

THE

House of Assembly Debates

(OFFICIAL REPORT)

FIRST SESSION 1994 - 99

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

Tuesday, August 1, 1995

Pursuant to the adjournment, the House of Assembly met at 11.20 a.m. o'clock on Tuesday, August 1, 1995.

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.R

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. O. S. ARTHUR, M.Sc. (Econ.), (Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Affairs, Minister for the Civil Service)

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

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON, LL.B. (Hons.) (Leader of the Opposition)

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

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

Hon. Dr. R. L. CHELTENHAM, Q.C., MA., M.Sc. (Econ.)

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

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, B.Sc., Dip. Ed. (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

Hon. R. St. C. TOPPIN, LL.B. (Minister of State in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Tourism and International Transport)

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN

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

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

Prayers were led by Mr. Speaker.

MINUTES

Mr. SPEAKER: This House is now in session. The Minutes of Tuesday 25th July, 1995.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that the Minutes of proceedings of the Honourable the House of Assembly for the meeting of Tuesday, 25th day of July, 1995, which Minutes have been circulated be taken as read.

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

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

PAPERS

Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I am commanded to lay the Report of the Public Enterprise Investment Fund for the quarter ending March 31, 1995.

Hon. R. N. GREENIDGE: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I am commanded to lay the Reports of the Department of Labour for the years 1984, 1985, 1986 and 1987.

GOVERNMENT NOTICES

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I beg to give notice of a Resolution to approve the lease to TAB Limited and Life of Barbados of a parcel of land at the Pine, in the parish of St. Michael. I further beg to give notice, Sir, of a Resolution to approve the sale to B & B Services Inc. of a parcel of land at Paradise Beach Drive in the parish of St. Michael. I further give notice of a Resolution to approve the sale to Nicole Browning of a parcel of land and the building thereon at 328 Cliff Avenue, Pelham, Westchester, New York, in the United States of America.

NOTICES OF MOTIONS FOR THE ADJOURNMENT OF THE HOUSE ON MATTERS OF URGENT PUBLIC IMPORTANCE ORDERS OF THE DAY SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Mr. Speaker, Sir, 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. D. A. C. SIMMONS: I beg to second that

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

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

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

ORDER NO. 5 - THE RURAL DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION BILL, 1995

Hon. R. C. EASTMOND: Mr. Speaker, Sir, for many years Honourable Members on this side and I mean the Barbados Labour Party have been concerned about the condition of rural Barbados and the plight of rural people. Indeed even before this Government was formed in September last year Honourable Members on this side have repeatedly called on the then Government to address the concerns of the population resident in far flung villages in Barbados and to improve the facilities and amenities that were available to these people.

I vividly recall, Mr. Speaker, the predecessor of the current leader of our side, the Honourable Member for Christ Church West, saying that Barbados had come to a position where there had virtually evolved in this country two Barbadoses, a developed urban Barbados and an undeveloped rural Barbados. Aware then, Mr. Speaker,

both of the plight of these people and our commitment to rural people in Barbados, at page 29 of our Manifesto, and I take it, Mr. Speaker, that this Manifesto is already a document of this Honourable House* the Barbados Labour Party addresses* the question of rural development in this Manifesto which forms the basis of a mandate given to us last September.

If you would permit me, Mr. Speaker, page 29 says: "The rural communities of Barbados have been the bedrock of our stability and progress as a nation but many districts in rural Barbados have not kept pace with modern development due in major parts to the dislocation and loss of employment resulting from the indiscriminate fragmentation of prime agricultural lands."

This same page 29 in this Manifesto, the party of which I am Honoured to be a Member pledges as follows saying: "We will Create a Rural Enterprises Fund to assist in the financing of new projects aimed at generating new business and jobs in rural Barbados, rehabilitate the Scotland District and convert it into economically and socially vibrant region of Barbados,"¹¹

Then it goes on to outline a number of other objectives which are intended to be achieved by a Ministry of Rural Development.

On this occasion, Mr. Speaker, I bear the privilege and the Honour of bringing before this Honourable House the draft Bill which sets out to establish the Rural Development Commission and I take it that Members would have received copies of this but this Bill is intent on addressing the question of what I would call economic dualism.

The name of the Bill is the Rural Development Commission Bill. I am saying that this is intended to address the question of economic dualism, Dualism to the economist, Mr. Speaker, is a term "that is used where in a given country there are two contrasting scenarios. Usually on the one hand there are glimpses and flashes of economic development, economic growth and such like, but on the other hand there is some poverty, some underdevelopment and some concern expressed among those who are experiencing such underdevelopment and such disadvantage. We are going to, through establishing this Bill be setting up a Commission which is going to be the primary policy making agency for rural development in Barbados.

The objects of this Bill are set out at Clause 4 and if you permit me, Mr. Speaker, Clause 4 says that the functions of the Commission are to facilitate road improvement and the lighting of streets in rural districts of this island; to provide housing and ancillary services, including the installation of sanitary facilities in rural areas; to provide assistance to small farmers in the areas

of agricultural training and investments, equipment and machinery and production and marketing of agricultural produce along with allocating land under the control of Government to persons desirous of farming, among other things.

Sir, the Government is committed to enhancing the quality of life of rural people. When I say this, Sir, our policy as we contemplate it, is not only going to promote a number of social community based facilities in rural Barbados but there is going to be an economic component to road development the way we intend to introduce it. 1130a.m.

Clause 4(c) mentions the question of providing assistance to small farmers in areas like agricultural training and investment. Our position is that we in the Barbados Labour Party that in instances where people from rural areas intend to live in rural that economic activities should be taken to them. You may be aware, Mr. Speaker, that over the years many people drifted from St. Joseph, St. Andrew to metropolitan Bridgetown and the suburbs and surrounding areas in St. Michael in search of economic opportunities including employment. There was this movement of persons from rural areas to Bridgetown overtime. The result is that Bridgetown and St Michael have become overcrowded and the result is also that the capacity of urban Barbados to properly allow Barbadians from rural areas to fulfil their dreams has now reached a point where it is very much to the limit.

So that the Barbados Labour Party is intent on taking economic activities to rural areas. Already there are persons in rural Barbados who demonstrated the type of entrepreneurship, enterprise, and commitment, Mr. Speaker, which show quite clearly that these people are determined to stay in their communities and to pursue ventures to make a living. For example, Mr. Speaker, recently I had the pleasant opportunity of visiting the potters at Chalky Mount, St. Andrew and I realized that these potters through their own efforts and without hardly any assistance from Government have been able not only to pursue a livelihood out of the potting industry but were able to make a contribution to this country in its culture and to establish a link with the important tourist industry. What I realized on that occasion having visited the potters, Mr. Speaker, was that the marketing of pottery left a lot to be desired. At that point, I recognized that something like a Rural Development Programme can assist these potters especially in the area of marketing.

I also came across a number of other scenarios in this Barbados which appealed to me. For example, it is a notorious fact and I am not using the word "notorious" in ordinary English, I am using it the lawyers' way. It is a well known fact, Mr. Speaker, that in excess of 90 per cent

of persons involved in sheep rearing, goat rearing and in cattle rearing are persons from rural areas who are very much landless. Could you imagine, Mr. Speaker, a situation where a substantial amount of economic activity is occurring among a cadre of persons who are determined to make their contribution to Barbados and these people are disadvantaged of being landless? Ask any person, Mr. Speaker, who has been involved in agriculture especially those persons from the Ministry of Agriculture who render extension services if it is not true that a large number of goat farmers, sheep farmers and cattle farmers just have no land. At the same time, Mr. Speaker, what you have in many areas of rural Barbados is the undesirable occurrence of the virtual abandonment of land where in a small country where land is a precious resource, we have the situation where there are large tracks of land out there in rural Barbados on which nothing is happening. There is an estate in St George close to a reservoir. I believe it is called Golden Ridge. It is an estate with prime agricultural land on which no agricultural activity has been occurring for some time and Golden Ridge is one of several pieces of land in Barbados which would normally have some economic potential but on which nothing has been going on.

I would like to draw to this House's attention, Mr. Speaker, the provision of Clause 4(d) which says:

"(d) to allocate land under the control of Government to persons desirous of farming."

What we in the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development have done so far is to identify those lands that are idle that with the cooperation of the owners of these abandoned lands Government could undertake such policies as long leases to take from the original owners on the long leases and thereby bringing the land under the control of Government, and then set a stage for subdividing this land into smaller agricultural lots to persons who are desirous of farming. We do so in instances where many young people in this country have been manifesting a determination, Mr. Speaker, to get back to the land. Some of them indeed have done courses at the Samuel Jackman Prescod Polytechnic and the University of The West Indies at St Augustine and other places and have developed a measure of expertise in agriculture, but just because there is no land for them they are not able to pursue their activities of their choice. We in the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development are determined that idle lands in a country of limited land resources are very much at a premium and should not be left idle and through aggressive policy decisions we will, Mr. Speaker, be bringing many of those lands under the control of Government not with any desire to expropriate or to wantonly appropriate land in the name of Government but for the policy of making sure that these lands are put to productive use. This is but one aspect, Mr. Speaker, of the question of bringing idle lands back into production. In addition, Mr. Speaker,

we recognize that many persons from St. George, many persons from countryside Christ Church, many persons from St. John, St. Andrew and in my own constituency of St. James North are interested in non-agricultural businesses but lack capital. There are those persons who have the desire to start their own business but lack what some Members would call "sea capital" and lack the financing needed to get started. I can think of persons interested, Mr. Speaker, in the setting up of cottages and earlier in my contribution I did refer to the cottage industries type operation in relation to the potters at St. Andrew. There are those interested in things like agro-processing of convening raw agricultural produce into processed products. There are those interested in launching certain small manufacturing business but who at this stage have no money to get started.

You will notice, Mr. Speaker, as I referred to it earlier, Page 29 of the Barbados Labour Party's 1994 Manifesto spoke of the creation of a Rural Enterprise Fund. In conformity, Mr. Speaker, with the proposal at Page 29 of the BLP 1994 Manifesto in respect of the Rural Enterprise Fund, this draft Bill which is now before this Honourable House also addresses the question at Clause 11 of the Rural Enterprise Fund. If you will permit me, Mr. Speaker, let me cite Clause 11 of the draft Bill which we have before us.

Clause 11 says quite clearly in perlocutely clear English:

"There is established a Rural Enterprise Fund which shall comprise:

- (a) such moneys as may be voted for the purpose by Parliament;
- (b) such moneys as may be borrowed by the Commission for its purposes; and
- (c) such other moneys as may become available to the Commission from any other source approved by the Minister."

Clause 11 therefore, Mr. Speaker, sets up the Rural Enterprise Fund along such lines as first Parliament, which is the logical and legal entity to vote money for public purposes, will be empowered to provide by way of vote an allocation of money for the Rural Enterprise Fund but where the Commission will also have power to borrow money on loan. Perhaps, Mr. Speaker, I should mention that in relation to the powers of the Commission to borrow I should have told this Honourable House before that the Commission is going to be established as a body corporate separate and distinct from its members. It is going to have legal status as a legal person will therefore be able to sue

and to be sued in its own name, will be able to embark upon legal contractual arrangements including the borrowing of money to pursue its objectives and such like. 11.40a.m.

I want to make that point clear too, Mr. Speaker, about the status of the Commission as a separate legal entity and I would want to refer you, Mr. Speaker, and Honourable Members to Clause 3(3) which says: "The Commission is a body corporate to which Section 21 of the Interpretation Act applies."

Apart from this, Mr. Speaker, in a country the size of Barbados, Honourable Members, including Honourable Members who represent metropolitan areas, would no doubt from time to time travel through country areas to observe the condition of country areas. There are those Honourable Members who are representatives of St. Michael constituencies who could tell you that when they travel through parts of St. Joseph the lack of amenities would leave a lot to be desired. I remember recently travelling from St. Bernard's down through a village south west of St. Bernard's and that whole place was darker than a place called Dark Hole, which was for years one of the darkest places in this country. Lights have been installed in Dark Hole in recent times.

The point I am making is that there are entire parts of countryside Barbados that are dark because of an absence of street lighting, where the roads are in a perilous state and where a number of recreational facilities which neighbourhoods and communities should normally have are simply lacking.

Aside.

Hon. R. C. EASTMOND: I can tell you, Mr. Speaker, that there are parts of St. George where the social amenities are in a dire state. The roads have collapsed, they have not been given any attention for years under the eccentricities of the Democratic Labour Party as they comprised the administration between 1986 and 1994. Parts of St. George were left to themselves in the same way that parts of St. Philip were. There is a road in St. Philip, near Golden Grove, which even though represented at the time by a Democratic Labour Party member has been left to maintain itself, and this generally speaking, Mr. Speaker, is the plight of countryside Barbados. There are a number of facilities which St. Michael West, for example, would have that parts of St. George, St. Philip and St. James North do not have.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: On a point of order, Sir. I challenge the Honourable Member to name one. Name a facility I have that St. George does not have.

Hon. R. C. EASTMOND: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I will keep to the debate but I will recall that before 1994 and in 1986 a lot of roads around the Eagle Hall area, Sawh's shop, down through Goodland and such like were done and look much better than parts of St George near Melverton and certainly look better than Golden Grove. In parts of St. Thomas, Mr. Speaker, darkness prevaileth even in the day. The abject neglect of some of these places, particularly wooded areas - and I am sure the Honourable Member for St. Michael West would be more familiar with the dark and the wooded in those areas - even in the day the density of the darkness in a lot of the country areas is so severe that it is clear that these areas have lacked lighting and the types of facilities that they should have had.

Mr. Speaker, I want Honourable Members of this House to refer to Clause 4(a) which indicates that one of the functions of the Commission would be to facilitate road improvement and the lighting of streets in rural districts in this island. Apart from that, for several years, going back to the late 1980s, the Barbados Labour Party has been worried that there are persons, especially the indigent and the aged, out there in countryside Barbados who literally have to brave the elements in the middle of the night when on calls of nature they have to stray out of their chattel house out into the yard to use old-fashioned dry pit toilets. This has been a concern of the Barbados Labour Party for years, where before the 1990s the poor and indigent have had to use dry pit facilities, in a country where there is almost universal application of piped water. In other words, I am saying, Mr. Speaker, that Barbados has for years had piped water all over. I cannot recall any village right now that does not have access to piped water. I believe the last place, in my memory in recent times, that cried out for piped water was a place called Forty Acres, which at the urging of the Honourable Member for St. Thomas eventually received piped water.

I am saying, Mr. Speaker, that in a culture where piped water has been available for years, it is nothing less than a disgrace that the poor, the needy and the indigent in St. Joseph, in rural St James, parts of St John, parts of St Philip - and we estimate the number to be around 5 000 at this point - there are persons who still do not have water borne sanitary facilities. I recognise, Sir, that at this point the Honourable Member for St Lucy looks up, but the Honourable Member for St. Lucy must know, as a person who was born in St. Lucy and who frequents St. Lucy almost every day, that there are persons in St Lucy still using dry pit toilets.

The Barbados Labour Party is concerned that as we modernise Barbados, as we develop Barbados, we have been going at such a pace that we have very much developed St. Michael - and I will admit that there are parts of St. Michael that could still do with some attention

- the area of Morris Gap, for example, needs some attention, and there are about eight dry pits in Morris Gap, but generally speaking, Mr. Speaker, there are parts of St. Michael which still need some enhancement and improvement. The Barbados Labour Party, through its Urban Renewal Plan, will be addressing that to make all members who represent St Michael constituencies happy, but the general point is that at coastal Christ Church, beginning anywhere in Oistins and coming right down to Bay Street, a measure of physical development with the support services has occurred faster and more rapidly than in countryside Barbados. That fact cannot be disputed.

What we are saying, Mr. Speaker, is that through the establishment of this Commission we are determined to have one Barbados and the dualism to which I adverted earlier will be a thing of the past through the energy of the administration of the Barbados Labour Party. Even though I am mentioning specifically that this Bill is very much intended to improve rural Barbados, in our concern for Barbadians as a whole we shall still be trying to identify those pockets of poverty in this country so as to give assurances to those who are still victims of poverty, that in our caring concern for them we provide the necessary facilities for them.

