particular resolution which, as I indicated, is an indication of the recklessness and confusion in the Ministry of Finance at this time.

The Minister responsible for the operation of the National Conservation Commission owes the public.

We are not asking for any special concession. We are saying that the Minister owes the public a full clear-the-air on the type of employment practices which the National Conservation Commission is going to employ with respect to those 177 workers. If they were not 500 people who anticipated re-employment we would have no quarrel. If there were not a large number of people presently on a three-day week we would have no complaints; but we are saying that against the background of what is happening in the National Conservation Commission, against the background of what the Barbados Labour Party previously said, even though its Leader is not present in this Chamber now and others may not remember what they themselves said, for reasons best known to themselves, the point is that in all of those circumstances, it appears to us on this side that a full explanation is needed.

The Honourable Member gave his explanation, and knowing him as I do, that is the end of the issue. Thank you, Sir.

Hon. Sir HAROLD St. JOHN: I want to say a few words because I am one of those who always believe that the National Conservation Commission was an institution which had a very important role to play in the environmental set-up in Barbados. I disagree violently with the viewpoint which was touted by the Democratic Labour Party that the National Conservation Commission was a Commission that was only hiring labour and that there was no need for the kind of programmes that they carried out in the beautification of Barbados in the cleaning of the beaches, in ensuring that absentee owners in Barbados who pay no attention to their lots, thereby causing great inconvenience to next door neighbours and providing a breeding ground for mosquitoes and illegal dumping and rats.

All of that we saw as a result of the programmes and particularly the last programme of which the Honourable Member who just spoke was particularly proud of, the programme in which wholesale sackings and retrenchments in the National Conservation Commission took place.

We have no time in here and the public will have no time in here for any mouthings now coming from the Honourable Member for St. John or from that side when we are now attempting to bring back a level of service to the community by the Parks and Beaches. Within the last month more and more people have been congratulating the Government, particularly in those...

Mr. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member is advised that he has only three minutes to speak. This debate winds up at 7 o'clock. So you can continue until 7 o'clock.

Hon. Sir HAROLD St. JOHN: I only want to make it clear, Sir, that one only has to take a drive around the

coastal areas in Barbados - I haven't got to St. Lucy, but I will certainly start from St. Philip - and you go right through and you will see the efficient programme that is taking place. You will see that a determined effort is being made by not only the National Conservation Commission but by the Public Health Department in Barbados to ensure that Barbados is rid of some of the most awful conditions that the Democratic Labour Party left this country in.

I live here and I see areas in which there have been lots of land, no attention paid to them for years. There are beaches as the Honourable Member for St. Michael East said that have not seen the light of beach cleaners for a long period of time. I congratulate the Honourable Member on his criticism of his own Party. It is not the first occasion in which he criticised them. When he can get in here and say that the beach at Chancery Lane is in a deplorable condition. It is a fact. I know it is in a deplorable condition. The Honourable Member's Party refused to provide money for the National Conservation Commission for a number of years to clean that beach. Something is being done about it now. That is the point.

Now, Sir, we will have an opportunity to debate victimisation and I want it to be clearly understood that there never has been an era in politics in Barbados in which more victimisation was practised than since 1986.

In 1986, the Democratic Labour Party came in office and they appointed a special Minister who was responsible for rooting out anybody who had any sympathy for the Barbados Labour Party and we will start from the Airport.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: On a point of order, Sir. The Honourable Member cannot make that kind of statement. He is misleading this Committee. That is blatantly untrue that there has been a Minister with responsibility for rooting out. We never had an Aaron Truss in our Ministry.

Hon. Sir HAROLD St. JOHN: Sir, I can give chapter and verse, starting from the Airport and on more occasions in which they sent home people who were working in the VIP lounge only to hire back people who happened to have a connection to them. When they sent them home the letter said very specifically...

Asides.

Hon. Sir HAROLD St. JOHN: We know chapter and verse and we know the Minister responsible. Sir, the position is very clear. Everybody in Barbados who had any connection with the National Conservation Commission will know that the Democratic Labour Party in their cut-back programme specifically made it their policy to send home people whom they believed were sympathetic to the Barbados Labour Party. That is the policy that

the Democratic Labour Party pursued and that is a policy that has to be rectified.

With that, Sir, I would like to commend the Government. Whether they like it or not, the new Estimates of Expenditure in the future will reflect our views on what is a desirable programme to keep the environment in Barbados in good condition.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: This debate will now wind up and we have to have questions posted accordingly.

The question that Head 37 do stand part was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

On the motion of Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER seconded by Hon. Dr. R. L. CHELTENHAM, Mr. CHAIRMAN reported the passing of one Bill in Committee and Mr. SPEAKER resumed the Chair and reported accordingly. 7.00 p.m.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that this Resolution be now read a first time.

Hon. Dr. R. L. CHELTENHAM: I beg to second that.

The question was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that this Resolution be now read a second time.

Hon. Dr. R. L. CHELTENHAM: I beg to second that.

The question was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that this Resolution be agreed to.

Hon. Dr. R. L. CHELTENHAM: I beg to second that.

The question was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

SUSPENSION OF SITTING

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that the sitting be now suspended until 8:00 o'clock.

The question that the sitting be suspended until 8.00 o'clock was put and resolved in the affirmative without division and Mr. SPEAKER suspended the sitting accordingly. 7.05 p.m.

RESUMPTION

Mr. SPEAKER: This sitting is now resumed. Order No. 7.

ORDER NO. 7 - RESOLUTION TO APPROVE THE GUARANTEE BY THE MINISTER RESPONSIBLE FOR FINANCE OF THE PAYMENT OF THE PRINCIPAL AND INTEREST NECESSARY FOR THE REDEMPTION OF BONDS ISSUED BY THE BARBADOS AGRICULTURAL MANAGEMENT CO. LTD. FOR THE PURPOSE OF FINANCING THE SUGAR INDUSTRY

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Mr. Speaker, this Honourable Chamber has, in recent weeks, already debated at some considerable length the matter concerning the issue of the \$42.6 million in corporate bonds by the Barbados Agricultural Management Co. Ltd. by a Resolution dated November 11, 1994 the Board of Directors of the Barbados Agricultural Management Co. Ltd. approved the borrowing of \$42.6 million by the issue of debentures to finance the operations of the Company. The debentures will be issued in three series. Series A will be for a maximum of \$20.6 million, Series B for a maximum of \$18.6 million and Series C for a maximum of \$3.4 million.

The unsecured non-transferable debentures will be created upon the terms of a trust deed to be entered into between CIBC Trust and Merchant Bank (B'dos) Ltd. and the Barbados Agricultural Management Co. Ltd.

One of the conditions of effectiveness of the Trust Deed is the execution of a guarantee in favour of the trustee by the Government of Barbados to unconditionally pay present and future indebtedness, liabilities and obligations of any kind in the event of a default by the borrower.

The Minister of Finance and Economic Affairs proposes to sign the guarantee document which has been submitted to the Solicitor General for vetting subject to the approval of this Parliament of this Resolution, and that is where we are at today, Sir.

I beg to move that the Resolution to approve the guarantee by the Minister responsible for Finance of the payment of the principal and interest necessary for the redemption of the bonds issued by the Barbados Agricultural Management Co. Ltd. for the purpose of financing the sugar industry do now pass.

Hon. Dr. R. L. CHELTENHAM: I beg to second that.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: Mr. Speaker, I particularly wanted this opportunity to express my views and

concerns about this guarantee and to get some further information from the Minister on certain details that have not been made available to the House and which should be made available to this Honourable House.

Now, my understanding of the situation is that we in the past have guaranteed several bond issues for the sugar industry. I believe as of June 1992, I am not sure whether there have been any bonds since then, the amount of guaranteed debt outstanding was, in fact, somewhere in the region of \$36 million. Those are old guarantees of sugar bonds. Now, those guarantees have now ceased to be guarantees. They have now become part of the national debt of Barbados, no longer a debt owned by Barbados Sugar Industry Ltd., following the events leading to the collapse of that entity, the taxpayers of this country are now responsible for that \$36 million; so a guarantee in this situation is no little thing.

Since then, of course, the industry has declined substantially. Its earnings potential has declined *pan passu* with that and we are now in a situation where we are guaranteeing a whopping sum of \$42 million in borrowings by the new entity. 8.05 p.m.