Mr. Speaker, there are other aspects of this Bill which I believe I can address at this point. Having already adverted to some of the specific functions of the Commission, to its status as a separate legal entity and a body corporate, I want to say that this Bill contemplates a situation where, especially in the early days, the Commission will have to have a staff possibly drawn from the ranks of the established Civil Service. Let me make the point clear. The Bill contemplates that in instances where persons are seconded from the general Civil Service to the Commission their rights as Civil Servants will be preserved. I think I should mention that and put it in the language that I have just put it. You can refer, Mr. Speaker, to Clause 17(1) and (2) that indicates quite clearly that:

"Where a public officer is seconded or temporarily transferred from a pensionable office within the meaning of section 2(1) of the Pensions Act to perform any service with the Commission, his service with the Commission shall, unless the Governor-General otherwise decides, count for pension under that Act as if the officer had not been so seconded."

I want to make that point clear.
11.50a.m.

Mr. Speaker, I would also want at this stage give some information to Parliament as regards other aspects

of this Bill. The Schedule is one of the Schedules and it comes about created by clause 3. Clause 3 in the general body of the Bill refers to a Schedule and this Schedule

"The Commission shall consist of a Chairman, a Deputy Chairman and 7 other members all of whom shall be appointed by the Minister by instrument in writing."

Therefore, Mr. Speaker, the Rural Development Commission will be a 9-member Commission inclusive of a Chairman and a Deputy Chairman.

As you will see, Mr. Speaker, at clause 12 for purposes of meetings of commission a quorum shall be constituted of 5 members. The Schedule also indicates that vacancies will arise at paragraph 6 of the Schedule:

- "(a) the death or resignation of a member;
- (b) the revocation by the Minister of the appointment of a member,
- (c) the absence from Barbados of a member without leave of the Minister."

Perhaps I should also say, Sir, that when members are chosen for the Commission they hold their tenure as members of the Commission for a 3-year period subject to their being eligible for re-appointment

So, Mr. Speaker, what essentially the Government is doing on this occasion is through this proposed Bill to set in motion a policy executing agency empowered to provide the types of services that Government contemplates for rural development and, generally speaking, the Commission will take directions from the Minister of Rural Development. Clause 18 says that:

"The Minister may give the Commission directions of a general nature."

The Commission, we envision when once it is put in place, will provide solutions to many of the problems which rural Barbadians are facing and at the same time while addressing the physical facilities and amenities or absence thereof in rural Barbados there is an economic component to the mandate given to the Rural Development Commission.

We believe that since we, as part of our mandate, were elected in September and we received tremendous support in many of the rural areas because of our proposals to these people as set out at page 29 in the manifesto, that

we are duty bound to give effect to the promises and the pledges which we made to persons in rural areas at the time of the election. We believe that we have a responsibility to deliver to these people in conformity with the confidence they reposed in us when we took to them our programme in outline for rural development in Barbados.

As I indicated earlier, Mr. Speaker, this question of the state of countryside Barbados has exercised our minds for a considerable time. I vividly recall the Honourable Member for Christ Church West warning that if development had occurred in urban areas at such a rapid rate as to concentrate an excessive amount of energy and funding of resources on urban areas to the neglect of rural Barbados that we would end up with 2 Barbados. It is to his credit that the Honourable Member for Christ Church West when Leader of our great political organisation was clear that we could not have 2 Barbados, on the one hand a spectacular amount of development and on the other hand abject neglect. He has been supported by the Barbados Labour Party in lamenting the backwardness of particular areas of rural Barbados.

It now falls on us, Mr. Speaker, in this great Barbados Labour Party, to remember the concern that we have been expressing about the state of rural Barbados and at the same time be mindful of the promises which we made to persons in those areas. Mr. Speaker, this Commission once it has been created by statute and once it is given its true legal status will then be able to attract a staff to carry out the work of the Commission.

I am asking that all my colleagues on this side lend their support to this Bill and be happy that we have come to a stage where we have brought it to Parliament. Bearing all that I have said in mind, Mr. Speaker, I do now humbly move that this Bill be read a second time.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Mr. Speaker, when one listens to the Honourable Member for St. James North, one gets the impression that rural Barbados is some place one should not live. I was wondering where he got that impression from. But when I look at the manifesto of the Barbados Labour Party I observed that it is in the manifesto of the Barbados Labour Party that he got this impression:

"But many districts in rural Barbados have not kept pace with modern development due in major part to the dislocations and loss of employment resulting from the indiscriminate fragmentation of prime agricultural land."

It goes on:

"The decline of traditional communities poses considerable difficulty in maintaining law and order and sustaining the stability and prosperity of rural society. We will rebuild strong, vibrant rural communities in which our people will find it desirable to reside, work and play."

I cannot believe Sir, that this is the same rural Barbados I know, because if you want to talk about vibrant communities in Barbados the place to find those vibrant communities is in rural Barbados where you get the oneness and sharing of ideas etc. So I cannot see how you can associate crime with rural Barbados when the Honourable Attorney General, the Member for St. Thomas, at one stage in this same Parliament was talking about closing the police station at Crab Hill, St. Lucy.

Hon. R. C. EASTMOND: On a point of order, Sir, if I heard the Honourable Member for St. Lucy say that I associated crime with rural Barbados. I am objecting to any suggestion that the Honourable Member for St. Lucy is suggesting that I linked crime to the conditions of rural Barbados. I never at any point mentioned crime.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Nor did I say so. I said it was the manifesto that said that

Asides,

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: I am not going to get involved in that, Mr. Speaker. To structure a rural development policy based only on agriculture in rural Barbados is a big flaw because if one has to be serious.... 12.00 noon.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Mr. Speaker, Sir, on a point of order. Mr. Speaker, Sir, I hold in my hand the 1984 Manifesto of the Barbados Labour Party. I am looking at page 29 - Rural Development The third paragraph. No reference whatsoever to crime. It is a grave misdirection of this Chamber for the Honourable Member to suggest that the Barbados Labour Party Manifesto is seeking to link urban development with crime. If I may read, Sir. The third paragraph says that a decline of traditional communities poses considerable difficulties in maintaining law and order and sustaining the stability and prosperity of rural societies. How can this possibly be interpreted to import crime?

Mr. SPEAKER: Let us proceed, please.

Mr. D. St E. KELLMAN: Mr. Speaker, I am no lawyer but law and order ...

Aside.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: I have no problem with that, Mr. Speaker, but I am saying, Sir, if we are going to have a policy which states that agriculture is going to be the bedrock one would have thought that as I have said in this Honourable House already that the Barbados Agricultural Management Company should set up an agro-processing plant and I have not seen that so I cannot see how you can be speaking about agriculture and giving the impression that the only job that can be created for the people in rural Barbados is jobs from agriculture.

I am saying, Sir, that in rural Barbados there is room for hotel plant I am saying, Sir, that at the Naval Base Facility the facilities are there that a hotel can be constructed or the buildings can be refurbished where people in rural Barbados can get employment, and I am not talking about at the end of the ladder. I am saying that we have a good opportunity to provide local management for something that is owned by Barbadians at the Naval Base in St Lucy.

Further to that, Sir, it gives a good opportunity and I believe that is what the Honourable Member for Christ Church West had in his mind when he took a strong stance against the Naval Base being in St. Lucy because he saw the opportunity where we could have developed the Naval Base for poor people in Barbados to get an opportunity to be involved in the hotel industry in this country.

At North Point, Sir, we have another facility there which could be developed, and you are talking about developing rural Barbados? In rural Barbados we have areas where we could develop health tourism.

Aside.

Mr. D. St E. KELLMAN: No problem, Sir, but it is in our minds. That is the important thing. Further to that, Sir, we have the Cove Bay and we have River Bay. These are all areas that if they are developed properly that we can provide meaningful employment for our people. I see Pico Teneriffe, the Drax Hall area, the area of the Lion at Gun Hill and also in St. Philip. When I hear people talking about rural Barbados sometimes I wonder where is Ruby Park and all those developments that you mentioned last Tuesday. I wonder if it is the same rural Barbados that we are speaking about.

Mr. Speaker, I hear people come to this House of Assembly and they would give the impression that nothing has been done for rural Barbados. It is true that some things might not have been done that were planned. Prior to 1976, in the Manifesto of the Democratic Labour Party there was a plan for a small airport in St Lucy at Spring Garden. As the Honourable Member for Christ Church South would know, that is on flat land and it would

have been a good area for a small airport He would also know that after 1976 the Barbados Labour Party came to Government and what happened to that plan.

I also remember, Mr. Speaker, that Heywoods was a project started by the Democratic Labour Party to help develop Speightstown and we knew that you could not only have a hotel but you had to have other things. That is why we bought the St. Joseph Hospital to make sure that when you develop rural Barbados, especially in the Northern areas, that you would have the necessary health facilities in those areas.

I want to go back to the agro-processing plant and I want to tell you that if you are thinking about agriculture and you are only thinking about agriculture dealing with sugar cane you have no plans because I cannot support it. You are not going to get small people going back into the planting of sugar cane. If you are going to encourage small people to be involved in the agricultural industry what you have to do is set up an agro-processing plant.

This is my plan, Sir. I feel, as I have said before, that the Barbados Agricultural Management Company is on a good foundation now to set up an agro-processing plant It has leased many plantations and it needs to lease some more.

Aside.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: No, no, the Barbados Agricultural Management Company because there is a need for the BAMC and the BADMC to come together. The time is right. We should not have two bodies. I am saying, Sir, that since 1991, after the structural programme of the Democratic Labour Party, a lot of Barbadians got involved in agriculture. Do you know what they were doing, Sir? They were using the land at the back of their homes and planting vegetables and this caused us to have gluts. The only way that we can solve that problem and at the same time make sure that the consumers in this country can pay a good price for the produce they are buying is if we encourage people to mass produce, or encourage everybody to produce. But, Sir, if you do that you are going to have a surplus we have to ask ourselves, what are we going to do with the surplus? Are you going to continue dumping the surplus, Sir? But if you have a processing plant, Sir, you can these things. You can do many things with them. But with the Barbados Agricultural Management Company which will be given the mandate to buy the vegetables and distribute the vegetables. When I say distribute the vegetables, I do not mean locally because I honestly feel that with the amount of land that they have in their possession and the technology that they have in place they should be exporting to the other Caribbean countries and they should also be exporting to North America. I cannot

understand why we should be buying vegetables from North America when they can only grow vegetables in three months out of the year and we have the capacity of growing vegetables for 12 months and yet we want to buy vegetables from them. 12.10 p.m.

I cannot understand that, Sir, and I am saying that with the structure in place at the BAMC that we have a good foundation to be exporting vegetables to North America instead of importing, Sir. But we must have the processing plant, Sir. The small farmers will be able to grow the vegetables and supply the local market. The BAMC will be able to plant their vegetables for the export market. Any surplus from the other plantations and other growers whether it is the Springhall Land Lease Project will be able to come to the BAMC and decide whether they want to export the vegetables or whether they want to can them.

But I go back to 1967 again, Sir. I do not mind going back and talking about the no cane blade speech, Sir. I maintain that, if that statement was taken in the right context, I would not have to be here today talking about an agro-processing plant because we would have done it since 1967 and we would not be importing all of these vegetables from Trinidad and Jamaica. Because we would have been exporting these vegetables to Trinidad.

One would not believe, Sir, that a country like Trinidad that depended on oil dollar for all of the years could now be exporting vegetables to Barbados when we had the golden opportunity to be exporting vegetables to Trinidad. If they could have done it in those short years, think of what would have happened if we had started in 1967.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, we also have to be very careful on how we are closing schools because in rural Barbados if we really have a good plan for rural Barbados the evidence is there that, instead of people leaving rural Barbados to go to urban Barbados, you are going to have people leaving urban Barbados to come to rural Barbados. With that scenario, Sir, you will have a situation where there will be a great demand for schools in rural Barbados. It might not happen tomorrow, Sir, but it is going to happen.

Talking about the problems of rural Barbados, Sir, road improvements. That is true. Road improvements and lighting - that is true. You see, Mr. Speaker, one has to understand rural Barbados. Rural Barbados is that part of Barbados where people as soon as they get money they construct homes and they do not normally construct a home where a road is. They construct their home where they own a piece of land or where the land is owned by someone who is close to them or a friend that is prepared to rent that piece of land to them. So what you will get is

a situation where a piece of land that was once used for the cultivation of sugar cane, a youngster comes along and gets involved with a lady - I am being practical about this, Mr. Speaker - sets up a family and he realizes that he has to get a home. He goes to his neighbour or his father or somebody like that, Sir, and he says that we are involved and we want to marry and we need to have our own roof. Permission is given that there is a quarter acre of land out there and you can put your house on it. That is the talk you hear in rural Barbados. They go and construct the home and they do not think whether there is a road. They think of the home. Then someone realizes that Mr. X built a house next door and the trend goes on. Then you get 12 or 15 houses on one side. Then there is the need for lighting and there is the need for roads and the other amenities.

So when you are speaking about rural Barbados, rural Barbados cannot really be compared to urban Barbados because the thoughts are different. You take the Democratic Labour Party. They might go in and build 20 roads and by the next 5 years there would be 20 more roads to be built somewhere else. Because in rural Barbados instead of waiting on Government to build apartments, Sir, you find a situation where the individuals look after the building of the homes, *et cetera* and then they look to Government to come along and put in the necessary amenities. That is why sometimes, Sir, you will find such a situation. You take the constituency in which I represent, Sir. You can build so many roads but in 5 years time you will need another 40 because those people get together and help one another to build houses and when the houses are built the roads are needed. So nobody has to come and tell me that I sent a letter for 40 roads because development in rural Barbados, especially the one that I am representing is growing so fast that you can never keep pace with the number of roads or street lighting that you have to put in place. That is why I can afford to say, Sir, that you have to be very careful of how you are closing schools down in rural Barbados because there is going to be a great demand for schools in rural Barbados within the next five years.

Craft, Sir - we have to ask ourselves what we are going to do about craft and what we are going to put in place to make sure that when all of these all-inclusive hotels are set up on the West Coast how my people in rural Barbados will be able to attract the tourists into rural Barbados and get some of the money. Because by the time all of the hoteliers decide that they want all-inclusive tourism we have to find a way in rural Barbados whether it be sports tourism or craft to make sure that we can attract the tourists into rural Barbados. I am saying that any rural programme must have things in place to facilitate craft and sports tourism also, Sir.

We are hearing a lot of talk about how many roads would be built, *et cetera*. But I want to remind this House,

Sir, that September 7, 1994, and I know that the new servants would not forget this date, that we had a lot of rain in Barbados and many roads in Barbados were damaged. Yes, Mr. Speaker, many roads in rural Barbados were damaged because the majority of rain was in rural Barbados and I have not seen the repair job yet. If you go through Crab Hill, whether it is No. 1 or No. 2, or if you go through Stroud Bay Road - Yes, down by your friend - you would realize, Mr. Speaker, that the roads in rural Barbados and I am not speaking about new roads but I am talking about roads that have been destroyed since September 7. There is the need to have them repaired and I do not want to hear that the Democratic Labour Party was in Government and they did not repair them. Because there was no need to repair them. It was according to them the showers of blessing that destroyed the roads in rural Barbados.

Aside.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Mr. Speaker, as I have said before, rural Barbados is expanding at such a rate that we need to see the main road going right through Crab Hill. It needs widening and, if you are discussing rural Barbados the same road that the Honourable Member for St. James North mentioned in Stroud Bay leading right down to the beach and since we are dealing with ways to attract the tourists away from the hotels on the West Coast and get them into rural Barbados, I want to see a road built from the top of Stroud Bay Road right down to the beach in rural Barbados. In that way the youngsters in Stroud Bay Road will be able to set up their craft centres, *et cetera* and get some of the tourist dollars in the same way as the people on the West Coast who believe that all of the money belong to them. My people in rural Barbados might get some, yes, as you would know.

I also would like to see, Sir, in developing rural Barbados a bridge constructed from...yes, this is part of rural development in rural Barbados...River Bay to Bishops. 12.20 p.m.

I would like to see a bridge constructed from River Bay leading to Bishops, Sir, so that when they pass through River Bay they can go straight on to Bishops, on to the Cove. Free access, Sir. We will save some foreign exchange, we will not have to waste so much gas driving right around. We would like to see a lot of things being done in rural Barbados, and I would really encourage you, Sir, to take a trip to rural Barbados in the constituency of St. Lucy and you will realise that there are certain amenities. We do not mind it being called rural, but we like the development that is going on. Once you come and you do the things I have asked since September, once you do the things in rural Barbados, little Barbados would be a paradise, but the problem is not doing the things, it is doing them correctly.

I hope that after the notes have been taken and the policies put in place - and I hope they will accept what I have said and put them in place - because if I observe that they are putting the right things in place, I also have another master plan for them which I will not give them now. They have to show me that they are genuinely willing to assist - I cannot really use the word "assist" after the work that the Democratic Labour Party has done in rural Barbados - after they have shown me that they are willing to continue the policy.....

Aside,

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: That is not true. Mr. Speaker, I saw in the newspaper that there was this \$200 million or \$400 million rural programme and I saw that the main beneficiary of this rural programme was the Honourable Member for St. George South and the Honourable Member for St. Lucy. That was started in the 90s. I do not know, I have to investigate it I do not know if they have plans for isolating St. George South and St. Lucy and that is why it was in the newspaper, but I know that there was a rural programme left by the Democratic Labour Party, which was started, I know that we started to get some benefits and I am aware that my friend got some. All I am asking is that they will continue the rural programme and not only do the highways, but that they will do the tenancies, because there is a belief in this country that once you build highways people in rural Barbados will benefit. That is not true, Sir. When you build a tenancy road, the people in rural Barbados will benefit from it, because they know how to do the necessary to improve their infrastructure, *el cetera*.

I also want to see in rural Barbados the infrastructure in place, the same thing you have in urban Barbados. I do not see why a constituent of mine would have to leave St. Lucy to come to Bridgetown to get a passport. I am not saying that you should put an office in St. Lucy, but you can put it in Speightstown. I also would like to see that my constituent should not have to go to the Pine to renew his driver's licence. He should be able to do the same thing in Speightstown. Likewise, those from St. Philip have to go to Christ Church, as the Honourable Member for St. Philip North will agree. I am saying that if you put a proper facility in place in rural Barbados, where the people from rural Barbados can access these services, the demand for having to go into urban Barbados would not be there and they would be able to attract people coming the other way.

When you are coming to this House to speak about rural Barbados and you are going to bring a half-baked policy, I cannot support it. I want to see everything, I want to see the infrastructure in place, because it is a waste of time asking people to go and do certain things and at the end of the day they do not have any place to market their

produce or to provide services. These things must be put in place and if you put these things in place the people will believe that you are serious and they would give you 100% backing.

I remember when we wanted to put an agricultural policy in place to export vegetables. We set up the BMC and then encouraged the farmers to produce more. The farmers did it because they were aware that the Democratic Labour Party had set up the BMC and they could produce and send their produce to the BMC. If we did not do that, the farmers would have ignored us, but they knew that the BMC was there to buy the vegetables, and they knew the BMC would have bought their produce no matter what quantity they produced. I am saying that if you want to develop agriculture in rural Barbados you have to find outlets for the farmers to gain their confidence that there will be somewhere for them to sell their produce at the end of the day.

One has to be very careful. I do not mind large farmers taking advantage of the market, but sometimes we have to be very careful how we encourage small farmers to get involved in things. If you take a drive from Warren's roundabout, Sir, to Mobil gas station in Redmans Village, you would see a large structure where very soon you would be able to buy all the produce you want. That produce would not be bought from small farmers, it would be grown on large estates in Barbados. What you are having is that the small men, as I refer to them, in Redmans Village who would normally sell their vegetables at the street corners are going to be competing now with some large farmers who have come together and applied some more pressure to my people. I am saying if you have a rural programme and the large farmers are coming together - and they have the land, they know where to put up their structures. The small farmers cannot do it, because they find sometimes that they would go and set up, let us say, in Redmans Village and three days after something else is opened and somebody will come to them and say: "This is my land, you will have to move." It is those people we have to protect. If we are encouraging people to go into agriculture, we must first convince those people that we have outlets for them and avenues where they will be able to get rid of their produce.

Sir, I would also like to see the Minister of Tourism encouraging or asking the Barbados Tourism Authority to get together with the various groups in rural Barbados - and if she wants advice on this she can seek the advice from the Honourable Member for St. Michael South East - to see how we can develop our community tourism, our sports tourism, so that when the people come off the cruise liners they can come into the districts and be part of our community.

Mr. Speaker, tourism in Barbados has been developed by the people of Barbados and what saddens me is to see that there is a group of people who are forgetting that tourism was developed by the people of Barbados and they are trying now to alienate the tourists from Barbadians. We are fast asking Barbadians to behave like Jamaicans or other Caribbean people, or other people in the world, where they see tourists as not part of them. Tourism is supposed to be our business, so if tourism is our business we must be part of the business. We cannot just be people seen as those who would just say "Yes, Sir", "Yes, Ma'am" and that is all, we must share in the cake; and in order for us to appreciate it more, we must get some of the benefits. 12.30 p.m.

Mr. Speaker, I have already said what I had to say on all-inclusive tourism and I will not say anymore. The day is going to come in this country when we will brag that we are making \$3 billion from tourism and then the bankers in New York or in Miami will be saying that they have accounts holding for people in tourism for \$5 or \$6 billion dollars and it will not be of any benefit to the people here in Barbados. Then you will get a situation where the bankers down town will start to cry out and they will start supporting the small people in the districts in rural Barbados. Do you know why, Mr. Speaker? Because the hoteliers will not be borrowing from them anymore. They will be using some of their funds overseas so they will start feeling the crunch and they then will understand the feelings of the small people in this country.

It seems to me, Mr. Speaker, that once people are getting through they do not care what happens to other people, but that is not me. I represent small people in this country and whenever I see something happening to my people I must speak out against it. That is why I will speak out, whether it be all-inclusive tourism, whether it be people who decide to set out large plants to run out small people or not, I will speak out, Sir. Thank you very much.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Minister of Agriculture spoke with the enthusiasm of someone who had recently been given a second opportunity. He spoke with such energy that one would not believe that all he was doing is warming up once again cold soup that has been warmed up a thousand times in this Honourable House.

There is not a single concept mentioned by him to which one can apply the term original - even the concept of a commission. As far as I am aware, commissions elsewhere have been set up when major developments like the Tennessee Valley Development, development of areas of the Amazon, where the task really was not to interpose yet another parastatal body between the executive

ministries and the people but really to attract capital on an international basis in order to facilitate the development of those areas.

I am not surprised, Sir, that quite clearly the Honourable Member referred to this as a draft Bill when he spoke and it is quite clear that it is still a draft Bill. Usually, Sir, in the section stated Objects and Reasons a government would say what a bill was about and they don't usually repeat it. They might say *inter alia* or *et cetera*. This is the first time, Sir, that I have seen a Bill both in the Objects and Reasons section and in the Bill itself where the words "*inter alia*" appear. So it's an *inter alia* commission, a commission *inter alia*, *et cetera* is its appropriate definition.

This confirms Sir, that it was no slip of the tongue when the Honourable Minister of Agriculture called it a draft Bill because it is quite clear that the Government itself is not entirely clear as to its aims, objects or reasons for the Bill.

When one looks at the reasons "to provide assistance to small farmers"... I thought that we had a Ministry of Agriculture that did that. I was always under that impression that there are large numbers of people employed in the Ministry of Agriculture to provide assistance to small farmers and the problem has been, over the past 20 years, to employ those people as productively as possible.

The Bill also talks about giving assistance to cottage industries in rural areas. As far as I am aware, going back to the IDC and its successors, over the past 30 years that was being done by an agency of government which I believe still has the responsibility to carry on those operations. As far as I know, there is nothing that prevents the Ministry of Agriculture or the organisations which are successor to the IDC from carrying out the functions as set out there in this Bill.

"(d) to allocate land under the control of Government to persons desirous of farming;"

I believe this has already been done again and again. So I have a problem, Sir, and

"(c) To provide assistance to small farmers in the areas of

(i) agricultural training and investment; (ii)

equipment and machinery." I believe that all these things are already being done.

I gather that part of the functions of this Commission is to provide roads. What are we going to do with

the Minister of Transport? What role is he going to play? Part of his function is to provide electricity to rural areas. Are we going to have another Light and Power company? Is there going to be a different relationship between the Government and the Barbados Light and Power Company in respect of the provision of these services in rural areas? Part of his function is to provide running water and I believe that the Barbados Water Authority already provides that service.

Really, Sir, I do have a problem. Now I do understand that what they are doing here today fulfills a pledge of the Barbados Labour Party, oral and written. The words in here are intended to put into a Bill before Parliament the words in the Barbados Labour Party's manifesto. Beyond that there is the question of what is the Commission going to do? I heard quite clearly the Minister of Agriculture say that it would be the primary policy making body in relation to these matters.

I always was under the impression that under our Constitution that the Cabinet of Barbados was the primary policy making body and I am reluctant to be in any way party to any position which runs so fundamentally in conflict with the basic tenets of the Constitution of Barbados. I think that all parliamentarians should be concerned about this.

The reality is this, Sir. This is just another body being formed. I do not see how it can have any authority that can be superior to either the Cabinet or any executive ministers. It can only function, if it is going to function at all, as some kind of coordinating body to help highlight problems or something like that. I do not see how it can do anything more than that. So this business of giving it powers to borrow money and this kind of thing is a matter of concern and this matter of envisaging money being voted by Parliament... 12.40 p.m.

Asides.

Mr. SPEAKER: Please! Order please.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: In this matter of money being voted by Parliament for this Commission I would be a lot happier when people who are actually spending the money voted by Parliament are inside this Parliament, answerable to Members in here on a day-to-day basis.

My concern, Sir, is whether or not this Commission does more than provide for a body which would help to highlight the problems and coordinate efforts to deal with the residual problems in the rural areas.

Now, if that is what the Government is saying, that is a different matter altogether. That is not what we were told

here in this Honourable House. We were told something completely different. In fact what we were told would to a large extent render the Minister responsible for Housing, the Minister responsible for Agriculture, the Minister responsible for Public Works, the Minister responsible for Transport, render all these persons substantially irrelevant in terms of their responsibilities to rural Barbados. Therefore I think there needs to be a reconceptualisation of the function of this commission and if the conceptualisation is what was presented to this Parliament by the Minister who would have executive authority for its functioning then I say that conceptualisation is fundamentally wrong.

Now, Sir, the second point I want to make is this. We can propagandise as much as we like about rural Barbados. Everybody from time to time can come and make all kinds of fantastic statements, promises and what not but the reality is that at the end of the day we have to see these things translate into action that leads to an improvement of the people.

Now I have heard Members today complain of the situations in certain rural areas in Barbados and the general state of depression in those areas. Again I form the impression that there is an attempt to blame one side or the other for what has happened in those areas. The reality is that all of us in this Parliament over the years must accept some degree of responsibility for neglect that followed 1951 and which has not yet been remedied. That is the reality that we have to face when we are dealing with rural Barbados and when we are dealing with these things because all of us would have had the opportunity at some point in time to deal with it and it was not dealt with. I believe, Sir, that some of us in person and two of the political parties who have held office.... so I do not want to go down that road, I just want to face reality.

I believe that this is not dealing with the root of the problem. I am convinced beyond a shadow of doubt that the time has come in Barbados for the reintroduction of community based local government in this country where the people in the rural areas would be empowered politically and they can demand the resources in order to control their destinies and do the kinds of things that we want done. That is the only way it is going to be done.

This Commission, Sir, and I am trying to put the best possible construction on it, is like a quarter way house towards that objective, an attempt to pinch away a little of the powers of central government to place it in the hands of people not elected by the people in the rural areas in the hope that in that way central government would be focussed, through this Commission, more definitively on the problems of the rural areas. But this is not dealing with the problem. The problem is more fundamental than that and the problem is that those people need to be

politically empowered. Unless they are politically empowered to demand their share of the resources of this country through local community based government, it is not going to have the results which I believe is the basic objective of this piece of legislation.

I believe, Sir, that it is rooted in the belief that it is difficult as a central government to harness its executive ministries in such a way that they can bring their combined focus to deal on the rural problem. That is why, if we are going to make any sense today, this is why I think this piece of legislation is here before us, the fundamental reason that it is here.

The fundamental reason is not putting in place manifesto promises or anything like that, the fundamental reason is a recognition that there needs to be a new effort to coordinate those services offered by the various Ministries in such a way that the rural communities could benefit maximally.

Therefore, Sir, I take this opportunity today to make a plea for all Members of this Parliament and all members of the public of Barbados to join in the demand for the urgent reintroduction in Barbados of local community based government.

Now, Sir, all the wonderful statements I have heard about bringing tourism to the rural areas, bringing better housing, bringing better roads, other facilities, the statement, Sir, about trying to link up the area between Pico Teneriffe, probably going right around across to Sam Lord's Castle, open up that area of Barbados into environmentally friendly access to the development process in tourism, the way to do it is through local community based government.

I sincerely hope, Mr. Speaker, that this Bill would be regarded as purely a temporary measure on the way to the reintroduction of community based local government as was espoused in this Honourable House again and again by the Honourable Member for Christ Church South. I am expecting him today to rise in this place and give support to this call. Now, Mr. Speaker, I have learned that when one has made a significant contribution, one must never dilute it by speaking for any length of time thereafter. So, Mr. Speaker, I will not be dealing with Scotland District issues today. I will not be dealing with landless farmers problems today. I will not be dealing with sea capital problems. I will not be dealing with any of those problems today less the crucial point that I have made today be lost. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. 12.50 p.m.

SUSPENSION OF SITTING

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Sir, I move that this sitting be now suspended until 2.00 p.m.

Hon. Miss H. E. THOMPSON: I beg to second that, Sir.

The question that this Honourable House be now suspended until 2 o'clock was put and resolved in the affirmative without division, and Mr. SPEAKER suspended the sitting accordingly. 12.52 p.m.

RESUMPTION

Mr. SPEAKER: This sitting is resumed. The Honourable Member for St. Joseph.

Dr. R. L. CHELTENHAM: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I was glad to see the Honourable Member for SL James North back in his seat after a short break from Parliament due to his imposition. I was particularly glad to hear the enthusiasm with which he introduced this measure which means a great deal to us in the Barbados Labour Party and we hope ultimately to the people of rural Barbados. I feel however that there is some slight evidence that he is not as well as we would hope because there was some evidence that he suffered from a slight bout of amnesia in so far as he misattributed the concept to the Honourable Member for Christ Church West and not to the Honourable Member for St. Joseph. I think it is fairly safe to say, Sir, that in his enthusiasm in presenting the Bill he showed some signs of inadequately conceptualizing the whole notion and so opened himself to the criticism which was validly made by the last speaker that it is really a coordinated mechanism. It was not conceived as an agency to replace the Barbados Water Authority, Barbados Housing Authority or the Ministry of Transport and Works or anything of the sort and I think that that criticism was validly made against the Honourable mover of the Bill.

I think that as it was conceived we would expect that some of the budget given to the Commission will from time to time find itself supplementing the budget for example for the Ministry of Transport and Works that would be asked to deliver a specific number of roads in specific areas. In short, the Commission will work in partnership with existing agencies and it will work as a coordinated body to deliver the services of which he spoke and which are badly needed.