And we are now in a position where we are guaranteeing a whopping sum of \$42 million in borrowings to provide for the new entity. I regret that the Minister of Finance and Economic Affairs is not in his place. I understand that he is away on Government Business but I have no doubt that his very eminent Deputy and expert in financial and economic affairs will supply the information on her feet and would be very happy to do so as the debate progresses.

Whenever I am asked to guarantee anything and I seldom do, because by the time people come to you and ask for a guarantee that means that the financial institutions have already determined that their credit worthiness will not justify the loan. I certainly try to get some information as to the likelihood of being repaid. I would think, Sir, in this situation that the Minister who introduced the Resolution and who has all the authority of the Minister of Finance had a duty to let us know at least what are the assets of BAMC, what are its liabilities, what are its potential earnings and in what way would this particular loan be liquidated by the company if it is not to become like previous guarantees a charge against the Consolidated Fund. Because I would hate to think that what the Government is trying to do is to avoid borrowing and using the device of guaranteeing debt which they know cannot be repaid, a kind of device which they virtually introduced into the financial life of this country between 1976 and 1981.

Aside.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: I did not hear the Honourable Member for St. Joseph but I would like to point out that it is utter irresponsibility, the highest irresponsibility of any Minister acting or otherwise to come and ask this House to give a guarantee without giving information as to how the money will be repaid and whether or not we are not trying to shift public debt under the heading of guaranteed public debt temporary.

I rather suspect, Mr. Speaker, that that is what is happening here. It is a matter of grave concern to me. It is a matter of grave concern to me not only because of the intrinsic nature of the financial impact at the corporate level but also the financial impact at the macro-economic level. I say this for this reason. Forty-two million dollars in the present context of the Barbados economy is a lot of money to take out. We already have a major breach of promise by the Minister of Finance in terms of an unwarranted increase in interest rates.

On top of that it is anticipated that there would be additional bond issues.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I have asked the Honourable Member to give way just for a moment. It was remiss of me - and perhaps this will make it easier for him - I should have said in my introduction that the bonds are expected to be repaid at par in accordance with the following schedule from the 30th June, 1995. From the 30th June, 1998 \$3.745 million, 30th June, 1996 \$11.089 million, 30th June, 1997 \$13.640 million and 30th June, 1998 \$14.126 million. The bonds will bear interest at the local prime bank rate plus .75% per annum which will be fixed at the date of the issue of the bonds.

I regret that I did not say this at the beginning. It is only now that I have discovered, Mr. Speaker, Sir, that the Addendum that Honourable Members have is so scant.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: Thank you very much, Sir, for giving me the information on the Schedule which reinforces my point that there would be a fairly acute and substantial removal of significant liquidity from the system by this borrowing. When one looks at the Schedule of repayments, that compounded with the increase in interest rates, compounded with the projected bond issues is going to create serious recessionary trends in this Barbados economy ultimately.

My understanding of the situation was that this money was to be raised by external borrowing of money for the revitalization of the sugar industry which, of course, would have had a completely different kind of impact on the economy. My warning and one reason why I wish to speak in this debate is this, that you are not going to

get a commensurate increase in net foreign exchange earnings to offset the damage that the removal of these large sums from circulation is going to do. Remember you have those high interest rates, remember you have the bond issue coming up and now you have these other bond issues.

I believe that I have a duty, Sir, to bring to the attention of this Honourable House that this kind of thing eventually has one ultimate effect. It is going to impact very negatively on the prospects of sustained economic recovery in Barbados. I do not wish to deal with the interest rate problem tonight, Sir, except under the area of prime. I want to deal with this area of prime. I know the experts for high interest rates in Barbados, the greatest advocate in the Honourable Member for Christ Church South. Indeed the best speech I have ever heard him make in this House was in defence of high interest rates. He may have changed his mind by now. I do not know. The Honourable Member for St. Peter, again he is not in his seat, he did confess that it was an error to have raised interest rates in the past but he seems now to have learnt nothing from it.

The important point I want to make is that this guarantee is not just a piece of paper; it raises substantial issues both at the level of the sugar industry and at the level of the wider economy. These are things that Government must be able to respond to and to give us an assurance that there will be countervailing measures - I cannot think what they could be - which would counteract what is being done by this exercise here this evening. It is not a simple matter.

The Honourable Member for the City, quite honestly I believe would have us believe that it is simple because it appears to be simple to her. But it is not that simple. It is far more...

Aside.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: Thank you very much. You realize it is very complex. She accepts that it is a very complex matter and it is a matter which she cannot just dismiss...

Aside.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: This is the problem with the Barbados Labour Party. Everybody in this country I believe understands that there is a need to assist the sugar industry in order to get the sugar industry going again. But if you all would listen to people like the Honourable Member for Christ Church South and recognise there are a lot of sharks out there that will take advantage of this Parliament and these are the things that concern me in a very fundamental way. 8.15 p.m.

I have already raised it in this House and I am going to raise one or two other aspects relating to this. My understanding of Booker Tate, what they have been saying in the Press, what they have been saying privately, is that their special expertise is not only in the sugar industry but that they would be able to mobilise the necessary foreign finance for the sugar industry. Is it the present Government that has stopped that process and has gone this route? That is a question which I think the acting Minister of Finance should seek to answer because I think the public of Barbados should know what is happening.

The next question relates to the local prime rate. Does anybody know what the local prime rate is today? Now we have a Resolution here before Parliament that talks about the local prime rate. This seems to me to be a very vague kind of statement in the context in Barbados. When I am in the United States I know what the prime rate is. I can pick up the telephone now and call any institution in the United States and I could ask them what is the prime rate. I could call up the United Kingdom and ask them what is the going prime rate, what is the LIBOR rate and there is a rate quoted every day.

Now, what is the local prime rate in Barbados on any particular day? I called up my bank here in Barbados today to ask what the local prime rate was and they did not know. They started to tell me what Barclays and these other people quote. They did not know what the local prime rate is. Now, you have come to Parliament with a Resolution, fixing a repayment schedule in relation to a non-existing prime rate. Would it be the CIBC prime rate? They can fix their prime rate and tell you that the rate is 0.75% above that. Will the Minister give us an answer on that? Tell us what the prime rate of Barbados is today.

I am saying that there is nobody inside here who knows what the prime rate is in Barbados today. I, Sir, have tried in the past to get the prime rate and they always tell me it is prime for me but there is no prime rate. And it is very difficult to get out of the banks in Barbados what the prime rate is.

Aside.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: Oh yes, he would get more than the prime rate. You take my advice on that, he would get much better than the prime rate. He is a net lender to the banks.

Now, Sir, that is another concern of mine because basically what we are saying is that we are repaying this loan at an interest rate that we do not know what it is and we do not know what the base rate for the repayment of the loan will be. It is my suspicion, in the context of Barbados, that the prime rate will be fixed by the

lending institution to determine what is paid on that money. And I do not know of any other way since we have no institution in Barbados that fixes prime and we have no institutional arrangements among the banks themselves that determines what is a prime rate in Barbados. So I have a problem with that and I will consider this to be somewhat defective and something that needs to be re-considered.

I believe that the Minister of Finance should probably withdraw this Resolution and come back to the House with better details and a Resolution that makes sense, rather than this kind of resolution before the House now. I think the Minister understands that there is obviously an error, that she cannot come to the House in this kind of vagueness.

Aside.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: I have never, ever, brought a Resolution to this House dealing with the prime rate of Barbados. Because I do not know what the prime rate is. I have brought resolutions dealing with the LIBOR rate or something like this but not...

As a matter of fact, Sir, I think that we might be better off using the inter-bank borrowing rate in Barbados because that is a more stable situation and much less subject to the fluctuations of the various banking interest in Barbados.

Now, Sir, on top of this guarantee it is my understanding that there is a projection of an annual subsidy to the sugar industry and presumably to the Barbados Agricultural Management Corporation. I have no problem fundamentally with the subsidy but what I would not like to see is that subsidy being eroded by the need to have it partially converted to servicing this loan rather than going into the primary purpose of the subsidy mainly to expand sugar cane production and increase the price of sugar in Barbados.