Let me go back to identify at least two of the factors that informed me as I articulated the notion about 8 or 9 years ago and thought to have it reflected in the 1981 Manifesto of the Barbados Labour Party and again in 1994. When I was the Minister of Agriculture way back in the period of 1981 and 1986, the Barbados Labour Party started a programme of rural development largely conceived in many areas of rural Barbados. It was a pilot project and we still have the evidence of it in Sturges

in St Thomas, Gibbons Boggs in Christ Church, Headings and Marchfield in St. Philip and in one or two other parts of Christ Church and certainly one or two areas in St. George. That programme introduced secondary roads in many of the agricultural areas that were about so as to facilitate the introduction of agricultural inputs and the carrying out of the produce. We introduced an irrigation system in those areas and also a credit system and a marketing facility. They were the four components of that system and it immediately brought economic activity and life and light to those communities. So it occurred to me when after 1986 I was invited to be the Barbados Labour Party's candidate in the St. Joseph constituency when I saw the extent to which there existed a disparity in the level of services between urban Barbados and rural Barbados that it would be a good thing if we could enlarge that portion that we had put into effect in the many parts of Barbados that I have identified.

The second factor that influenced me in trying to conceive this notion is the fact that I was shocked even though I had lived all my years in Barbados except for the years I studied abroad with the sharp disparity in the level and the scope of services that exist in rural Barbados as opposed to coastal Barbados between the South and West Coast and generally in urban Barbados. Take for instance my reference to my constituency of St. Joseph. There is not a single Government sponsored, Government provided playing field or pavilion. Not a single one in the entire constituency of St. Joseph and there are many parts of urban Barbados where the young people have difficulty of choice evening after evening whether to go two miles to the left or a mile and a half to the right to go to a community centre, playing field with a pavilion attached. You can walk length and breadth in the constituency of St. Joseph which touches three parishes of parts of St. John, St. Thomas, St. Andrew and you do not have one single playing field provided by the Government or a community centre with pavilion attached.

We can continue to illustrate this disparity in the level of services by reference to the quality of roads which were rightly identified by the Honourable Member for St. James North about the fact that it is a question of degree. Because as he rightly said *sotto voce*, there are parts of urban Barbados where we still have pockets of poverty too and depression. But it is a matter of degree and there are still too many people relatively speaking in rural Barbados who have to go to the back of the yard to attend to functions of nature. The housing stock in rural Barbados is still relatively speaking too depressed in relation to that in urban Barbados and the same can be said of the number of street lights and the level of sanitation and all of the rest 2.10 p.m.

When we reflect, almost all the roads in Barbados ever since the 1930s - certainly in 1937 there was a big debate as to whether the roads in St. Andrew and St. Lucy should be transferred from the Vestry system to the Central Road Board - but by the end of the 30s almost all the roads, certainly the main roads, in Barbados had been transferred from the Vestry system to the Central Road Board, which in subsequent years became the Ministry of Transport and Works. Notwithstanding that, Mr. Speaker, it is true to say that the Ministry has done an outstanding job. There were times in the not too distant past when in a two or three-year period 100 tenantry roads would have been repaired, resurfaced or provided, so there has been good going and it has happened both in our administration and in the administration of the Democratic Labour Party. But notwithstanding that, the heroic efforts that have been made to provide these services across Barbados, we still have a situation where the disparity is too great.

It occurred to me that we needed a policy focus concentrated in a Ministry and so I made the call then, and the Honourable Member for St. Michael West will remember there was a time when I overused the technique of repetition in calling for a Ministry of Rural Development, and I would be asked whether I did not have any other speeches to make in Parliament. He would remember that very well indeed, Mr. Speaker. I am glad that in a short period of eight to nine years that idea has reached the point where today we are at the stage of introducing a Bill to establish the Rural Development Commission, because when you look back at what has happened in this country in the last 50 years or more, Mr. Speaker, it was in 1937 for example that the railway in Barbados came to an end following the report of a Commission by a gentleman who was brought out from England - he had served in Nigeria - a Mr. Gland, and following the Gland Report in 1937 the railway was closed. It was part of his recommendation that an east coast road be provided and it took from 1937 until 1964 or thereabout before the East Coast Road was commenced.

Looking back we see that when the Deep Water Harbour was constructed in Barbados the idea had been actively discussed in this country for some 50 years before the work commenced. The point I am making is that it is rare for an idea to be put into the public domain within a period of seven or eight years for it to reach the point when it begins to be implemented, and so I am happy indeed that we have reached this point in eight short years when this notion, which I conceived, articulated and fathered, should come to Parliament in the form of this Commission.

But I fear that the Honourable Minister might have somewhat confused the means with the objective. To that extent he opened himself to very legitimate criticism

as was made by the last Honourable Member. We need to see the Commission in broad terms and so the provision of water borne toilet facilities would only be a means to the broader end of ensuring that there is a more equitable distribution of resources between rural Barbados and urban Barbados. It might only be a means to the broader end of ensuring that we have one Barbados and we are small enough as a country to work towards the goal of ensuring one Barbados and not a Barbados in which there is a sharp dichotomy between the urban area and the rural area in terms of the provision of public services. It would only be a means to the larger end of trying to arrest the drift of young and more affluent people from rural Barbados to urban Barbados, and that is a particular problem in the constituency of St Joseph. That explains, Mr. Speaker, why it is that we have had to draw the boundaries for electoral purposes across four parishes in order to constitute one constituency, the constituency of St Joseph, because the young people are not at all happy to be living in areas that remain in relative darkness. They do not feel proud inviting their friends to come to see them. In fact, their friends have, in some instances, difficulty getting to them and so many people in St. Joseph as soon as they can do better move out to the Heights and the Terraces in parts of urban St. George, in St. Philip, in St. James and Christ Church. So there has been a particular drift of people away from St Joseph into other parts of Barbados.

If I had anything to do with the definition of the objectives, I would have been concerned to see written into the Bill something that would go like this:

"to ensure as much as possible a uniform level of services and development between rural Barbados and urban Barbados;

to ensure that one Barbados will be created rather than two;

to halt the drift of persons from rural Barbados to urban Barbados;

to ensure a more equitable distribution of public resources, be it rural Barbados or urban Barbados."

I would also have been concerned to make the point, Mr. Speaker, that the role of the agency would to a large extent be a co-ordinated one. I think it is important to make that point, because if one reads the Bill as it is, one gets the impression that there will be considerable replacement and/or duplication, that is to say, that the Rural Development Commission will take over some of the responsibilities of the Barbados Water Authority; that it will take away some of the responsibilities of the National Housing Corporation; that as far as job creation is concerned it will take over some of the responsibilities of

the Skills Training Institute, and so on. All, in truth and in fact, as I conceive it and as I understood it, this body would be doing is focussing in a concentrated way on the problems which we have identified and working in partnership, in harmony, in co-ordination with existing agencies ensure that there is a speedier delivery of the services which are needed in those areas, so that within a defined time period we could move to a position where you may be proud living in Dark Hole, St Joseph much the same way as you would live in Ruby Park. That the same level of services that exist in Ruby Park, that are available there, will generally speaking be available to people in St. Joseph in the area of Dark Hole and other depressed communities across rural Barbados.

I think, Mr. Speaker, there can be no doubt that this vehicle is needed, there can be no doubt that over the years the Ministry of Transport and Works, even though it has done an outstanding job, has not somehow got around to providing these services in some of the depressed communities in rural Barbados. To that extent it was necessary for a concentrated policy focus for an institution that would attract a budget and working in harmony and co-ordination with existing agencies, to offset their budgets to ensure that specific jobs are done in particular areas in rural Barbados. That has been the thinking behind the establishment of the Rural Development Commission.

The last Honourable Member who spoke makes the point that in truth and in fact what we need to do is to empower the people of rural Barbados by returning to some form of local government, and I took that into account as I thought through this notion ten years or so ago. The real truth is that it was in the 60s that we abolished local government completely in this country. It had become expensive and the argument that a small country like Barbados really does not need two tiers of Government, even though there is support both in this House and in the main political parties for a return to some form of local government, I don't think there is any agreement as to precisely the shape and form it should take, and I think that viewpoint is not widely shared by people of Barbados. So it might take a few more years of promotion before we arrive at a point where we would want to return to a new form of local government, since we have moved from the old vestry system to the local government system, as was recommended by the Jackson Commission. 2.20 p.m.

What we think would be the form of local government in the future, I don't think we have thought through to the point where there is uniform support, both in political parties and without, for that system of local government, so that in truth and in fact this problem which we are addressing is urgent. We need to restore life and light and bring new forms of economic activity to

rural Barbados in a deliberate way. We cannot wait for the introduction of any form of local government before that takes place. To that extent, the measure is very much to be welcomed.

I want to say, and this point has been made by the Honourable Member for St. Lucy, that it is important too that we try to integrate rural Barbados into the tourism product of Barbados. We have the Scotland District, an area of matchless beauty. It represents the contrast in our tourism product between the West Coast and the South Coast and the East Coast.

We have to ensure as much as possible, and I had already started the work of ensuring, that the NCC begin the process of integrating rural Barbados into the tourism product. I think that this Commission should work closely with the NCC and the Tourism Authority and with the Ministry of Tourism too to ensure that rural Barbados, in particular the Scotland District, is integrated into the tourism product.

In Barbados, at the semi-finals, and increasingly at Crop Over, we see tourism oriented not only for the cultural expression of Barbados but for the benefit, too, of visitors and we were able to discover a few days ago, all of a sudden, that the Scotland District is a natural aquatic setting for the holding of an event of that nature. It was a very important discovery indeed. I think that that alone has strengthened this process of which I speak, integrating rural Barbados into the tourism product of the country.

I do not know why it is the Honourable Minister thought that this agency will in future be...

Mr. SPEAKER: Please! Let us hear the Honourable Member.

Dr. R. L. CHELTENHAM: This agency will in future be populated by members of the Civil Service as the ones likely at the outset to be the persons responsible for the management of this particular Commission. I myself do not think that that is particularly necessary and I would hope that we would cast the net so wide that we could get people without having to bring them from the Civil Service to do the job that has to be done.

It is an important job and I hope the Commission is properly staffed and persons will approach their work with a certain sense of urgency, because there can be no doubt that there are some tear-compelling pockets, let me put it that way, of depression and neglect in many parts of rural Barbados. I can illustrate that thesis by reference again and again to my own constituency and indeed others in neighbouring constituencies of St Andrew and St. Thomas and St John.

I want to conclude, Mr. Speaker, as indeed I began, by welcoming this measure. I thought it might have been more broadly and perhaps more accurately presented in terms of the history of the development of the idea; but that apart, there can be no doubt that it is more than politicking here. We are addressing an obvious need for those of us who know Barbados and who are acquainted with it in an intimate way with the problems of rural Barbados.

I can only hope, Sir, that the powers that be, and I am herewith referring to the Minister of Finance, that he will equip the Commission in such a way that it will have the financial resources as well as adequate and sufficient manpower.

Mr. L. R. TULL: Mr. Speaker, Sir, the Bill before the House speaks specifically, in clause 4, about the functions of the Commission which are in essence:

- (a) to facilitate road improvement and the lighting of streets in rural districts of the Island;
- (b) to provide housing and ancillary services including the installation of sanitary facilities in rural areas;
- (c) to provide assistance to small farmers..."

and also to provide land for persons who want to get into farming.

This is what this is all about, Sir, and I welcome it for that reason. There can be a number of fine speeches made about the dichotomy between the country and the town. I could speak with equal fluency on both as I come from town and I live and represent the country.

I want to say things that relate to my constituency because I don't want to get into any heavy debate. What has been happening in Barbados for a long time is that there has been a disproportionate allocation of resources of this country to St. Michael, coastal St. James, coastal Christ Church, and the rural agricultural belt of Barbados which incidentally has fed this country for all of 300 years and on whose backs the wealth of this country was produced, has always got a smaller share of the pie than places like St Michael and Christ Church and coastal St. James.

Any effort by any Administration to redress the imbalance has my full support So I am supporting this totally. I want to caution a few things though, Mr. Speaker. This Commission which is set up specifically to do these things may or may not turn out to be the best vehicle for what is to be achieved. It is not the programme that

is going to determine the success of rural projects. It is only the commitment of the persons who have the responsibility to discharge the programme, and I am worried about all the wrapping up of this Commission in red tape and civil service norms. I am inclined to the view that you have to give the communities some power.

The people up in Greens, Mr. Speaker, Sir, can clean up all the gutters and all the bush that is overgrowing halfway into the road in 2 or 3 days for 1/10th of the cost of the Ministry of Transport and Works. Why not put the money in the community and let those people in the community deal with their problems? Not only would they make sure that the place is cleaned more quickly and at a cheaper cost than a central Ministry but they would have a pride in their community because they have been given responsibility and resources to look after it.

I am inclined to the view of those who think that you have to decentralise this whole operation, if not we are going to have the same thinking and the same orientation that has prevailed all the time. The central government will behave the same way as it behaved all through the years and this programme which has been started with a great amount of expectation may find itself floundering on the civil service and central government rules and regimen. 2.30 p.m.

I want to say one other thing which I heard the Honourable Member for St Joseph mention before he sat down. My experience in Government has told me that the Minister of Finance can make any Minister look good. Of course the obverse to that is that the Minister of Finance can make any Minister look bad. If you provide the resources to a particular Ministry the Minister can appear to be really doing things and making things happen. I am hoping that the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development would be given the resources to do this job.

When we got the Government in 1976 we did a survey of all the homes in Barbados that did not have electricity and all the homes that did not have running water and we aggressively attacked this problem but there are still some pockets left, certainly in my constituency - and I am not even speaking of the rest of Barbados now - where modest resources can change all that.

We have a situation, Sir, where the Barbados Labour Party administration in those days started the Tenancies Freehold Purchase Act which brought a whole new vista across Barbados. All across rural Barbados, Sir, in the plantation tenancies we have seen the quality of life of the people change dramatically. Where there were a lot of old chattel houses propped up on stone with out-houses, we have seen a transformation in the plantation tenancies in Barbados because of the far-sighted approach of the

Barbados Labour Party Government at that period passing the Tenancies Freehold Purchase Act.

When the Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central was talking today, Sir, he brought back to mind the same kind of debating inanities that obtained in that debate back in 1979 when we brought the Act before Parliament. The Democratic Labour Party, in opposition in those days, hid behind a lot of constitutional and legal technicalities, seeking to deny the people who lived on the plantation tenancies in the country, the opportunity to own the land that they were living on for 300 years and to be able to improve their quality of life, like building homes and getting services and various amenities.

They took the same position, a lot of foolish, meaningless, constitutional technicalities which they have never sought to challenge in the courts because they would be laughed out of court and rather than look at the bigger picture of how the people in those areas would have been having their lives transformed, they ran into all these technicalities. I am hearing the same kind of quibbling coming today from the Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central. He would not deal with the substance of what this is trying to achieve. The only thing he has said and I applaud him

Sir, he and I do not agree on many things, but only when he

Aside.

Mr. L. R. TULL: I know that you are all friends, but he says he does not want you.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, the only thing that I am totally in agreement with is the whole issue of the decentralization, to give the empowerment to the communities. I am not talking about local Government now, Sir, I am talking about empowering communities to look after themselves and feel that they are part of this powerful thing called participatory democracy that falls so freely off the lips of Honourable Members, like the Honourable Member for St. John.

Aside.

Mr. SPEAKER: Please, let us continue orderly.

Mr. L. R. TULL: A rose by any other name is just as sweet. I do not care what it is called, Sir, it will give communities in Barbados a chance to have a direct say in their own governance.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, I want to use this opportunity to tell the Government that I feel extremely happy over the

final decision not to close the factory at Bulkeley. Now this is critical to the whole area of rural development. A Government that sits down secretly and agree to close Bulkeley factory so that they can borrow \$20 million from the Caribbean Development Bank is a Government that really has sold the people of St George and rural Barbados short.

Aside.