So that this Resolution, Sir, involves an awful lot of money that is going to hinge on what is going on here and I am at a loss. It is the kind of Resolution, Sir, which I find difficult to vote for, difficult to vote against and difficult to abstain from. All three. And it is largely because the Government clearly is treating this Parliament with the greatest contempt. You cannot ask any Parliament or anybody to guarantee this sum of money and not give any details whatsoever about the viability of the organisation for which you are borrowing it, what is the likely possibility of its ability to repay and otherwise.

These things are very fundamental and I think that we need to establish clear rules in this House that if you wish other Members to support this kind of Resolution then you must be in a position to give them the information. If this

was a straightforward loan I would not have a problem, in a sense of a technical nature, because the Consolidated Fund would have to pay it. 8.25 p.m.

But when you start looking at Government's debt obligation down the road and you have guarantees out there which have a history of becoming actual liabilities, then there is no way that you can even project a proper management protocol for the public debt of Barbados. It is a whopping sum. It is no \$5 million or \$10 million. You are talking about 40 something million dollars here and it is totally unsatisfactory to have come to the House with this kind of Resolution. In addition to that, you are linking the repayment to a rate that nobody knows about called the "prime rate" in Barbados, such as a half per cent on \$42 million is an awful lot of money. It is a lot of money and a lot of people do not understand that, when you talk about a 1 per cent on top of 6 per cent, what are we talking about here? You are talking about paying thirteen point something per cent more on the money that you have borrowed. This is a bucket of money.

Sir, regarding that issue of the prime rate, we want to know about a proper rate or how you are going to determine the rate that you will consider prime. Because you cannot leave it to the bank to tell you. They will tell you that any rate is prime rate. This is Barbados and it is quite an unsatisfactory Resolution to have brought down to Parliament. I think that it is too open-ended and I believe that the Resolution should be withdrawn. It should be reconsidered and you should look very much particularly at the rate of interest that you have quoted here linking it to the prime rate.

I do not propose to go any further into the economy. Just a few other questions that I would want to ask. I would have hoped to get some kind of response today.

Sir, this is not a political speech. It is genuinely not a political speech. This is a speech out of a fundamental concern that I have over what is happening to Barbados in many areas. I see a lot of people making money out of the sugar industry even as it stands now and I see where the debt is going. I see where the liabilities are mounting and it is my feeling that we have another major liability here. This cannot even be minimized because of the crop situation on the one hand and on the other hand even if you had some kind of foreign inflow you could still have that to protect your balance of payments next year. What are you doing? What has led you into this kind of trap? This does not make sense. Believe me, it does not make sense as the Resolution stands here now.

Sir, I would have hoped that CIBC which in the past has not been totally reluctant in short-term support for

the Government of Barbados by way of lines of credit to the Central Bank and so on that they would have at least provided some mix of foreign and local financing for this particular operation. But I think that you are going to cause macro-economic damage and, believe me, I am really worried about this further leap into massive indebtedness. I am worried about it and it is entirely up to you all but I see problems. I see problems also at the micro-economic level. My understanding is that this country has significant first quarter and fourth quarter debt payments and so on next year. You compound that and, when you start by taking money out of the economy by way of borrowings and things like interest rates, you know where you are heading for in the third quarter.

Aside.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: It depends on what happens with sugar earnings and so. Yes, I agree with you. Right. But you are compounding it. You are creating a further problem by the way in which this financing is being done. That is the point I am making.

I think that what you should have done is to call on Booker Tate to honour its commitment to assist you in getting at least foreign financing for this obligation. Okay. Now I do not know what is happening, but it seems to me that something is wrong. As far as I know, you are not going to get any short-term borrowings on the crop itself which will not be repayable at the end of the crop. That is the usual pattern that has obtained in the past. You are not going to get any long-term borrowings on the crop. I would have preferred not to be directing these questions to the Deputy Prime Minister. However brave she may be, it is not her substantive Ministry and I would have preferred to have made these comments in the presence of the substantive Minister of Finance. Nevertheless, Sir, I believe that I have a duty in the circumstances to make sure that my reservations are recorded. The Barbados Labour Party can shout up and down the country that I am opposing the sugar industry and I am doing this and doing that. If you criticize any aspect of what they do, they start moaning and groaning and the chief moaner and groaner is the Honourable Member for St. Thomas. He cannot take licks. He gets vex real quick. Now, Sir, you see what I mean. I am just teasing and he is getting vexed.

In conclusion, Sir, I hope that the other side will certainly give some consideration to what has been said and recognize that there are problems inherent in this Resolution. I thank you very much.

Hon. Sir HAROLD St. JOHN: Sir, I had thought that on the last occasion when we had a debate in here on the main Bill that many of the points that the Government wished to point out to all Barbados about the sugar

industry would have been made clear. This Government, as I understand it, has made it abundantly clear that in respect of the Bills that were being brought before the House by this Government, that in truth and in fact the Government was merely implementing the arrangements that had been made by the previous Government in office.

The Government of the Barbados Labour Party is never afraid of its views on the sugar industry in Barbados. The position was made clear on more than one occasion that the Government was committed to the continuance of sugar within the context of an overall agricultural production in which there was a land use policy that that land was capable of growing sugar, given the present arrangements for the external marketing of sugar, which would be continued and there would be other crops grown with sugar including cotton such as vegetables and root crops.

There is no doubt about it that the arrangements that were made with respect to the restructuring of the sugar industry were completed to a large extent prior to September. The other completed arrangements relate to the passage of a number of Bills before this House to permit the finalization of the leases between the Barbados Agricultural Management Company Limited and the several individuals, companies, and partnerships that own the approximate 12 or 13 thousand acres of land which are the subject of the leases. 8.35 p.m.

In addition to that, the Barbados Agricultural Management Company Ltd. has by lease assumed possession and control of the sugar factories in Barbados from the Barbados Sugar Industries Ltd. They are lessees of land as I understand it and lessees of the factories. Now those factories process cane not only from the Barbados Agricultural Management Company but also from other sugar growers in Barbados who continue to carry on sugar growing, another uncompleted area that arrangements have to be made to finalise the relationship between that production and the production of the Barbados Agricultural Management Company.. New arrangements have to be made also with respect to a split between the growers and the others.

As I understand it also, the Government that formed the Barbados Agricultural Management Company Ltd. did not capitalise the Agricultural Management Company Ltd. by way of shareholding. Now the Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central who is greatly experienced in this area would know that if you form a company to carry on business capital must come from somewhere. The capital either is going to come from the fees the proprietors inject in that capital or the proprietors are going to be able to persuade a banking institution to provide the financing requirements.

What has happened as I understand it, very clearly and perhaps the Honourable Member for St. John can enlighten the public of Barbados in this respect is that the decision having been taken that there will be no injection of capital by the Government in the Barbados Agricultural Management Company Ltd. that it was clearly envisaged that that company would be financed by borrowing. It is not any question of mystery therefore that we have had to come for a guarantee because no person, no banker with any sense at all would lend the Agricultural Management Company one cent without a guarantee from a person with substantial worth. That is the position.

There is no banker that would lend the Barbados Agricultural Management Company Ltd. one cent without the provision of some form of guarantee. Now perhaps we can be told what were the arrangements that were made in that direction. No arrangements were made for short-term or long-term. Indeed, the position is very clear that the Barbados Agricultural Management Company Ltd. up to date was so starved of capital that they have not even paid - I want the Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central to know this - for the equipment that they took over from the estates that they leased. Up to now, they have not even been able - the Barbados Agricultural Management Company - to carry into effect the re-organisation plans with respect to the consolidation of the management of the estates which now form within their purview. That is a fact.

One of the reasons is and this is well known if it came out that notices were served by the Chief Personnel Officer which had the effect of asking people to leave where they were resigning as part of their employment terms on two days notice and it caused quite a bit of a stir and that they were going to be made redundant as from the first of November. Now all of these things have taken place, it is the Government's duty as on the last occasion to tidy up the unfinished business in relation to the sugar industry that was left. I want to repeat it - the unfinished business that was left was the legislation that had to come to this House as a result of the advice of the lawyers of the Barbados Agricultural Management Company that in order to implement the leases since a subdivision was taking place a law had to be passed to exempt the leases to the Agricultural Management Company Ltd. from the Town and Country Planning Act. There was no mystery in that because that is what had to be done when you were doing the Tenantry Freehold Option to Purchase Act. Did you remember that when you did the Plantations Tenantry Act you had to pass a law? That has not been done. In addition to that, this financial arrangement had to be finalised.

Now, Sir, there has always been a dispute in Barbados as to how you are to finance the agricultural industry. Some people feel you should borrow from abroad

financing, other people feel that since the Central Bank has repeatedly stated that the foreign exchange leakage in the sugar industry in Barbados only amounts to 10% that if you borrow domestically a dollar in order to foreign dollars that you cannot have this foreign exchange drain with the sugar industry because in truth and in fact the amount you pay out abroad is very small. That is the point that has always been made and there has always been a difference of opinion. This difference of opinion went right back to 1974 and 1975 when the Governor of the Central Bank, Mr. Courtney Blackman at that time, repatriated the sugar debt and brought it to Barbados and some economists like Mr. Wendell McClean who wrote articles saying that that was the cause *de facto* of the balance of payments crisis in 1975. That's the argument among economists and that argument is still the same argument that is being propounded today.

As I understand it, loans have been acquired via CDB for certain parts of the re-organisation. I think it is equipment purchase.

Aside.

Hon. Sir HAROLD St. JOHN: What are you thanking me about? You got your compensation yet? I hope you get it.

Sir the restructuring has a component which deals with what they call the consolidation of the field, the mechanisation and all of those things. That needs money and equipment. As I understand it there are a lot of new tractors and things that have come in now that have to be paid for by external funds of some kind.

As I understand it there will be some...

Aside.

Hon. Sir HAROLD St. JOHN: Sir, the position is abundantly clear. Either the Barbados Labour Party believes as the Democratic Labour Party believes that you should have a sugar industry in which case you do the guarantee or you believe that you should not have a sugar industry and you will have Barbados becoming a wasteland of bush, a haven for mosquitoes, speculators, rodents and things of that kind. 8.45 p.m.

Mr. Speaker, I invite the Honourable Member to look at Lower Estate in St. George, Cottage in St. George, look at a large mass of St. Lucy, look at a number of areas in Barbados, look at Kingsland and you will see the consequences of not having a policy to have cultivation on such a large mass of land. The position is very clear.

However much anybody can talk from their seats the basic point is that a lot of unfinished business was left and the Government will continue to pass all of the legislation necessary.

Now, Sir, obviously the Government is borrowing money from the local banking system to the extent of this amount of money. The Honourable Member says it is not prime rate. I accept some of the strictures because I have always been a person who feels that the banks in Barbados on the one hand say things and on the other hand do things. Do not let us fool ourselves.

The Honourable Member for St. John in his capacity as Minister of Finance liberalised the banks and freed them from the shackles of the Rate of Interest Act. There is no question about that. This Government at some time will have sooner than later to decide in its own mind whether it can allow a situation to continue in which the banks can lend an unlimited rate of interest and the savings rates are subject to control by the Central Bank. You cannot have a half-way house. Either you are having a free market when you are lending or you have a free market when it comes to borrowing from the same so we have to deal with that.

These are very important matters we have to understand. The question of prime has always been a source of mystery to people in Barbados because I have never been able to find any customer who got prime. I know everybody gets a percentage above prime. Maybe the Government gets prime. My understanding of this Resolution is very clear in that the Barbados Agricultural Management Company at the time of the issue of the bonds - the bonds will bear interest at the local prime bank rate plus .075% per annum which will be fixed at the date of the issue of the bonds so that whoever the banker of the Barbados Agricultural Management Ltd. will be, it is their prime rate and it will be .75% above their prime rate.

Aside.

Hon. Sir HAROLD St. JOHN: No. They cannot say anything is their prime rate. It is not as easy as that. The Honourable Member knows that it is not as easy as that because I presume that the Barbados Agricultural Management Co. Ltd. from the point of view of short-term borrowing still banks with the Barbados National Bank.

Aside.

Hon. Sir HAROLD St. JOHN: Let us stop. The point is, you just cannot say it can be anything. There is no question of trouble. Each bank in Barbados has its own prime rate.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: On a point of order. Would the Honourable Member advise me as a client of his to sign an agreement of this nature?

Mr. SPEAKER: There is no point of order.

Hon. Sir HAROLD St. JOHN: It is not a point of order. The Honourable Member cannot afford me as a lawyer, Sir.

The basic position is, Sir, that we all know that the financing of the sugar industry is dependent upon a cess of the domestic consumption which cess represents the difference in price between the cost of the sugar from the factory and the amount that is necessary in order to pay for the financing. We know that. That has been going on for a long period of time. That was part of the original sugar bonds issue. This is not the first time we have done that. You know that.

The Government went further. It imported sugar having been in the unfortunate position of the sugar industry moving from 116 000 tonnes in 1986 down to 50 000 tonnes. It had to import sugar because it was not enough to satisfy our 56 000 tonnes export quota to LOME, so you had to import and put a levy on the imports, the same means, so there is a mechanism in place to ensure that there is a fund of money. It is a fact. This is the way how it has been going.

There is a fund of money that is in place. In addition to that, the Barbados Agricultural Management Co. Ltd. as the processor of canes never pays out what it receives from the canes. The split in the past was 72%. The Booker Tate Report indicated very clearly that for a long period of time there was a well recognised split in the amount of the receipts between the growers and the sugar factories. That is one of the outstanding areas. It does not matter in relation to the Barbados Agricultural Management Co. Ltd. because they own the land and however they split it all the money will be going to them so in a split that has to take place.

Sir, we have come down to an argument as to whether you believe that you should continue to put money in the sugar industry or not. That is one argument. The second argument is whether you believe that you should borrow money domestically or you should borrow money abroad. My understanding is that what has happened is that in respect of some of the money, foreign financing has been put in place. In respect of the balance of the money this Government made the decision. I am not sure on that but I believe that if the Government made the decision there is nothing wrong in the Government making the decision having regard to the historical pattern that the leakage of foreign exchange is very small and that they would finance the domestic cost by domestic money.

Let us never forget that Barbados' sugar industry is a unique sugar industry anywhere in the world because the cost of labour alone amounts to approximately 45%

to 50%. Also, let us never forget that within the Government's capability, by a simple taxation measure they can recover every penny they have ever put into the sugar industry by seeking to bring into public revenue the difference between the value of land without planning permission, and the value of land with planning permission in respect of that land which you allow to be converted from agriculture into any other use that can be done. It may be anathema to the Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central. It may be anathema to other Honourable Members but the Government of Barbados is in a unique position of being able, by the mere stroke of a pen after the passage of a Bill in this House, and in the other House, to ensure that all of the investment that has ever been put into land in Barbados can be recovered on behalf of the taxpayers by bringing into the public revenue some of the gains that are made by reason of the fact that we are a small country with a finite land space, an insatiable demand for land and a rigid town planning policy. 8.55 p.m.

Sir, I just wanted to be clear that we are talking about a mere \$42 million. I just wanted to be clear in the context. I just want the public to understand, in the context of this \$42 million. Because there are some who will speak in this debate and seek not to remind us of the fact that the sugar industry had over \$200 million in debt for the Barbados National Bank. The Government of Barbados issued forms to the Barbados National Bank thereby increasing the national debt of Barbados in return for which the Barbados National Bank assigned - it is a public document - the Central Bank of Barbados Annual Report 1993 and it sets the restructuring. On October 1, 1993 two companies were incorporated, the Government-owned Barbados Agricultural Credit Trust and a subsidiary, the Barbados Agricultural Management Company. On October 1 the Government issued \$208.9 million to the Barbados Agricultural Credit Trust to permit it to purchase loans made by the agricultural division of the Barbados National Bank to highly indebted plantations and the insolvent Barbados Sugar Industries Ltd.

The position is very clear. The total re-organization of the sugar industry is going to cost in the vicinity of \$300 million. But that is not new. The Booker Tate Report said that. I have tried repeatedly in this House to draw to the attention of the Honourable Members and the public the fact that, in my view, \$300 million was worth it because I said and I continue to say that if you have an industry that owns such a large amount of land in Barbados that the Government could always recover the money. In the Honourable Member for St. Lucy's constituency there is 150 acres of hillside land that by a mere stroke of the pen...

Aside.