Mr. L. R. TOLL: What Government do you think that I am talking about? That Government that sat down secretly and did not tell the workers at Bulkeley anything. They did not tell me, as the representative of the people, living in the area, anything. They did not tell the public of Barbados anything but they sat down and came to a secret agreement to close the factory at Bulkeley. They were insensitive to the problems of unemployment. They would have put a lot of people in St George out of work. Not only the people who work at Bulkeley but the vendors, the shopkeepers, all the people who benefit from the presence of Bulkeley in St. George and its importance as an institution in that part of the island. They were prepared, Sir, with great indifference, to shut down the factory and move away from it and not care about what happened in that area. I want to hear them on rural development because we are now talking about rural development in a holistic way where I am hearing all about tourism development and so on. The people in my constituency are not too concerned about any tourism development in St. George. They are interested in the general improvement of the quality of their living.

A study was done, Sir, a few months ago on the state and condition of the roads in Barbados. The people who did the study were looking for the number of unpaved roads in Barbados and I say, Sir, with great deal of shame, since I have been representing my constituency for a number of years, that the report says that St. George was the least developed in terms of paved roads, of any parish in Barbados and particularly the Southern part of St. George.

I know I am batting on a good wicket now, -Sir, because with all these facts. I am expecting that a Government that is sufficiently progressive to see that it is time that in 1995 for the historical imbalance between town and country to be corrected. 2.40 p.m.

Aside.

Mr. L. R. TULL: I represent the people of St. George, Mr. Speaker, and in that process I will say what I have to say for them. But I am hoping that a Government that has had the courage, foresight and the good sense in 1995 to

seek to correct this imbalance will deal with the areas that most deserve to be treated well. So therefore the people of St. George will be watching and waiting and confidently expecting that they have now come into the kingdom.

Now I want to mention one or two things very quickly because I did not want to speak at any great length on this matter. I think it was the English poet, Goldsmith. Is he the one who said:

'111 fears the land to hasten ills a prey
where wealth accumulate and men decay.'

The Honourable Member for St. Philip South knows these things. We have a problem in rural Barbados where the demise of the small farmer is no longer imminent. It is a reality. People who own small lots of agricultural land in Barbados can no longer make a living out of agriculture for all kinds of reasons which I need not go into at this stage since we debate them on a regular basis.

I want, Mr. Speaker, Sir, as the Government embarks on a new and attractive programme to seek to what extent they can concentrate again on two areas that I am recommending to them. One is the development of the agricultural cooperatives which used to be a regular feature in rural Barbados and which had a slow and somewhat painful death. I believe that the Government should do what it can to revive the agricultural cooperatives that looked after the interest of the small farmers in Barbados for many decades in this country in providing services such as transportation and plowing and the whole work range of agricultural services. They did not have to rely on the services of the Agricultural Extension Services. Where the community used to look after itself. I remember the one in Ellerton, St. George and the one who formed the leadership of that cooperative and I knew what they did on a daily basis because I was very involved and by the time that cooperative died small farming in St. George died. I am not talking about dairy farming. There is still some of that with some vegetables, but generally the growing of crops in Barbados fell off considerably with the demise of the agricultural cooperative.

One other thing that I am bringing to the attention of the Government and the Minister is the question of the provision of land under the control of Government to persons desirous of farming. I have an interesting situation. I have a group of fellows who sit down around a corner in St. George. I am not going to identify the corner at this moment, but I go there sometimes during the day and see large numbers of them and they constantly raise the question with me, and it relates to nothing more important than the selling of nuts. They tell me exactly how much money they have to pay for a bag of nuts at an

alley behind my office in Spry Street. They are saying that in the meantime all across this country and they called out every district where there is land lying idle, and they say that we can grow the nuts. Why cannot the Government make it available to us so that we could produce these things for ourselves? I only mention this as one example because there are several examples of that kind. I am saying, Sir, that the Governments must stop talking like I have been hearing them talk for the past 20 years about making land available to persons so that they can benefit and the community can benefit. It is time that we stop talking about it and start an aggressive programme of allocation of land to persons who are presently idle to see whether we can reverse some of the same decline that we are talking about in the countryside.

I am saying, Sir, that idle hands and idle lands can make an extremely potent force if they are brought together. I would really like the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development not to get himself caught up with a lot of feasibility studies and a lot of papers written by a lot of technocrats but to go up to SL George with some marlin and rope and let me help him mark out some of the spots for him and let me call some fellows together to meet him at a corner so that they can say that he can say that piece there. Start working on it and they can start from Monday morning. I understand that they are providing seed money. So they are going to give the money to do the initial work and I understand the money is already available because in the Estimates of Expenditure for this year a figure of \$3 million or something like that is set aside. That money like the land is lying idle. While Nero is fiddling Rome is burning. We could spend this money in St. George.

I read in an Official Gazette yesterday relating to the regulations under the Financial Intermediaries Bill a whole set of names published by one of the commercial banks in Bridgetown of accounts that have not been active within the last ten years. One of the accounts that I read with great interest is one of the Southern District Council where over \$260 000 have been lying there. The Southern District Council, Mr. Speaker, was disbanded in the 1960's and there is still lying around in a commercial bank in Bridgetown with \$260 000 which nobody seems to want. I am just wondering if the Government..

Aside.

Mr. L. R. TULL: My friend from Christ Church East would like to have it, Sir. There is a place called Waterford that when I was a boy nobody used to easily walk through Waterford Bottom after 6 o'clock and both sides of the road were covered with cane. If we can get this money, Sk, things could happen up in the area of Waterford and all around the constituency that you represent, Mr. Speaker. So we are not going to leave you out of this. This is a

programme for the country and some parts of St. Michael are rural. I was born in rural St. Michael, Sir, so I know of what I speak. I did not intend to speak very long on this matter, Sir, because I have other things to speak on.

Mr. SPEAKER: You are doing well in Waterford. That is okay.

Mr. L. R. TULL: I am doing well in Waterford. As they say, a word to the wise is enough so I do not need to speak anymore.

Now I want to deal with one or two other things very quickly. As I said, this debate is about social amenities among other things. Now it was not the pattern over the years to put street lights in the country. More and more they are doing it but there are vast tracks of St. George which have no street lights. As I was pointing out to some Honourable Members during the break, every time that there is a jail break at Glendairy they all run into St. George. We have had a problem in recent times that is fairly new for us up there, Sir, where we have been having a number of armed robberies and that kind of thing in the Market Hill area and in the Newbury area and so on. So things have changed. 2.50 p.m.

The days when old people in the country could walk down the street to church and walk between fields of canes and nobody would trouble them are over, Sir. Security in the country is as important as security in urban and suburban Barbados, and therefore I am asking that the Ministry of Rural Development meet with the representatives, the Members of Parliament, of the rural constituencies. You notice, Mr. Speaker, I am not being partisan, I am including Members of Parliament of rural constituencies who are on the other side. Let us sit down and detail for the Ministry the specific concerns of the people of those constituencies, the complaints that we have been getting on an almost daily basis and the very special needs of those people, because we cannot put off any longer the effort by Government, and indeed the whole community, to bring rural Barbados into the mainstream of the good life that is Barbados.

I want to say, Sir, as I am about to take my seat, that it is the Honourable Member for St. Joseph who, when he first showed an interest in running for St. Joseph after we got wiped out in 1986, when he went up to St. Joseph and he saw the way in which the people in rural Barbados were living, as compared with those in the area which he was representing before, he said we could not continue this, that there seemed to be two Barbadoses. This two Barbados concept I heard him with.

Aside.

Mr. L. R. TOLL: This has nothing to do with credit, I am speaking the truth as I see it. He came up with this two Barbados concept and began to articulate an argument for the development of the country in an aggressive way it had not been before.

I want to say, Sir, as I am about to sit, that the Barbados Labour Party has done very well so far in addressing the needs of rural Barbados. The Honourable Member for St. Lucy would have us believe that all the great things that happened in rural Barbados happened under the administration of the Democratic Labour Party. I am not going to get into the partisan dialogue at this stage, all I am saying is that this Government has done reasonably well in the development of facilities for rural Barbados, and I believe now that this is the decisive difference that I heard about so much in the last year. The decisive difference will be in four years' time when I am able to go into my constituency, St. George South, and meet the people of Drax Hall, Todds, Jordans, Windsor Hill, Hannahs Valley, Monroe Village, Drax Hall Hope, Woodland, when I am able to go in four years' time and meet those people and say to them: "Free at last!" The rains are falling and it is difficult. You see in the newspaper from time to time. The last few weeks I saw it for Champion Castle in my constituency, the newspaper people go up there and take photographs of people skidding around in the mud and the big pools of water in the road, and the complaints that nothing has been done in one administration or the other. The decisive difference, Mr. Speaker, I will expect to see in four years' time when I walk into all those districts and see that the people have said: "At last we have had a Government that has realised that we too are Barbadians and that we deserve to have a part of the natural patrimony."

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. W. C. C. CALLENDER: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I hope it does not appear inappropriate that I am rising to speak on rural development.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: On a point of order, Sir. I believe it is 3 o'clock. This is Private Members' Time.

Mr. SPEAKER: I believe the Standing Orders were suspended. The Honourable Member for Christ Church East, please.

Mr. W. C. C. CALLENDER: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I recall when I went to school in town that the boys from St. Lucy, St. Peter, St. George, St. Philip and Christ Church we were known as the country boys. We were the rural people of Barbados. I am saying this, because I want to place in context what rural development is all about, what we are talking about when we speak of rural development.

Before I define the exact areas, I want to lodge at my definition of rural development. It is a strategy designed to improve the economic and social life of a specific group of people, the rural poor. It involves extending the benefits of development to the poorest among those who seek a livelihood in the rural areas. This group includes small farmers, tenants and the landless. Sir, the dichotomy exists where we have a situation that because of the size of this country it is difficult sometimes to distinguish between rural and urban. We heard earlier comments being made of the urban sections of St. George, which shows you the kind of difficulty we have in deciding what is urban and what is rural. I therefore think we need to highlight the fact that we are focussing on the poor who traditionally have been deprived of essential services which could help them to provide a better livelihood for themselves. So that when I speak of rural development, I am not just speaking in terms of agriculture, roads, lights and housing, I am speaking of the total development of the poor. I am speaking in an era when agriculture itself is under strain, when small farmers are finding it difficult to make a good living from farming. We have difficulties with water, and those areas where you do not have irrigation you find that some small farmers have to use ordinary water illegally, water which is in relatively scarce supply.

We have a situation, Sir, where the youth are moving away from traditional forms of agriculture. The challenge therefore is one of deciding in 1995 and onwards where the real development for the poor will lie. In essence, what will constitute rural development moving into the 21st century, and therefore I am saying we need not confine ourselves to merely looking at agriculture as we know it, but we need to look at new ways of addressing agriculture. In this regard a lot of research will be necessary to determine the forms of agriculture which the youth will be attracted to, the forms of agriculture which can earn a livelihood for the poor of this country. I would like to suggest that this Commission would include looking at a mixture of economic activities, which I alluded to already, as including cultural activities. 3.00 p.m.

At this point, Sir, I want to refer to a discussion I had yesterday on Saturday with one of my constituents, a German-born community counsellor called Tina Puckering who in looking at the development of youth, essentially at rural development pointed out that we need to look at such things as having entertainment packages, facilitating entertainment so that the kinds of things that would be done in Pinelands where you can develop a group to beat drums and do dance and you can bring the tourists who would pay a small fee and who at the same time would eat some of the native food such as this guy who is now campaigning against the dump, Julian Hunte, something like what he used to do where he used to take around

the tourists and they used to eat the local food. I believe, Sir, that we could gear things so that the tourists can be entertained by the locals in the community, they can eat the local food and at the same time this would provide employment for the rural poor of this country.

The development of culture clubs will therefore be essential so that these clubs can hopefully put on events of similar nature to the semi-finals and the Party Monarch competition where people could be encouraged to come and watch these people put on large-scale entertainment and cultural activities. Sir, I believe that this is the direction in which we will be forced to go if we are to look meaningfully at the rural development in this country.

In the discussion with Miss Puckering, she also pointed out we could look at bike shops, repairing motor bikes, bicycles, computer workshops and we can train youngsters in graphics, word processing, doing newspapers and newsletters. We can have mini fashion stores where you have sewing classes and you can make clothes that locals and tourists can wear. You can have joinery shops where people can come and learn how to do joinery and where they can sell their products.

I believe that if we can head in this direction rural development will have meaning. It would require community leadership and I believe that leadership that comes naturally from the community is the real leadership and an imposed bureaucracy or unnecessarily traditional political structure superimposed on it will not necessarily derive the kind of results which a community-based organisation can provide because the community will feel that it is part of the process which empowers them and makes them feel that they are doing something for the good of themselves and for their community.

What would happen then is that the Rural Development Commission would have to look at the training of leaders in the community, not only at the training of the leaders but at the training of people who would teach these people joinery, the computer skills, in life skills so that their lives can become more meaningful so that they can benefit by these activities.

I heard mention being made of \$200 000 in the southern district council and that gives me an idea that these kinds of community projects can do well if they can be funded with funds such as those.

Asides.

Mr. W. C. C. CALLENDER: This money which can be shared to provide the kind of training opportunities, the community training and the kind of facilities that are

necessary would do well to develop the rural poor who reside not only in Checker Hall in St. Lucy but who reside in Gall Hill, in Parish Land and in Fairview as well.

Sir, I support a rural development commission but I believe that it has to be conceptualised in such a way that it looks forward to the results that it can get into the 21st century and not necessarily using historical experience in order to develop its programme. It can use it as a guide but one has to have a vision and look at the world economy and one has to look at the reality of the situation in Barbados where after structural adjustment with limited funds one cannot expect that the central government would have the money it would have had before to put into these things.

Therefore training has to be done in such a way that the communities would then become independent and that they will then become intra-dependent in such a way that the economies will benefit from their programme. It would be a matter of providing for these people so that they can provide for themselves and become independent and inter-dependent and not have to put out their hands to the central government for everything that they would want.

I believe that financial institutions would welcome a programme such as this because it would indicate that a poor country like Barbados can through its own conceptual skills put programmes in place that can bring pride and joy to the rural people of this country and at the same time can help them to be self-sufficient.

The Rural Development Programme obviously has to include the provision of electricity in those areas that have none and the provision of a suitable rural network in those areas which are inaccessible similar to those spoken about by the Honourable Member for St. George South. I therefore reach out to those people in places like St. George who for years have had to walk through all the mud and cannot go out at night because they don't have proper roads to walk on. This has to be addressed but I am saying that the programme must address the issue of road improvement in a context where it is looking at a total package of developing communities in such a way that they can sustain themselves.

In essence, Sir, we are looking at empowering communities and I think that today Sir, we are perhaps on our way to deal with the real empowerment that some people have been speaking about for years but it does not come with talk, it comes with action. It comes with our understanding that this is a modern Barbados, a Barbados which must develop new strategies, new institutions and new approaches to deal with old problems. We, as a group in this House, can put our heads together to make this a brighter and a better Barbados. 3.10 p.m.

Sir, the vision of this programme perhaps started some years ago with the Tenancies Freehold Purchase Act and the Tenancies Development Act which at that time provided the development of rural agriculture with such things as roads and the normal essential services in areas where people did not have them. It provided those poor people with the ability to get their own homes on their plot of land in the areas where they worked in helping to develop plantation Barbados.

I spoke earlier, Sir, about irrigation. I spoke about water and the need for water. In that connection I want to talk about irrigation which is necessary in agriculture. We are talking about specialised agriculture, something which needs to be looked at and it could only be done if serious research is carried out to discover the kind of agriculture which can bring meaningful benefits, where we can export our crops, where people can get involved with the spin off cottage industry that comes out of agriculture.

In relation to irrigation, Sir, it has been discovered that those people who can afford it have been able to get it. It is fairly expensive to install irrigation systems. The Government has, over the years, been giving assistance to people who have been putting in their own by giving them refunds and so on but this irrigation development has become very expensive. This is the reality and it will take a great deal of money to irrigate the places where we need to place irrigation. This means that we are faced with the situation of determining the kind of agricultural projects that can serve a meaningful purpose in rural Barbados.