Hon. Sir HAROLD St. JOHN:... Town Planning permission that land would move from the value of \$5 000 to \$6 000 an acre to \$40 000 an acre. One dollar per square foot for land with planning permission, undeveloped is the going rate in Barbados. It is 43 560 odd square feet in an acre. That is the order and magnitude that we are talking about. All you have to do is what has been done in California. Do what has been done in many countries of the world. Decide in your mind that you feel that that is a national asset too and that some of the gains... I am not telling you to misappropriate anything.

Criticize the Government for borrowing domestically this tranche for the amount of money which was clearly envisaged would be needed as part of the restructuring plan. I only want one thing. I want to make it abundantly clear I am not, not, not in favour of the inhuman manner in which the Barbados Agricultural Trust went about trying to rationalize the management and the supervision of the sugar industry to bring it in line with the new norms of production units that was always envisaged as part of the restructuring plan.

I think that the parties who participated in the exercise of sending out notices to men and women in an industry, giving them 2 or 3 days telling them that they can file their claims in the National Insurance to receive severance well knowing that the National Insurance Board does not have any money to pay severance and that they had to leave the places where they occupied that it was such an inhuman act that it should be dismissed.

Aside.

Hon. Sir HAROLD St. JOHN: I know who appointed the man that did it. That is the position. I know who appointed the Chairman that was part of it. That is a Government company. Thank God some steps have been made to mitigate the impact of that inhumanity.

But I do not think that anybody here should lead...

Mr. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member has 2 minutes to conclude.

Hon. Sir HAROLD St. JOHN: Yes, Sir. ...without the very clear and distinct understanding that the decision to keep the sugar industry alive is going to cost money. You have to make your own evaluation as to whether you believe it is worth keeping alive or not.

I have to believe for the reason that I have stated that the Government is in a position to recover every penny that it has put in the sugar industry once it has the courage

to implement laws that many other countries of the world have implemented.

Mr. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for St. John.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I think you could characterize that presentation as an unnecessary interruption, for the simple reason that I have never met a Member of this Parliament who has been able to use the same arguments as an antagonist with such facility as he has used them now as an apologist.

Would you believe that somebody with the wisdom and sagacity and all of the skills which the Honourable Member for Christ Church South possesses, together with the knowledge based on debates which have taken place in this House could actually get up, in this debate, and give the impression that a few trivial matters like the BAMC has not paid for the equipment and that a few bills have not been brought to the House, that on that basis, there was this major unfinished business with the restructuring of the sugar industry that needed to be done.

The Honourable Member for Christ Church South does not even know, and should know, that the Town Planner himself, on a file and in advice to the Cabinet, said it is not necessary to bring any Bill. It is because there were too many lawyers involved in the restructuring, one of whom was the Honourable Member for Christ Church South, who constantly were pushing and pulling the Government from side to side in defending their own peculiar interest. The Town Planner himself said it is not necessary. As a result of that, as usual the technocrats capitulated to the lawyers of whom they are terrified.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Likewise we came...

Aside.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: I never advised the Government on legal matters. I was there as a policy-maker. I want to let Honourable Members know that. Never feel that I applied my legal knowledge to any issue. That was the job of the Honourable Attorney General. Then he said, they have not paid for the equipment. He has not said if they need the equipment they are using. The Honourable Member has not said if they have agreed on a price, which is the reason why they have not fully taken over, because valuation has not been completed on BSIL far less the equipment. 9.05 p.m.

There were some old tractors which clients of the Honourable Member owns, that they were trying to sell to the BAMC as if they were brand new. As usual some of

them felt that they could continue to rip off the taxpayers of this country and now one of their ...

Mr. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member is making a very serious imputation about...

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: But, Mr. Speaker, I can validate it. I have absolutely no problem. I can identify the tractor and the tractor number if necessary.

Mr. SPEAKER: I am responding to your use of language, "people attempting to rip off. I consider that to be very unparliamentary and I am asking you to rephrase what you said.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Mr. Speaker, there are some people who are doing their best to suck every cent out of the restructuring of the sugar industry and offering all kinds of broken down equipment. At the point at which the BAMC most needed the tractors they were holding the Government up to ransom and yet I can hear a thing about not paying for the equipment yet. That is the reality, as if you walk around and throw away taxpayers money buying equipment.

So the legislation is not a big issue because the plantations are in operation now so the legislation has not stopped anything.

The fact that you have not bought the equipment has not stopped you from reaping the crop or carrying out the things that need to be done so that is trivia, monumental trivia for a debate of this importance. But it is the argument of people who wish to apologise because, as the Honourable Prime Minister said on the last time we had the debate on the sugar sector in here, he has thrown his hands up in the air and does not know what to do next and I said to him in response, Mr. Speaker, do not trouble yourself too much because I know where this sugar sector restructuring is going and I did my best when my time came but I had to leave it to people who say they are wiser and the Honourable Prime Minister now has the opportunity of taking advice from the Honourable Member for Christ Church South on matters such as this and he can feel free to do so.

We came to this House two years ago for the approval of the House for an offer of finance from ING Bank of Holland, the Netherlands. The rate of interest was more attractive than the rate which we would have paid in Barbados. In fact the difference was substantial. Booker Tate, and the Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central is partially right on this, was the principal architect for putting that finance together for the sugar sector. The Honourable Member for Christ Church South has talked

a lot in this debate about there are only two questions. This is what he has reduced it to. Do we want a sugar industry, and whether it should be foreign financed? Now that is the most simplistic position that you could want and it does not take a Solomon to answer either question but there are some consequential things. He has not yet said what his position is on whether the sugar industry should be financed domestically or by foreign borrowing. He has not said it on this occasion because he knows that eventually, on that side, because of the precise problem which the Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central has indicated are going to occur, that they are going to be walking around cap in hand looking for foreign loans to support the sugar sector. So he is frightened now, in my judgement, to state and reiterate what the position was two years ago. So what he said is that there are two arguments but he did not say which side of the argument he is presently on. But I want the House to know that he bitterly and vehemently opposed the borrowing on the basis that he said if there was one thing in Barbados that should be financed domestically it was the sugar crop, even though, by his own analysis, if there is only a 10% leakage in foreign exchange, the interest rate that we were paying ING amounted to less than that. And I pointed that out to the House of Assembly. So, however small it was, it was a net foreign exchange gain. He did not understand that then but seems to understand these things now.

When the Honourable Prime Minister, and I do not wish to say anything about him, because he is not in his seat, he vehemently opposed it. Following the tutelage of his former leader he took the same line of attack but he is not here now to tell us what this is about.

This exercise has nothing to do with the previous administration. This exercise in borrowing from CIBC has absolutely nothing to do with any arrangements put in place by the Democratic Labour Party. This is the free wilful act of the Barbados Labour Party. They are doing some re-financing and they should say so. I heard a lot of fancy talk about some of it being foreign financed. It is foreign financed because they had to look for some foreign exchange for other borrowing that had been done from the same ING Bank. They have also to take into consideration the previous financing from the City Bank loan for the last sugar crop. So there is some re-financing in this and I predict that next year it will be the same story.

We do not know what the interest rate will be then but it will be a higher figure and it will go on and on. That is where the hole is being dug.

This therefore has to be placed in the context of what is happening with the sugar sector as a whole and we have to get to that point. We appointed a Board of competent people involved in the sugar industry - a very competent executive chairman. We experimented with the scenario of having an executive chairman because we realised that

when he had to go and negotiate with some of those fellows, he had to have full authority without the Minister having to approve his every decision and position and to give him, because he had that expertise, the opportunity of carrying out that restructuring himself. He is now being supplanted by a Bridgetown merchant I do not wish to say too much about this because I am not going to deal with it here. I do not want anybody to feel that I am hiding behind the Parliamentary Privileges and Immunities Act, so I will say what I have to say about him outside as I usually do.

Mr. SPEAKER: Could I ask the Honourable Member, what has all of this to do with the Resolution before the House? 9.15 p.m.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Monumental foolishness! That is the decision that the DLP took two years ago and the Workers' Union appointed a former worker I think at the Carrington Factory as a member of that board in his own right. That is nothing new. But as usual, I am concerned because he is totally visionless, devoid of any perspective of what the future of the sugar industry is. I offer to say this also. I am watching the thing carefully because this importation of sugar has always been one of the major areas of private sector corruption in this country. That is why we had to take it out of their hands and let the BMC deal with it. We had to take it from those boys on Broad Street and put it in the hands of the BMC. Now it is going to Eckstein Village and that is economic empowerment. Lick up Julie 'N but elevate the white merchant class in this country.

Aside.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Oh, man? You will say "Oh, man" very quickly you see, Mr. Speaker. I am seeing the landscape of Barbados being pulled back and people of colour and ability being levelled in an attempt to ensure that those economic interests in this country that have been entrenched for centuries are reassimilated and put into position of prominence in this country.

Aside.

Mr. SPEAKER: Now let us hear the Honourable Member please.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: They have control now, Mr. Speaker...

Aside.

Mr. SPEAKER: Let us hear the Honourable Member please. The Honourable Member will get back now to the Resolution I believe.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: ...over every area of foreign exchange earning and now once again the sugar industry is back in their hands. It was the culmination of 350 years of exploitation being reversed by a Government headed by a graduate of the University of the West Indies, steeped in the social political and economic traditions in this country, with people sitting on the front bench who shouted "economic empowerment, lift up the black masses of this country." And tonight, as I stand up before you, the first effort at major social engineering to take the sugar industry out of the hands of some of those people who have continued to exploit Barbadians was reversed silently, because other than for that article in the *Sunday Sun* the public would never have known that that merchant from Eckstein Village who built his empire on patronage and not on any brain - he did not even build it on that. He is now the chairman of the major...

Mr. SPEAKER: No need now. Let us keep it out of that please.

Aside.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: ...sugar management entity in Barbados. You will not phase me because I do not sit in his living room nor yours. These things need to be said. The ball will never be played by him not with me. You can play with him if you wish.

Mr. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for St. John - I believe that you will get back to the Resolution now.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Mr. Speaker, Sir, the sugar industry has been bushwhacked by the Barbados Labour Party and hijacked once again. It is in the hands of those who asked for the right to be making decisions again in Dover when they were trying to bring down the previous Government and they now have it back in their hands. That is good, Mr. Speaker. The lessons of this year are going to be painful because they are not simply going to be the kind of economic lessons which the Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central spoke of and he is right to raise them. I am not saying a word about interest rates. I issued a statement in the Press only in response to a request from a reporter and I pointed out, Mr. Speaker, that the Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central will be more disappointed than me at the increase in the minimum savings rate. Because one of the first things that he said is that the Honourable Prime Minister appears to be an honest man who was going to follow a low interest rate, low energy cost and low tax policies which would be in keeping with his perspectives. Well, I said that he now must be a very disappointed man. But I was not disappointed because I take the point which the Honourable Member for Christ Church South made that you cannot have a regime 'where you remove the control you have by way of the interest rate legislation (Rate of Interest Act) and then at the same time have the Central Bank

intervening when it wishes. I was hoping that we would have seen the last of that intervention when it was necessary because of the circumstances to protect the economy in the way in which the Democratic Labour Party did.

Sir, you have \$42 million and less of 25 per cent of that is going to be repaid in this year when they expect to have a poor sugar crop.

Aside.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: I do not care. I am making that point and I have written that down even before the Honourable Member for the City mentioned that it was those payments which would have to be carried in the end.

The point that the BMC was not capitalized. What fact could that be? We came to the House of Assembly. If he said that it is not capitalized by some kind of on-budget support, that is one statement. But to say that it was never capitalized by the Government? The sources of the capital included borrowing from the CDB and a whole range of other measures. If he said that the capitalization was inadequate or that it was not the kind of capitalization that he thought it should be or, in other words, if he felt that the Government should have taken \$5 million or \$10 million and capitalize it, well say so. But do not say that it was not capitalized. You mean that it was not capitalized the way you wanted it to be capitalized or the way you perceived that it should be capitalized.

The BAMC used the money which the Caribbean Development Bank lent to it, to which you were a Member of the House when it was approved, to purchase equipment which formed part of the capital. That is the answer that you should be giving to him because he does not understand. It is not the Acting Honourable Prime Minister who does not understand. It is the Honourable Member for Christ Church South who is trying to confuse this issue because he has turned from antagonist to apologist and that role is now causing him great difficulty. It does not cause me any difficulty because my mind is clear on the sugar sector restructuring. It was one of the most difficult and odious tasks that I had to perform as a Minister of Government, even more odious than privatisation. I mean odious because of the pressure being applied externally and internally to your effort to privatise. It was never popular in the Government and it was never popular with the Opposition, but I had to forge ahead. The same is with the sugar restructuring.

There are a large number of Barbadians who are not romantic like the Honourable Member for Christ Church South and he has a right to be a romantic because, as I have said, and I do not mean this in a negative way. He has come up in the plantation system, therefore, he

has notions of it that I do not have. I never owned a plantation and I have no desire to own any, and I am like the average Barbadian, regrettably. Therefore, his perspectives on it are a lot different. They are different to a fellow who was born in a tenantry. They are different from the managers who are given two days notice although some of them do not deserve any notice at all if you want the facts straight and plain. Well, I do not have to apologize to those who do not deserve the notice. Because when they were reaping the crop and should have been paying the money into the Barbados National Bank for the money which you were lending them, they were taking that money and buying race horses, going to South Africa...

Aside.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Precisely. But he has a better way of financing things. I remember the BDB and how he financed his own operations through the BDB. So I am watching him very carefully. But I heard Errol Barrow in Independence Square say that the only white man in Barbados he knows who has to use Wella Straightener every morning... 9.25 p.m.

Mr. SPEAKER: Do continue please.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Anyway, Mr. Speaker, there is no difference of views really and that is why the Honourable Member for Christ Church South's speech is so remarkable because he has not said anything big. He has not even addressed the questions that have been asked and some of those questions are valid. There is a role for Booker Tate in raising external finance. In fact, if they would spend more time on things like that and give those people who are the experts on the Board of Directors of the BAMC an opportunity to revise some of the overall proposals to the sugar sector we would be a lot better off. So there is a role for them in that way, but this is an initiative of the present Administration. These are not financial arrangements now being finalised.

There was never a year, to my recollection, in which I was in the Ministry of Finance that the financing for the sugar sector was not something which was being hurriedly put together at the last minute. It is not something you plan five years ahead and because of the way that the capital market is functioning in Barbados, many of the institutions including City Bank, are raising the financing of the sugar industry domestically and, because of the criticisms by the Barbados Labour Party, it appears as though ING and Booker Tate got cold feet and never arranged anymore foreign financing for the sugar sector. They had actually persuaded technocrats in the Ministry of Finance. The Honourable Member for Christ Church South actually persuaded, by his speeches in here, technocrats in the Ministry of Finance that it was better to borrow the money

domestically. So they didn't like dealing anymore with ING. They started to deal on your say-so, not mine... And that concept they were throwing back in my face every day in the Ministry that it is better to borrow that money domestically. So they never made any effort to raise foreign funds.

Aside.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: When I was Minister of Finance. There is still a foreign component in it. That is the point and certainly, in terms of what the Honourable Member for St. Peter knows is happening in 1995, and I am not going to say anymore about that, he should be much more cautious. He needs to sit down with his Ministers, including the Minister of Agriculture, and make it very clear the kinds of constraints that you will have next year. Don't mind the Supplementaries today. You can pass a thousand supplementaries in here. When they start to hold those purse strings, as they will have to do, all of this will be an academic exercise. All the rhetoric about education and the rhetoric about sugar and so on will be an academic exercise.

The perspective which one is seeing in relation to the financing of Government's operations whether it is the sugar industry by provision of this Guarantee, whether it is the other instruments that are going to be used or the foreign financing which is now being sought, it is not going to be an easy 1995. I will leave that right where it is.

The point is that you have a very poor sugar crop. You do not have a bright prospect for the next sugar crop and these things have to be forcefully brought home to Barbadians, that even with the effort that we made in 1993 with the sugar sector, the new planting programme, the incentives that were offered in the face of the restructuring, when things started to settle down that was still not enough because we then did not get the rainfall.

It is true that there may be a time for euphoria after an election victory, Mr. Speaker, but that euphoria will not be sustained on the kinds of measures and signals which one is seeing coming from the Minister of Finance in matters such as this. It is a great concern to me but as I say I leave it there because I will wait until the day of reckoning to explain the position very carefully but I am very worried.