I believe that the technicians in the Ministry of Agriculture have their role cut out for them where they have to look at Barbados into the twenty-first century. When we talk about agriculture some people feel that we are talking about just planting a corn or a yam or just planting some canes and as such anybody should know about that. I am of a different view, Sir. My view is well known. Agriculture is a serious thing. It is serious business and therefore it is time for the experts to come out in their numbers otherwise we will suffer. I need to make that point. This is time that we take the economy of Barbados seriously and position people who have the necessary expertise in critical areas such as agriculture in the interest of this country.

We are serious about agriculture, Sir, and the technicians in the Ministry of Agriculture have to start doing work so that you can have a future 'secure. The people out there in the private sector or wherever they are who know about agriculture should be discovered and they should be put to work. We are behaving as if this is just business as usual. When I ran in 1994, Sir, I did not believe it was business as usual and it is not business as usual now, Sir. The economy is not only under the hands

of Jehovah or Jesus Christ, Sir. They will not do everything for us, Sir. We have to do for ourselves and they will help us if we try. We are not going to sit back and allow ineptitude to cause this country to sink.

Sir, this Rural Development Commission, as I understand it, will not operate in a vacuum. My understanding, Sir, is that it will be working in conjunction with a number of Ministries and a number of government agencies and non governmental organisations which will facilitate rural development in this country.

Among the agencies which will be involved in this programme will be the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, the Ministry of Transport, Works and Housing, the Ministry of Community Development, the Ministry of Education and Culture, the Ministry of Health, the Barbados Agricultural Society, the Division of Women's Affairs, the National Cultural Foundation, the Small Business Association, the National Youth Council, all of these organisations, Sir, will assist this Commission in ensuring that the necessary services are provided.

I wish to make the point that it will not just be a commission by itself. The Commission as I understand it will be a coordinating body. What it therefore means is ...

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

Mr. W. C. C. CALLENDER: What it therefore means is that both the Government agencies and the non governmental agencies will have to give the necessary support in order for this new development programme to work as efficiently as it should so that the Rural Development Commission would be a catalyst...

Mr. SPEAKER: Just one minute, please! Let us hear the Honourable Member.

Mr. W. C. C. CALLENDER: Sir, the Rural Development Commission would be a catalyst for ensuring that the livelihood of the rural poor is assured in times when we need to look at increasing employment and providing opportunities for people to make a better living for themselves.

Sir, I alluded earlier to the linkages with tourism and I therefore would believe that even the Barbados Tourism Authority would be involved in ensuring that rural development is as successful as it should be. In the development of rural industry, Members have spoken earlier about the Rural Enterprise Fund. I am not aware of how much money will be in this fund. 3.20 p.m.

Aside,

Mr. W. C. C. CALLENDER: Rural enterprises, business enterprises which will provide credit for people who are establishing businesses. These businesses, Sir, obviously will have to be given guidance so that they can effectively utilize the credit which they will get. As we know, there is no sense giving a man credit if he does not use the credit profitably. So that I believe that persons who get this credit will be given the kind of credit that they can use the credit in a wise way and also so that the projects that they choose to embark on will be ones that will be meaningful. There is also the need for raw materials, equipment, managerial skills, technical skills and also for research.

In regard to rural development, Sir, the use of equipment specialists will be necessary in cases where people are purchasing things like tractors and ploughs and so on. But I am not going to talk only about tractors and ploughs and so on. There are a number of modern technological devices now being used in agriculture to conserve blood and offal and those sort of things. I believe here again that the Ministry of the Environment would also be involved in assisting in the project so that in terms of conservation there can be projects that can be used and the necessary equipment to do this conservation would be put in place. But this can only be done if the specialists know about the necessary equipment that can be bought and where it can be bought and so on.

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

Mr. W. C. C. CALLENDER: Sir, I support this idea of a Rural Development Commission. I believe that it has scope for change in Barbados and for achieving what a lot of people have expressed over the years in many different ways. The idea is good. The execution however has to be given careful thought and it has to be given careful leadership so that it can effect the kind of change that we expect to see for the better of Barbados and particularly the rural poor of this country. Thank you.

Mr. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for St John.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I realize that it appears to me that those persons who have articulated this subject who represent rural constituencies have now spoken. Living myself in one, I was hoping that my parliamentary representative would have got up to put the case for the residents of St Philip North. But I am always happy to put it for them and the Honourable Member for St. Philip South. So I will assume the responsibility in speaking for my own constituency of St

John to also speak as a resident of St. Philip North in relation to rural development. Because I would not want this debate to have concluded without the very important case having been put because it needs to be put and I only regret that the Honourable Member did not feel compelled to speak in this debate.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, this has been a useful debate. I must say that the Honourable Member for St Joseph does need to be commended. And had he not done so himself, and I know he is a man who would not have any qualms about doing that, I must say that I had written at the top of my notes this morning when I heard the assertion by the Honourable Member for St James North that the idea of a major thrust in rural development came from the Honourable Member for Christ Church West. I thought it was almost a deathly blow to the Honourable Member for St Joseph who, although bloodied, he is not yet bowed and attempts to make him bow are not going to work. I say that because the Honourable Member for St Joseph consistently since he re-entered the House in 1991, during the Estimates debate, when we debated the Scotland District, whatever Bill it was and whenever we debated rural development even when it was not relevant of land acquisitions, and he even repeated the same speech I thought too often, it was an *ad nauseam* presentation from him. So it was an unkind assertion, though not intended, ungracious and I think in all fairness to the Honourable Member for St. Joseph he must take the credit for having mooted this issue for a long time. Of course, because of the pressures of the economic circumstances, I myself after 1991 was not in such an expansive mood or so unconstrained as to be able to make a case for rural development as he made it. So I sat and admired the tenacity with which he put the case.

I want to congratulate the Honourable Member for St. Lucy because I think that he grappled with the subject and brought to bear on his analysis, not superficialities about street lights and dark holes and anecdotal things, but he brought substance to the issue by talking about the quality of life of people living in rural areas. That quality of life does not rest on street lights alone. It does not rest on tenantry programmes which we have all been committed to, but it rests on the relationship of persons living in those areas to the economic resources immediately around them and; secondly, to empowerment

Now the Honourable Member for St Michael South Central has spoken about local Government. In our last manifesto, we spoke about the development of community councils and people have various concepts about how to empower people in communities. There is widespread acknowledgment that there is need to, re-empower in the case of those who were in favour of the previous attempts at local Government, or to empower citizens. I speak on behalf of those who do not feel that they are citizens

or have ever been empowered in their community but we accept that across the board. What mechanisms are going to achieve this? There is nothing in this Bill that speaks to the issue of empowerment of communities. In fact, this Bill is a piece of technicalities in providing housing. It is platitudes.

Aside.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Well, perhaps that is the best way to put it. Yes. The end result. But we need to speak to the broad principles. A member of this commission reading this Bill would feel that his job is really to provide housing and ancillary services, to facilitate road improvement and to provide assistance to small farmers. What you need to do is broaden his image of what his contribution is as a commissioner being part of the 10th commission which the Barbados Labour Party has established in a short 10 months. So we get a commission a month, Mr. Speaker, Sir, under this Government. The commissioners should come to their job with a broader vision about what is necessary to make a difference in rural Barbados. 3.30 p.m.

The second point I want to make is that it is a fallacy for the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development to believe that he can hide behind any Commission and shift the responsibility for what is necessary in relation to rural development in Barbados off his slender shoulders and on to the shoulders of nine men chosen by virtue of an Act, and then at the same time, Mr. Speaker, have a clause in this Bill which protects a Commission from suit even for things which the Minister would be legally responsible for if he were making policy. What has happened here is that a group of nine men and/or women are going to have more power and more immunity, if we were so misguided as to pass this legislation in its entirety, than the Minister himself.

The Minister is not immune or protected under any legislation in this country from prosecution or other proceedings brought or instituted against him in respect of any act *bona fide* in pursuance or execution or intended execution of this Bill, the Minister is answerable to the citizens of this country, not only at election time, but in the law courts of Barbados. Mr. Speaker, this is shifting the policy responsibility into the hands of nine people who are not accountable to anybody in this country except the Minister and enjoy greater privileges and immunities in relation to their duties than the Minister.

Mr. Speaker, this is a very important turning point in the history of this country, because this Bill also provides immunity in respect of any member of the Commission who may have a personal interest in a company or concern

with which the Commission proposes to make a contract. Unless I have gone mad, when I read this legislation, clause 16 subsection (2) - I am going to get to it in Committee -

"(2) No act done or proceedings taken under this Act shall be question..."

Well, it means "questioned", you need to add an "ed" to that.

"... on the grounds of

(a) the contravention by a Member of paragraph 14 of the Schedule;..."

and paragraph 14 deals with the conflict of interest situation. So even though the Bill, in the Schedule, provides that a person who has an interest in a matter should declare it, the Bill also goes on to say that if he does not do so, that would not be actionable. In other words, an ouster clause shrouding immorality - for immoral acts. That is what this Bill is saying, that a member of the Commission is clothed with morality even when he commits immoral acts. Full immunity. This is a path breaking piece of legislation, or it is going to break up some paths to the pursuit of corruption and dishonesty in public life if we proceed on the basis of what is before this House.

I want to go on, Mr. Speaker. I do not support ouster clauses for anybody. I want to make my position clear on ouster clauses. I have never been in support of ouster clauses, but I am even more concerned about any attempt in this country to set up any body of persons who by virtue of legislation are required to take steps on behalf of the citizens of this country in the development of their interest and then turn around and give it immunities which not even a Minister of Government enjoys. This cannot be right. What kind of legal drafting and what kind of development is this? I thought this House of Assembly was moving into a direction, Mr. Speaker, as I always understood it, of new levels of integrity, greater accountability, participatory democracy, transparency, but this legislation flies in the face of these very bold assertions. So not only does the legislation fly in the face of the Labour Party's Manifesto, because it does not speak to the grand design of rural development, but it flies in the face of very serious positions which I assumed were taken by the party in relation to issues of integrity in this country, because as I say, it gives nine men and/or women the privilege and right, once they are acting *bona fide*, and even in some cases where they are not acting *bona fide*, to commit certain acts and they are immune from suit

We will not be supporting that section. I am making it very clear, speaking on my own behalf - I have

not consulted fully with the Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central, but if he is willing to accept my legal advice on this matter, then I know what the outcome will be - we are not supporting Clause 16 but we are not going to stand in the way of the Government proceeding in relation to this matter, because we think that if this is a promise that is made and this is the way that promise is going to be delivered to the citizens of this country, then we should not be a bar to that development

Mr. Speaker, it would be very short-sighted of anybody to believe that the mere provision of land for the landless is going to be an answer to small farming in Barbados, because there are many people in Barbados who own land - I have relatives who own land in Haggatt Hall in a very populous area which has been available for agricultural activity for the longest time - but in the absence of other kinds of supports, irrigation, security, seed funds and a whole range of other support services, all of this talk about small farming is not going to hinge on access to land only. I want to make that point because I think the Minister overplayed the issue of access to land. I had land in St. Philip for the longest time available prior to them putting in irrigation. I will now try myself to get it under production, but it was available and well known in the area that I would even pay for the inputs, all I want is half of the produce. That did not work. So just the provision of land alone is not going to be enough. I think we need to focus on some of the other things. Perhaps it would have been good if the legislation spoke to those much broader considerations, because the provision of land, I understand that to be Government's responsibility. Particularly where Government has land available it should, wherever possible, facilitate small farmers and that kind of thing.

Now, I want to make my own position very clear in relation to the Democratic Labour Party. I am impressed by the legislation, particularly where I see that it speaks of an idle land programme, because in the Manifesto of the Democratic Labour Party at page 19 we indicated quite clearly, under the heading Idle Lands Programme:

"Many good agricultural properties large and small have been going out of cultivation for a variety of reasons. In order to arrest and reverse this trend a Democratic Labour Party Government proposes to lease idle agricultural lands in excess of five acres from owners and on-lease these properties to individuals and organisations for farming. It is envisaged that the programme will be extended to include persons presently engaged in farming and desirous of increasing operations. The programme will be voluntary."

So this is a Democratic Labour Party idea. It is so well written in the Bill that it is almost as if it is taken from our

Manifesto. Then we said in our Manifesto, Sir, that we wanted to introduce a landless farmers programme where landless farmers make a substantial contribution to the agricultural economy, but their circumstances create problems for themselves, neighbouring farms, the Scotland District and the travelling public especially motorists and the State. The object was to establish an agricultural area called Agricultural Commons for pasturing of cattle, and where the State did not own suitable lands for this project we would lease or purchase property for that purpose. That is something else I understood the Honourable Member for St. James North to be speaking of, a landless farmers programme particularly for those involved in livestock farming.

What is missing in relation to this Rural Development Programme, or the functions of the Commission, is that I still feel it is very important for the Commission to have a major say in land use policy in Barbados, particularly agricultural land use policy. What kind of housing and where? What kind of other physical amenities and where because in the constituency of St. John I have been trying for the last 8 years, Mr. Speaker, to get development taking place around St. John's Parish Church particularly the provision of small huts for ice cream stalls for crafts and those things and the Town Planning Department in keeping with its policy in relation to agricultural land use has not approved any such approach so I am very concerned about that. 3.40 p.m.

If the restrictive land use policy which we presently have in place continues, it means that those kids of developments in rural Barbados will never get off the ground and you will never create those jobs in St. John, in St. Philip, parts of St. Philip, in St. Lucy, in St. Joseph which are critical to our development in Barbados.

Now, Mr. Speaker, Sir, with regard to the actual work of the Commission it is very important to note that all of the functions which are set out by the Minister are already dealt with by agencies in Barbados. Under (a) to facilitate roads and street lights - the Ministry of Public Works and the Barbados Light and Power. Housing and toilet facilities - Ministry of Housing, National Housing Corporation, Environmental Division, Ministry of Health. And assistance to small farmers - Ministry of Agriculture, the BADMC and the BAS have exactly those same responsibilities. Cottage industries - there is a division of the Barbados Investment and Development Corporation which is to focus on that.

Mr. SPEAKER left the Chair, His Honour R. D. MARSHALL in the Chair.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for St. John may continue.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Mr, Deputy Speaker, it is very important for the issue of land use policy in rural Barbados to be re-examined. I think a wonderful opportunity presented itself in relation to preparatory work for the IADB loan to look at land use policy, the Ministry of Agriculture came out with its own views and the previous Government did not come to a firm determination on the matter but I would hope that in due course it would be fully examined and that in relation to this particular Commission that it would have some responsibility in that regard.

I think that it is also important to recognise that the Democratic Labour Party manifesto had contemplated for each of those entities which presently have responsibility for those functions that their roles would have been expanded. Certainly we developed a tenantry road programme and most governments have had it in our time but more importantly, Sir, the expansion of the other facilities we felt was the proper responsibility of the various entities.

What now then is the role of the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries? As I understand it, the Honourable Member for St James North as Minister of Agriculture is not presently responsible for the sugar industry companies, BAMC and BACT which was a cany over from the previous administration. Sugar is not, in terms of its operational aspects, under the control of the Ministry of Agriculture. Now under the Rural Development Commission the legislation as we read its functions, some of which would have previously been under the responsibility of the Ministry of Agriculture, have been divested functions such as the provision of assistance to small farmers, agricultural training and investment, equipment and machinery and production and marketing of agricultural produce. So what is it that the Minister of Agriculture will now be doing as a result of the establishment of this Rural Development Commission? What functions will be left in the Ministry of Agriculture after that?

Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, perhaps if the Honourable Member were minded and I cannot direct his thoughts in this matter there has been a lot of literature on rural development and if he were minded to re-examine the objectives of the Commission, the formulations which the Honourable Member for St. Joseph came up with were quite practical and acceptable although they may not be worded in a form which inspires that broader vision but the kinds of ideas that were raised were acceptable but there are Caribbean economists who have written quite extensively in this area - C. Y. Thomas, in one of the more recent books, "The Poor and the Powerless", has written about re-empowering rural people, about efforts that could be made by Government to empower rural citizens and also to increase the productive base of the economy through the

development of agriculture from communities and decentralisation.