Aside.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: I don't pray to God for that. I pray for success for this nation. I pray for a good sugar crop, a bumper tourism season. I pray that the Prime Minister will come back with all US\$30 million and he will have a successful time in Boston. I pray for

the development of the International Business Sector because I believe all of us deserve our place in the sun in this country. But at the same time, in 1994, when I was presenting the budget and trying to explain that 1994 looks bright but what follows that is something else it was being pooh-poohed and there was a lot of talk about running a higher deficit and doing this, that and the other.

Asides.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Well, some people are not getting the lunch money now, but they are going to coipe to you for that because eventually they will say, "Look if I'm not getting anything, at least let me get what the Joker said he would give."

Mr. SPEAKER: The Resolution, please.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: So, Mr. Speaker, I don't wish to keep us back any longer except to say that I hope that this restructuring exercise will be successful. We are going to keep coming to the House with measures of this sort. It is very important that the Government keeps us up-to-date and abreast with the issues because it is only through that that you will not get the questions validly put by the Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central and you will not have the unnecessary interventions of the Honourable Member for Christ Church South which have added nothing to this debate because he is trying to explain what we already know.

What we want for this House is new information on the progress of the sugar industry, on the configuration of Government's financing and information to help us to make sensible decisions about whether this is prudent borrowing, whether it makes sense and how it fits into the financial picture of the sugar industry in Barbados. That is the kind of information that we need and we can put the rest of that debate behind us, because what has been done with the restructuring has been done and, as far as I am concerned, if you left it there it would make absolutely no difference,

I told the Prime Minister not to hurt his head too hard about doing anything else with those people because as far as I am concerned they are looking to suck every cent out of the taxpayers of Barbados and the role of Government is to stop them from doing that. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Mr. Speaker, on the last occasion I said I would support the Resolution that was brought before this Honourable Chamber, but this afternoon, Sir, while looking at this document I have some problems. I want to know from the Government if this is a loan or if this is a grant to the Barbados Agricultural Management Company.

The reason why I am asking this, Sir, is that I have a situation in front of me where we are guaranteeing \$42.6 million to the Barbados Agricultural Management Company to be repaid in three years and the Honourable Member for Christ Church South said that this would be financed from the surplus from local sugars.

Aside.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Yes, you said that. I am saying, Sir, it is true that over the years that the surplus from the local sugars went into the Sinking Fund but that was when the borrowings were redeemable over a longer period and I am saying that we cannot finance these bonds in three years. The only way that these bonds can be financed in three years is if the Honourable Member for Christ Church South has a plan to increase the price of sugar and then the taxpayers in this country will not be able to pay for the price of sugar in order to finance these bonds in three years. 9.35 p.m.

We have here, Sir, that by June 30, 1995 they will be repaying \$3.745 million. That amount is possible from the imported sugar. I would like to find out from him how in 1996 they will finance \$11 million from the surplus. That is not all. On June 30, 1997 they will be looking for \$27.7 million from the surplus of the imported sugar that will be sold on the local market. I would like to know where they will be getting this money from and that is why I ask the question whether this is a loan or a grant to the Barbados Agricultural Management Co. It is true I would like to wish the new Chairman well and I know he has a difficult job.

I have another problem. It is said that this is for the purpose of financing the sugar industry and I have a problem with this because in my previous statement I said that the sugar industry would never be profitable.

Aside.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: The Honourable Member for Christ Church South said that also, and the Honourable Member for St. Peter said it also, so you disagree with us? I am saying that if you have a Resolution asking us to guarantee something for the sugar industry I might have a problem but if you ask us to guarantee something for the agriculture industry I will support it. If the wording here is wrong correct it quickly so that I can support this Resolution.

It can only be a grant, Mr. Speaker, because to ask the sugar industry to repay \$42.6 million plus interest in three years' time is impossible. I would like the Honourable Members from the other side to tell me how they are going to finance this because if they do not,

they are misleading the House and I know that you would not allow that so you would have to ask them to correct that.

In 1982 when Portvale Factory was being built the Barbados Labour Party guaranteed a loan for the Barbados Sugar Industry Ltd., and part of it was borrowed on the overseas market so I cannot understand now how there can be one argument in 1982 and the Honourable Member for Christ Church South is using another argument today about local borrowings. I might agree with you that if in 1982 you had borrowed the money on the local market we would not have found ourselves in a situation where we had to pay back a lot of money to the Japanese because we borrowed that money, and the Honourable Member for Christ Church South would agree with me that we borrowed the money from the CDB when the yen was low and we repaid it when the yen was high.

Aside.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Mr. Speaker, imagine the Honourable Member for St. Joseph talking about bullet loans in this House and is sitting next to the Honourable Member for Christ Church South when he helped borrowed one, and he is again, Sir, guaranteeing another bullet loan for the Barbados Agricultural Management Co. where they are borrowing a loan to be repaid in three years' time. Bullet loans? It seems to me, Sir, every time they get a new term they get bullet loans, thanks to the Honourable Member for St. Joseph.

It goes further, Sir. We had been accused of allowing plantation owners to subdivide land but now I can understand why the Barbados Labour Party would guarantee a loan to the Barbados Agricultural Management Co. to be repaid in three years because the Honourable Member for Christ Church South said that there are plantations in my constituency that all they have to do is get land permission and they do not have to worry about the debt. The plan is that they will lend the Barbados Agricultural Management Co. \$42 million. They will not be able to repay it and then they would get some of the plantation to subdivide. I can only have that analysis and I can only make an analysis of that based on the information from the Honourable Member for Christ Church South. He gave us all of that information.

The Honourable Member for Christ Church South also said that the equipment has not been paid for and there is no other person who can inform this House better, why the equipment has not been paid for on the plantation than my friend, the Honourable Member for Christ Church South. He knows that there is a valuation problem and he knows that there are lawyers who will advise their clients and the two sides will not agree, and that is why the equipment has not been paid for.

Aside.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Sir, the Honourable Member knows that accountants and lawyers do not agree because the lawyers even believe today that accountants should not deal with offshore business.

Aside.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Mr. Speaker, I always have good sugar. I still have some.

Mr. Speaker, I have also said in this House that I do not believe that we should guarantee money to pay the private sector unless we put some conditions. I am having problems again. This is the second time I am speaking on a Resolution like this and I am not hearing the conditions because when you are talking about \$42 million, at first I thought this \$42 million was for the B AMC alone but I am seeing today that it is for the sugar industry which tells me that it is going to the BAMC to be passed on to the other sectors. I am saying that, if some of this money is to be given to the other sector we as Honourable Members should have some say in what they are doing on their plantations.

We cannot come in here and set policies and where we give people money and they have no conditions set to that money because we would find ourselves in the same situation as the Honourable Member for St. Joseph found himself in 1982 where he was able to give price support, no conditions in place and they did whatever they felt like doing. We cannot have this. We must have conditions. Once we have conditions the policy set in place by the Barbados Labour Party will go far. I am quite prepared to support them in this Resolution but they must also be prepared to set conditions and they must also explain to us how they are going to finance this \$42 million in three years' time.

I would like to believe the Honourable Member for Christ Church South but I know that the amount of money going into the Sinking Fund cannot be over \$42 million so it tells me that the Government of Barbados would have to find money to redeem these bonds. If they are only pretending that they are guaranteeing these loans when in truth and in fact it is really their liability, they should tell the House that this is their liability and this is part of the capital they are putting into the Barbados Agricultural Management Company.

I believe this is the plan because if one listened to the speech by the Honourable Member for Christ Church South he talked a lot about capitalisation so I believe that this is a back hand way of capitalising the Barbados Agricultural Management Co. but, at the same time, it is a way to

help give assistance to the private growers. If that is what the Honourable Member for Christ Church South was saying, I would like them to admit it on the floor of the House. We should not be coming to this House having to ask questions like these. We should have all of these things put in front of us where we could come and say we agree with this or disagree with that but I should not have to be speaking on a Resolution like this. 9.45 p.m.

I should like to support this, Sir. But I am still asking them before they bring it to the vote to explain these things for me because the sugar industry, I agree, has value and has always been an industry that provided foreign exchange for this country and it is the only industry that you could guarantee the foreign exchange from. Whenever I have spoken, I have always said that if the Central Bank of this country could tie the other industries down like how they tied down the sugar industry this country would go far. I know that the Honourable Member for Christ Church South would agree with me. If we could do the same thing in the tourism industry, we would have no problems.