Perhaps it would have been good, had the opportunity been taken, not to look so much at the functions of this Board in a technocratic sense but to look at the broad objectives of what we want for rural Barbados and to set out those broad objectives in the context of the Act and I think that is very important and something that I think should be considered by the Minister if he has that opportunity.

In our own view, Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, the Honourable Member for St. Lucy set out some of the new ideas which the Democratic Labour Party considered and also in our own internal discussions we have been looking at what I suppose one would call post adjustment policies. We did not have the opportunity to implement any of them but that is the verdict of the people but we still have to take the opportunity now as a political party to re-examine many of the founding principles of the party and many of the precepts which have been consistent with the country's development and which now need reconsideration in the context of modern Barbados.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, some of the issues that I ' thought would have been raised by the Minister in the course of his address would be the questions of qualification for farmers in Barbados, what efforts are going to be made to expand the opportunities for training for farmers in this country. I know there are students at the Community College, the Polytechnic, i.e. a CXC agricultural science programme and there are practising agriculturalists. How are we going to feed them in and involve them in discussions with those landless farmers who are very important to the development of rural Barbados?

Then there is also the issue of the size of lots and particularly the question of irrigation. The need for irrigation in relation to 2-acre lots and what is going to be the optimum size of a farm or unit for a small fanner in Barbados. In relation to location it is very important that wherever possible land surrounding villages be used in a process of land reform. The object being to seek to create a relationship between the people who live in those villages or tenancies to economic resources around them. This is very important

Then there is the question of areas near to where water is available. Those are concerns tht we have. Then there is the question of the problems facing the agricultural sector, the lack of water, the problems in relation to cultivation, praedial larceny, market production, extension services and the point I raised about size of lots, these are all issues that are going to have to be addressed by the Commission and for which we need to have substantial consideration. 3.50 p.m.

So that, Mr. Deputy Speaker, in relation to solutions this Commission is going to have to look at issues such as proper water allocation, security, fanners* co-operatives to plan marketing groups, plan production, develop farm plans and then also look at the issue of finance. Whether Government is going to finance these operations, whether it is going to be borrowed funds or whether other sources of financing are going to be made available.

The other issue, Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, if I have the time, is that this creates another additional layer of bureaucracy and one would wonder if the object of the Government in creating participatory democracy is to add layers of bureaucracy for the existing players in governmental affairs rather than to add new institutions to create opportunities for non-traditional players in relation to participatory democracy. So you do not want to create another layer of bureaucracy in which you move civil servants from the Ministry of Agriculture over to the Rural Development Commission. You want to create an institution which seeks the empowerment and change which is desirable.

I know you said it is a temporary arrangement and we accept that for what it is worth but that as soon as possible the relationship between this institution and new players, new forms of democracy, new forms of participation, is created as a matter of priority.

We will also have to consider the question of additional costs. What is it that the funds which the enterprise fund will have in it are going to go towards at this time? Is it going to be focusing on street lights, roads, or is it going to be focusing on acquiring land? What is that first tranche of funds going to be focusing on, the first \$3 million or whatever it is that has been made available? Perhaps the Minister can also tell us why he could not have achieved the same aims keeping his functions, as a policy maker, in addition to keeping his functions as a policy maker, without clothing him in immunities he could also then establish a small unit within the Ministry of Agriculture, an operative staff which would have for example a sociologist, an economist, somebody involved in agriculture, a market specialist and a production planner. It would give him more flexibility and the opportunity to create other policy options.

Then the question of agricultural co-operatives. There may have been opportunities through the Rural Development Commission to speak to the issue of co-operatives because even though I saw cottage industries I do not feel that the remit of the Commission under this, unless the Minister is going to give them that remit, would involve a more active role in relation to the co-operative movement and particularly the establishment of agricultural co-operatives, self-help programmes in communities and

other investment entities, building societies, whatever you may wish to call it. That would be very important.

Now, Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir ...

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Honourable Member has one more minute.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Thank you very much. Apart therefore from the fact that we will not be supporting section 16 and in particular we have raised concerns about the section which seeks to create protection for the commission against prosecution or other proceedings, even in relation to acts *bonafide* in pursuance of the Act.

The reason why we cannot support that, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is because we do not think that if you have an Administrative Justice Act in this country that it is necessary to go behind the provisions of that Act which gives citizens access to the court and makes sure functionaries are accountable to create ouster clauses. These new developments, I have seen it in the Boundaries Commission legislation, I saw it in another piece of legislation, create a form of immunity which we do not think is desirable. I have opposed it in Select Committee on previous occasions and I think it is something that needs some attention and flies in the face, in my view, of Cap. 109B of the Laws of Barbados and it is something to which we would not give our support. It would not affect the legislation if that were taken out. It means that they would be treated to the same scrutiny as any other functionary. There is no need for an ouster clause unless one feels that there is going to be some kind of act which the commission has to undertake which would require immunity.

With this out, Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, citizens would feel safer, they would feel that there is no way that public officials can be protected by ouster clauses even in the face of acts which on the face of it one would not think are acceptable and particularly because we already have adequate safeguards in relation to legislation. So, with those few words, as I said we support the bulk of the provisions but we will not be supporting section 16, Sir.

Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, at the end of the day, when we come eventually to review the legislation that is before Parliament, it might well have to be said that, had there been a rural development commission in place, there would probably have been a St. John Development Plan and it would probably, Mr. Deputy Speaker, have been implemented. I start at that point because what we are dealing with this afternoon is, in my view, one of the most important pieces of legislation that has been brought to this Parliament in recent times.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, this issue is not just about two Barbadoses, it is about the fact that historically the strength of the rural society has been the bedrock upon which the stability and the progress of this society has been based. The rural society, Sir, has provided Barbados with its skills, with its values and has come to typify a Barbadian way of doing things and a Barbadian way of life.

In the course of the last 30 years there has been, in this country, a pattern of development that has focussed upon the modernisation of the society but the rural society and the values that rural Barbados has exemplified have come under threat. It is very unfortunate, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that the Democratic Labour Party's Members have spoken in this debate. I believe it was E. M. Forster but I speak subject to correction who spoke in terms of a "whale cut up for blubber". The DLP's relationship to rural Barbados, Sir, has been that of a whaler approaching a whale with a view to cutting up its body for blubber; that is what we had in this country, a most unfortunate tenancy where plantation after plantation back in the 1960's, early 1970's. Unfortunately for them, between 1986 and 1991, including St John, the Democratic Labour Party's approach to rural Barbados has been an approach which has featured the cutting of deeds between DLP Government and DLP supporters as if rural Barbados was a whale to be cut up for blubber. As a result, Sir, rural Barbados under the Democratic Labour Party has suffered. St. John has suffered because they did not have a holistic concept as to how the problem of the rural poor should have been addressed. This legislation before Parliament, Mr. Deputy Speaker, intends to put in place a public sector institution for whose purpose it is specifically drafted, but whose general purpose is to redress a tendency to help serve purely to undermine the stability and the prosperity of our rural society. 4.00 p.m.

Sir, we could have put into this Act the most lofty principles as the Member for St. John would have wished. But at the end of the day it must represent itself to the rural poor in the form of concrete benefits measurable in terms of mads, material improvements and a general improvement in the quality of their life. This Rural Development Commission, Sir, is intended by the Barbados Labour Party to focus, not on lofty principles, because the rural poor have been tired of lofty principles, but it is intended, Sir, to deal with the small things and to remove those last residual aspects of abject poverty which bear upon the backs of the rural poor of this society.

I commend those who have drafted this legislation for taking such a practical view of the purposes of the Commission, Sir. The people of the rural society are not interested in development plans conceived of in broad

conceptual frameworks that are not represented to them, Sir, in concrete benefits. They are interested in Government's dealing with their basic needs and ensuring that, at the end of the 20th century, we can put the problems of basic needs behind us. Those who have spoken in this House, Sir, about the narrowness with which this legislation has been drafted misunderstand its purposes, that until we focus upon basic needs, aspects of abject poverty, and put them behind us, all of the grandiose development plans and so on will mean absolutely nothing whatsoever to the people of the rural society.

There are people in my constituency, Mr. Deputy Speaker, who have to buy three pairs of shoes merely to go to church because the roads are bad. There are people in my constituency, Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, who do not know what it is to exist in a community that has street lights. There are people in my community who do not know what it is to see their community expanded by the provision of sites and services equivalent to those that are enjoyed by other urbanized communities in Barbados. I want to say, Sir, that this Rural Development Commission has had its purposes very specifically drawn because we are seeking to develop the rural society of Barbados, Sir, in pragmatic and sensible ways that make some connection with the basic needs of rural Barbados.

I also want to say, Sir, that for a long time lip service and only lip service has been paid to the rural society and to rural development in this country. This is not the first time, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that we have had something that has approached a rural development programme. Indeed, I want to commend the Member for St Joseph who in the early 1980's was the Minister responsible for the discharge of a rural development programme which was concentrated in a narrow section of Barbados; its impact was not across the country, and the focus of the programme was largely agricultural as if the problems of rural Barbados are in large measure agricultural.

This concept that is being here applied seeks to deal with the problem of rural development, not from an agricultural point of view. But it seeks, Sir, to deal with the problem of rural development from the point of view of the development of the individual, from the point of view of the development of the community and from the point of view of the development of the community within the context of the development of Barbados. What we are seeking to do through this programme, Sir, is so to conceive of and implement a programme of rural development that it will be able to answer the basic needs of individuals, the needs of communities and entities and the relationship of the rural communities in the context of the development of Barbados as a whole.

I want, Sir, to congratulate the Attorney General and the Minister of Agriculture who have worked hard to

define a piece of legislation that captures the point that rural development must answer the needs of individuals in rural societies, must answer the needs of rural communities and must correctly position communities within the context of Barbados as it is likely to evolve. There is no apology therefore, Mr. Deputy Speaker, to be offered on this side for the fact that the functions of this Commission are so defined that a man in rural Barbados could pick up this legislation and say for himself that this is dealing with my needs as I have perceived them, because as I have said, Sir, all across rural Barbados there are people who have to buy an extra pair of shoes just to be able to go to church on Sunday.

So those who want to cast the legislation in broad general terms will find that in the rural society the people are tired of theory, they are tired of sociological constructs and they are interested in a Government that gets down to the business of dealing with their basic needs. This legislation is, in my view and in my experience in this Parliament, the first piece of legislation that has been crafted specifically to deal with basic needs as a developmental aspect. I commend those who have thought it necessary to make sure that the basic needs of people are kept in the forefront of our considerations as we seek to address this particular matter.

I just want to say, Sir, also that poor people, whether in urban Barbados or in rural Barbados, are poor people and those who wish to draw a distinction between poor people in urban Barbados and poor people in rural Barbados are misleading the public. I say that to come to my additional point, Sir, namely that a Rural Development Commission is but the first in a two-part series by this administration to address the needs in communities of poor people as they exist. In addition to the Rural Development Programme, Sir, we have already this year provided financing in the Estimates for an Urban Renewal Project out of which will come legislation that will do for the urban poor what this Rural Development Commission is intending to do for the rural poor.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, in the course of this year's Estimates, I made the point that this Barbados Labour Party Administration is not interested in monuments. We are interested in dealing with the needs of individuals, the needs of communities and the needs of this country. 4.10 p.m.

I believe, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that the essence of development concerns the way in which a society creatively uses its resources, human, material and otherwise, to fundamentally deal with the basic needs of its people in the first instance. This rural development thrust is also going to be accompanied by an urban renewal thrust under which we will do for the poor people in the urban

tenantries of Barbados, in the urban villages, including Canington Village, what we propose to do in SL George, St. Joseph, St. Peter and St Thomas, because we do not believe that there must be two Barbadoses. The way in which you can ensure that there must not be two Barbadoses is to have a homogeneous approach to the improvement of the welfare and the quality of life of poor people in this country wherever they exist.

Therefore, I want to urge upon this Parliament not to consider this Rural Development Commission in isolation, but to view it as a companion piece to legislation that will come before this Parliament in due course having to do with an Urban Development Commission that will replicate in virtual exact detail the functions that this Rural Development Commission is going to be responsible *for* discharging.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we are also in this exercise involved in advancing the practice and the precept of governance as we in this country would best wish to see them practised and exercised. I do not believe that we have to introduce a separate system of local government so defined involving Councillors or Vestrymen or Aldermen, with a separate system of taxation, in order for the people at the bottom to have a say in the governance of their affairs, or in order for the needs of individuals and communities to be addressed in a concentrated and a cohesive fashion. I believe, Sir, that, through the instrumentality of things such as the Rural Development Commission and an Urban Development Commission, persons, simple people, at the level of communities can be drawn into the process of being involved in the management and operation of Commissions that affect how they live and that the needs of people at the local level can be addressed without our having to bring in this small country a new structure of Government with new taxation to bear in order to have problems addressed.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: Sir, on a point of order. I am quite sure that no one has suggested in this House that local, community based government would involve two tiers of taxation. I think that is an invention on the part of the Honourable Member.

Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Deputy Speaker, those who call so eloquently for local government have a responsibility to tell the people of this country how the local government should be financed. I am not interested, Sir, in "in due course"; we are interested in now.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: On a point of order. I fully agree with the Honourable Member that this should be done, and it will be done in due course.

Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Deputy Speaker, we have to enlighten the public that you do not have to create

a system of elections at the local government level, nor new politicians in the form of Aldermen or Vestrymen in order for us to have Government responsive to local needs. That is the point, Sir, that through a Rural Development Commission you can have an institution of Government whose focus is involving people in the community in matters that affect how they live, dealing with the needs of the individual and better integrating the individual and the community into the governance of their country. We feel that this is not only the most cost effective way but the most efficacious manner in which we can have the essence of local government, meaning dealing with basic needs of people in communities to infuse governance in this country again.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: In other words, the Honourable Member is saying that he wishes to have local government but he does not wish to empower local poor people and give them the political authority to determine who should look after their affairs. He wants at the same time to have his cake and eat it. He wants to have the political power and he does not want to allow the people to participate politically in the exercise.

Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I do not want to trouble the Member for St. Michael South Central, but he was an unapologetic disciple of Errol Barrow when Errol Barrow abolished local government in this country on the most frivolous reason that he wanted to get Mottley out of the City, and he did not at that time have the courage of his convictions to rise up and tell Errol Barrow that he was wrong.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: The Honourable Member...

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: On what do you rise?

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: On a point of order, Sir. The Honourable Member is misleading this Honourable House. I was not even in Barbados, I was not in this country when it happened. On top of that, Sir, I fully support the Honourable Member for Christ Church South, who has been demanding the reintroduction of local government in this country, and I want to draw to the attention of this House that the Honourable Prime Minister is not speaking to me, he is really putting the Honourable Member for Christ Church South in his place.

Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Deputy Speaker, it is a matter of record that the Member for St. Michael South Central has been described as having been in that era the second most powerful man, and all he has now today established is that he was controlling Government by remote control.

The point I am making, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is simply this, and I want to say it very clearly, that the

Barbados Labour Party is interested in dealing with the basic needs of individuals. We are interested in dealing with the needs of communities, we are interested in having a strong rural society re-established in this country, including a strong St. John. We are interested in having the problem of abject poverty in urban Barbados removed, and we feel that all those things can be accomplished without our having to re-introduce in this country a new layer of government with a new layer of taxation attached to it. This must be seen in that context. The Rural Development Commission is intended to address the problems of the rural poor in the way in which they represent themselves, not to us in terms of grand principles but in the form in which they represent themselves to the problems of the rural poor in the form that they understand. Bad roads, no lights in their constituencies, no services for the communities that have been now established, a decay in rural employment as a result of the fact that the modernisation of this society has involved the creation of factories and conglomerates rather than the building of those enterprises that were there to begin with. Therefore, when you check what this Commission and the concept of it is about, Sir, we want to deal with the building of strong rural communities, with the provision of services in rural societies commensurate with those that coincide with the needs of the people. 4.20 p.m.