Soon I will be coming to this House and I will be asking the House to do something like that for the simple reason that we have a situation where we are getting involved in other industries where all the money stands a chance of staying outside. As a citizen of Barbados I have a right to come to this House and ask the Minister of Finance to do everything in his power to make sure that all the foreign exchange that should come into the country comes in. The Honourable Member for Christ Church South knows what I am talking about. He will agree with me on this, that if the sugar industry can bring in all of its foreign exchange, the manufacturing sector and the tourism sector that the Central Bank should put something in place to make sure that all the foreign exchange comes in. Whenever they want some they apply to the Central Bank and they get it.

I have nothing more to say on this matter, Sir. Thank you very much.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Mr. Speaker, Sir, over the past 30 years I have watched the debate on the sugar industry come full circle. We have come from no cane blade to a position where, in 1986 this Barbados Labour Party, then in Government, left the sugar industry reaping at 120 000 tonnes. Today, if we make 35 000 or 36 000 we are lucky. Today we are in a situation in this country where we cannot meet our quotas on either side of the Atlantic and we are eating nasty sugar out of Guatemala. I have seen it come all that way.

I listened tonight...

Aside.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: You are a little pup who has now come in here. Cool it. I listened tonight to the Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central. He has always, from the time he came in here and I was in here before him, so I can tell you that from the day he came in here he has this fascination with the national debt.

The Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central, when he had his turn, did much to increase and improve the national debt. He has always been pre-occupied with it, Sir.

Aside.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Mr. Speaker, Sir, on the 25th....

Mr. SPEAKER: Would the Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central let us hear the Member, please.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Mr. Speaker, Sir, this is a very serious debate. This is possibly the last opportunity that we are going to have in this century to keep the sugar industry alive. It is nothing to muck about with. This is a serious debate. Everybody knows the history of the Barbados Agricultural Management Company and how it came into being.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, on the 25th October this year in this House of Assembly we passed a Bill which became an Act cited as the Barbados Agricultural Management Company Limited Sugar Bonds Guarantee Act, 1994. At Clause 3 of that Act, it states that:

"The Minister may, with the approval of Parliament guarantee in such manner and in such terms and conditions as the Minister thinks fit, the payment of the principal and of interest necessary for the redemption of bonds issued by the Barbados Agricultural Marketing Company Limited for the purpose of the financing of the sugar industry."

Aside.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: They voted for it, Sir, and tonight we are going to hear them now trying to pick...

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: On a point of order, Sir. We voted for that but we never voted that the bonds would have been for 3 years.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I did not say that they voted that the bonds would be three years. They voted under Section 3.1 that:

"The Minister may, with the approval of Parliament guarantee on such terms and conditions as the Minister thinks fit".

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: On a point of order, Sir. It is quite wrong for the Honourable Minister to mislead this House. All that Bill does is create a debt instrument.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: I am not suggesting otherwise. Let me finish what I am saying.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: It is a debt instrument. Under that you can bring in individual Resolutions. Just like the same Bill.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: I am not saying otherwise. Just creating the legal authority for a debt instrument.

Aside.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: I am fully aware of that.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: You are misleading the House.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: It went on to say at Section 4, Sir:

"for the establishment of a sugar industry revitalization fund into which all monies raised from the issue of bonds would be paid and from which payments for the financing of the operations would be made."

Section 5 provided:

"For the establishment of a sinking fund for the purposes of redeeming the bonds and for meeting other incidental expenses."

Section 6 provides for:

"The annual audit of the accounts of the funds established under the Act."

Mr. Speaker, Sir, on the 2nd day of June this year, I repeat, on the 2nd day of June this year the Barbados Cabinet approved a proposal for the Minister of Finance to guarantee a medium-term financing facility from City Bank Trinidad and Tobago Limited to meet part of the working capital requirements of the Barbados Agricultural Management Company Limited. The Honourable Leader of the Opposition knows why he spoke and ran out.

In addition the then Cabinet approved arrangements for providing short-term finance for the reaping of the 1994 sugar crop and for obtaining a loan of some \$23 million from the Caribbean Development Bank for capital investments in a sugar industry revitalization project which at the time of appraisal was estimated to cost \$60 million.

The Barbados Agricultural Management Company Limited's plan for the implementation of the sugar

industry's revitalization programme during the period July 1994 to June 1998 will require counterpart financing in the sum of the \$42.6 million of which we speak. They have identified the need for funds to finance medium-term working capital requirements and for providing counterpart contributions for the investments supported by the CDB loan. In addition, as everybody knows over all the years, pre-shipment finance is required on an annual basis to start off the sugar crop.

The programme for the revitalization of the sugar industry which is going to be managed by the BAMC envisages the return of sugar production to a steady level of around 66 000 tonnes by 1998. I hope that this answers at least one of the questions for the Honourable Member for St. Lucy. At that time, meaning in 1998, the BAMC, we hope, will be able to generate some modest profit on its operations.

In the meantime though, Sir, the BAMC's borrowing will avoid the need for direct injection of funds by the Government, the Government being the sole shareholder in the company.

The Honourable Member for St. John had a great deal to say about ING and Booker Tate and what we should have done and what we ought not to have done. The BAMC invited offers from a number of banks to provide financing, according to a schedule over the three-year period. The most favourable reply came from the said ING capital corporation. The Honourable Member for St. John would know about that because they were the people who provided the pre-shipment finance for the 1994 crop and also from City Bank Trinidad and Tobago Limited.

The fact is, Sir, that there was very little to choose between the two as far as the cost of funds was concerned. Because a pre-shipment financing was between 7.5% and 8% on a variable basis and the medium-term facility between 8.5% and 9% on a fixed rate basis. All of these facts were known. But City Bank indicated that it could mobilize locally available funds by developing a financial instrument which could be marketed to insurance companies, pension funds and credit unions as well as to commercial banks. In the light of this consideration, Sir, the BAMC issued a letter of mandate to City Bank to provide the financing required. That is where we are at, Sir. The City Bank put together a package to enable the participation of local investors through the issue of corporate bonds by the BAMC. These bonds are going to be marketed as I said, Sir, to Insurance Companies, to Pension Funds, to Credit Unions as well as to the Commercial Banks. The investors have provided ... 9.55 p.m.

Aside.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: The BAMC is a very young company and naturally the Bank is asking for guarantee. If you were a banker would you not ask for guarantee in those circumstances?

Mr. SPEAKER: Continue please.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Mr. Speaker, what I am saying is that the investors have provided commitments to subscribe the \$42.6 million required by the BAMC over the 3-year period. For the crop year 1994-95, this is the year that we are in now. Sir, City Bank proposed to disburse accordingly as I have set out in the Schedule.

Mr. Speaker, these are facts that were known to the Honourable Leader of the Opposition. The overall financial situation of the BAMC's operation is under review.

*AsU**.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: No, Sir. I am not going to ignore the asides. I am going to speak to them. As far as my information goes &§ Company's fixed assets at June 30, 1994 had a pet book value of \$2.779 million.

Hon. Miss B, A, MILLER: I am not in a position to speak for those. But I want to go on to say, Sir, that the overall financial situation of its operations are under review and since the latest projection for the 1995 crop, as everybody knows, of approximately 36 000 tonnes represents a shortfall of over 8 000 tonnes - below the target of 54 000 - this significantly lower level, Sir

Everybody knows that we had a drought for the first 8 months of the year and that that is the cause of it.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, that is where we are at today. I have already said what I had to say about the rate of interest and that is, I hope, sufficient information....

Mr. Speaker, Sir, the Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central goes on with what is the prime rate. Every bank has its prime rate. I cannot tell you tonight what is a particular bank's prime rate.

Aside.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: You do not know. Why should I know?

Mr. Speaker, Sir, I beg to move that this Resolution do now pass.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: I beg to second that, Sir.

The question was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

ADJOURNMENT

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I beg to move that this Honourable House do now adjourn until Tuesday the 20th day of December, 1994 at 11.00 a.m.

Hon. D.A. C. SIMMONS: Seconded.

The question was put and resolved in the affirmative without division and Mr. Speaker adjourned the House accordingly. 10.00 p.m.

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