We want to create again the base for self-reliance and self-employment in rural Barbados and I lived in the 1950s in a village in which much of the employment was generated in that village. We cannot go back in time to that. Sir, but across Barbados there are people who have ideas who would like to be able to create small enterprises to help themselves and the people in that community. Our institutions have become super structural. They can cope with the project feasibility studies for \$10 million projects but they cannot deal with the needs of man who has an idea. He might want to expand his sheep farm and he cannot find either a commercial bank or development bank to lend him the money to be able to help himself, help his family, help his neighbours and a rural enterprise fund is intended to deal with that kind of eventuality. This is what this project is about.

I submit to the House, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that it is about building a stronger Barbados, by building a stronger rural Barbados because Barbados has always been strong when rural Barbados has been strong. It has been a mistake of historic proportions for persons to allow rural Barbados to go into decay in the belief that modernisation could by-pass rural society and come to it eventually as a residue.

I believe, Sir, that when this particular matter...

Aside.

Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: ... Sandiford as a Prime Minister was not interested in the North and the Member for St. John want me particularly to say that, and I will say that on his behalf.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: I never asked the Honourable Member for St. Peter to say anything in or outside of this Chamber on my behalf.

Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I believe that he wants to say - he is an experienced politician, Sir, - and he wants to tell you that if he wants to say that Mr. Sandiford is inadequate as a politician I will say it for him.

Asides.

Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, the Government of Barbados is committed over the course of the next 4 years when once there is a Rural Development Commission place to utilise properly these resources. We are committed to making sure that adequate resources are deployed to the Rural Development Commission for it to be able to discharge properly its functions.

This is not the kind of initiative that is going to elicit support from the multilateral lending institutions. Their approach is to subject everything to pre-feasibility studies and feasibility studies with the result that nothing ever will happen. This is not the kind of initiative that is necessary to elicit support of the bureaucracy and that is why I have been very particular to compliment the Attorney General and the Minister of Agriculture for our being able to have this Commission brought to Parliament at an early stage.

There are those persons who believe that Government initiatives must be put in the form of projects that have rates of return calculated. I have seen in my own constituency where a Speightstown Development Task Force is going about the business of the redevelopment of Speightstown upon the basis of the methodology prescribed by the IADB so they have a pre-feasibility study for the redevelopment of Speightstown and then it must go to the feasibility study stage and 15 years from now they may be able to prove that a jetty in Speightstown is feasible.

I have told the Speightstown Development Committee that if we have to rely on pre-feasibility studies and feasibility studies to determine whether Speightstown should have been created in the first place - or Oistins or Bridgetown or New York - no town would ever have been created. It has taken too long.

The funds for this initiative - and I want to repeat it, Sir - will come off the top. I told this to the Minister of Agriculture and to my whole parliamentary group this year and I repeat it again. The funds for this initiative will be

treated as one of the major priorities of this Government and I believe that if we reach the stage in this society where if every year in a concentrated way we can take \$10 million out of a capital programme of \$150 million and deal with the basic needs first of all of rural Barbados and another \$10 million to deal with the basic needs of people in urban Barbados all of the social problems - I feel so fundamentally, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that every time there is a capital programme of \$150 million and we spend \$10 million each year on dealing with the basic needs of poor people in urban Barbados, and the poor people in rural Barbados, in a systematic fashion a lot of the alienation of the people of Barbados, a lot of the disaffection, a lot of the breaking down of communities can be redressed in a short period of time.

I make no apology for saying that funds for this project as well as funds for the urban development project, which is now being planned as the companion piece, are being treated by this Administration as fundamental priorities. We feel that Barbados has made tremendous progress at the macro-level and that we had a large number of large projects that have improved the investment potential of this country, but that it is now right, opportune and ripe that our development efforts must filter down in the form of our changing the social relationship of the man in this society to the society and the social relationship of communities to the society.

Our capital development programme is defined in terms of those dialectics. For those who have asked whether we are going to vote appropriate resources to these programmes just let me say I have already indicated that the age of monuments and arches and Sherbourne complexes is over and that the emphasis of capital development in this country, as expressed in terms of the allocation and composition of government capital expenditure, must be expressed in terms of a large number of small projects that will allow the small man, whether in rural Barbados or in urban Barbados, to feel that he has truly been empowered by an enlightened Government.

This is what these projects are about, Sir. I want to plead with the persons in the Ministry of Agriculture. They have become accustomed to Sherbourne Complexes. The psychology of development that represents itself in the belief that government capital projects must be \$50 million capital projects or they are not projects must die and that we must come back to the psychology that you can have a capital project that represents itself in a man in Diamond Corner in St. Peter who has an idea. 4.30 p.m.

Aside.

Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: ... Gall Hill, St. John who has an idea that will help himself, his family and his

immediate community and a Government will move to put him in funds to be able to make his project, as a capital project, part of the country's capital project.

I also believe, Sir, that across Barbados the old established villages were the logical places where human settlement should have been established because they were the marginal lands when agriculture was king. If we go back to each of the old established villages we will find around them marginal lands that can be used for sites and services and we will find, Mr. Deputy Speaker, in almost every old established community, whether it be Boscobel or Arch Hall or Parish Land or St. Patricks, that there is marginal land around these old established villages but the children born in those villages have had to go to the terraces and the heights to get sites and services.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Would the Honourable Member wind up please?

Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I was just beginning my speech. Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, this project, this programme, this development concept, this development philosophy, has at its core the restoration of the place of the established communities like St. Patricks and Parish Land, Black Bess, Arch Hall, as integral communities in the social and economic life of this country and you are going to find that the funds allocated for this particular Rural Development Commission will have, and I want to repeat this, Sir, will have to be devoted to the building of strong integrated rural communities, will have to be devoted to the support of rural enterprises, will have to deal with the basic, fundamental needs of rural people and the provision of services in rural Barbados that would allow us at the end of the day to feel that in rural Barbados there are communities that have fundamentally tapped into the vein of development that has been extended in this country for the last 50 years.

I feel, Sir, that this piece of legislation is a historic necessity, that development will not take place in and of itself, development must be induced and spurred on. We, Sir, have heard the lip service on the other side and we have seen the failings and the decay of the rural society because of the lip service paid to fundamental problems of basic need. We want again to put basic needs at the centre of our consideration as a Government.

I feel, Sir, as I close that I should say this. I feel that Barbados has done most of the major things that are necessary to build a strong and a modern society in this country, but there is a sense of alienation on the part of the man in the street and the villages because they do not feel that the small things that coincide with basic needs have been dealt with as efficaciously as the large things. This Rural Development Commission, the Rural Development

Programme and the rural development philosophy of this Government restore the concept of the satisfaction of basic needs as a consideration at the centre of the effort of development in this country and I want to say, Sir, that...

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable Member you will have to wind up now.

Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: I am winding up, Sir, with the last paragraph.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable Member, time is up.

Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: I thank the Member for St. Joseph. I thank the Member for St. Thomas. I thank the Member for Christ Church West and I thank also the Minister of Agriculture who have brought us assiduously to this opportune moment in the history of this Parliament where we can respond to a historic necessity by grasping a historic opportunity. I am obliged to you.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for St. Michael West

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I do not believe that anyone who just heard the Prime Minister and Minister of Finance deliver his contribution to this debate can doubt that in his heart he believes everything he says. Coming as he does from the rural part of Barbados one could feel that this is a speech he wanted to make for a very long time and he was constrained by God only knows what; but finally this Bill has given him the opportunity to speak to issues which obviously burden his heart.

I, Sir, will not address all the issues he addressed at that point except to ask him a very simple question. I would like to ask the Prime Minister and the Government, is it necessary for us to have this legislation to implement the measures which the Honourable Member says he wishes to have?

Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: I asked in good faith, Sir, and I made a statement in the course of my speech, I truly believe that unless we have a Commission that is separate from the bureaucracy that rural development is going to die a natural death and that is an honest answer.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Sir, far be it from me. The Honourable Member has now had a year to assess the bureaucracy of Barbados and far be it from me to make any judgement on his assessment of the capacity of that bureaucracy to implement the programmes and the policies which he identified and therefore, Sir, I believe that we in fact have seen a paradigm shift of the Prime Minister away from the rest of his colleagues who sought to speak on

this issue today. He has indicated in fact that the Commission as a vehicle by which he will seek to have his Government implement a series of programmes which cannot or will not be introduced by what another Prime Minister called the army ...

Asides.

Mr. B. M. TAUT: But, Mr. Deputy Speaker, this is what I want to ask Honourable Members on that side. How can you come and tell us that this piece of legislation is to ensure that we do not have two Barbadoses? That has been the theme beginning with the Honourable Member, the Minister who introduced this. The theme was that we are seeking to have a single Barbados. Let us have no two Barbadoses. The entire speeches that I have heard today have been rural versus urban. Rural Barbados must be brought to the fore. I want to hear the Honourable Members who represent St. Michael constituencies. I want to hear the Honourable Member for St. Michael South East. I know what I am talking about. I want to hear the Member for St. Michael North East. I want to hear the Members for St. Michael because you would believe that they represent constituencies in Trinidad and Tobago. They believe ...

Aside.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: The Honourable Member for the City, we will not get involved in that. Her concept of rural development is Murphy Pasture. So the Honourable Member will speak but I want to know if the poor hungry people in St. Michael are now to feel, based on the Prime Minister's federation today, the money is coming off the top for rural development. So the people in Ruby, St Philip can look forward to some more expansion despite the fact that Reynold Weekes over the last 20 years transformed St. Philip into the most beautiful part of Barbados. 4.40 p.m.

Aside.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Do you think that we would deny our past? Mr. Deputy Speaker, what I find unacceptable that in a society of 166 square miles and 257 000 people for purposes of political aggrandizement we would have this division of rural and urban in a place where it takes 20 minutes to travel by a car like mine from one top of the island to the other. The same Honourable Members put a highway into the country and by the time Highway 2A is completed the Honourable Member for St James North will be able to go from the airport to home in 20 minutes. But yet for purposes of comfortable political division we can have the kind of debate as if this is China. You would believe that we were debating China, Sir. You would believe that we are debating the United States where we talk about Mississippi on the one hand and the Eastern

Seaboard on the other. You would believe that we are talking about Europe regarding East Germany and Western Germany. That is what you talk about rural and urban. But in Barbados anyone who did not know, anyone who comes to this country for the first time and hears this debate in this Honourable House by 28 distinguished Barbadians talking about urban and rural, talking about how the rural have been neglected - my God, my heart started to hurt me, Sir, as I thought of my poor people, my family who live in St. Joseph and how they have been neglected for all of these years have no access to health care, have no access to education, have no access to food, have no access to anything.

In fact, the Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central was moved to suggest that we should go back to 25 or 30 years and bring in the kind of Southern Council of which the Honourable Member was a member or the Northern Council or the old Local Government. Because I am sure he was moved to feel that we had really not moved to being the 20th most desirable place on earth to live according to the UNDP. These statistics show that there has been no disrespect of persons who come from any part of Barbados to win any of the scholarships that have been won or in becoming any distinguished professor. Do you know where Professor Sir George Alleyne comes from, Sir? He comes from St. Philip. He is now the head of PAHO, but he comes from St. Philip. You would not think that anybody who comes from rural Barbados has any opportunity to survive in this society. I could not believe when I heard the Honourable Members in here speaking from that side that we are in this same House, Sir.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I want to make a proposal that in order to assist the Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central in bringing back Local Government let us agree to abolish 4 seats in this House.

Aside.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: You can abolish St. Michael West. I will run in the City and you know that you are gone. Abolish St. Michael West and I run in the City and you are gone.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, if we are going to have Local Government, you cannot impose the cost of that on the people of Barbados. I have heard the Honourable Member for St. Peter say that we are the most over-taxed people in the world, although in a very short time as Prime Minister and Minister of Finance he has added another layer of taxes on them. Very quietly and without fanfare, he has loaded them with an additional piece but we will come to that in due course. If we are now going to have an additional lawyer of Government, you know somebody will have to pay for it. It does not pay for itself. One thing

you can be certain of that the Government does not pay for itself. So if there is going to be an additional layer of Government whether by way of Commission or Local Government, it will have to be paid for. An easy solution would be to reduce the House to what the Democratic Labour Party had called for originally to keep it at 24 seats. Because for 257 000 people you really do not need 28 seats unless the Members of Parliament are going to do their job and help provide the connection with the people which is envisaged by the provision of assistance to parliamentarians.

Now, Sir, I believe that Members of Parliament ought to be put into a position where they can better empower the constituents which they represent to participate in the Government of the day. I do not believe that the little paltry assistance which they get now allows for any empowerment of any kind. In terms of Local Government, Members of Government who wish to do their job well have to go beyond the call of economic duty to ensure that they can help their citizens and survive. Honourable Members who have become Ministers now are beginning to realize, I hope, what one talks about without any rancor. But this whole question of Local Government in Barbados has to do with how we perceive our citizens and what level of representation they have in relation to the rest of the society.

Sir, I do not want to deny the Government their right to their moment of glory. They said in their Manifesto that they would have a Rural Development Commission or some such thing and they are having it I would have thought that they would have called it the Rural and Urban Development Commission. That would have covered all the bases. But are they bringing a separate commission for the urban area, Sir? Do I understand them to say, that we can expect another Bill that will bring an Urban Commission so that we will have two commissions. This is all the more reason why we should get rid of 4 or 5 of the parliamentarians, because it seems to me that you are going to be duplicating the work a little bit, or you are going to have to reduce the Ministries further.

The Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development needs to be re-examined and revisited if you are going to have this Rural Development Commission. If the Minister of Agriculture, Sir, is having this Commission, he has to show for me to approve and agree to that by creating this Commission he is going to reduce the size of the Ministry of Agriculture. Because the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development is supposed to do a number of the things which are identified in this legislation to be done by the Commission. Now who will be doing that? Will the Minister be receding from the scene or will his experts do the job? There is no Ministry, no entity in Barbados with more experts than the Ministry of Agriculture. Will they be

going home? Will you be taking some from off the top? Will you be down-sizing the Ministry of Agriculture? Will you be transferring some of them over to the Commission so that they will now be out into the field and doing the work which the Prime Minister obviously is saying that he cannot get done through the normal bureaucracy?

When we started having statutory organizations or parastatal bodies in this country, the rationale of the creation of such agencies was to bypass the bureaucratic system which the ordinary Government had created. That was the reason given for the creation of the Industrial Development Corporation and the Tourism Board as it then was. I recall, Sir, and I went for some of the reports for the Urban Development Corporation. It might not be remembered because I heard some Honourable Members talking as like Daniel come to judgment saying that this was the first commission of its kind. The truth is that the Urban Development Corporation was created in the 1960's. The Honourable Member for St Michael South Central was the Deputy Chairman and that Commission developed as a legacy for Barbados the whole area surrounding Cave Hill, Wanstead area, Cave Hill area, the University area and that was done by an Urban Development Corporation. 4.50 p.m.

I will say this in passing, since the Government has the numbers and this Commission is likely to become a fact of life, you may do well in the staffing to pay attention to the capacity which that Urban Development Corporation had and the small number of staff which it utilised to produce a great amount of work that is obvious to anyone who drives anywhere in the vicinity of St James South, because that very small Corporation, of which the late Mr. F. C. Canew was the Chairman and of which Mr. Louis Redman was the General Manager, was able to do a number of things in a short order, but it did not set itself up, it was not set up as, nor did it behave as a replacement for the Ministry of Home Affairs or the Ministry of Housing, what it did was to assist the Minister in creating the milieu, the framework within which those developments could occur rapidly.

I heard the Minister. Now the Minister of Agriculture is not a man who misspeaks very often. I understand that we have from time to time to deal with the politics of the situation, but the Minister is not one who has been politically offensive in his utterances and I do not normally take a dig at him unnecessarily, and I think that he may have, in the exuberance of having returned to work, uttered a phrase in the opening of his remarks which was misleading. He made the statement - which I know he does not believe, he cannot accept that, he is a lawyer, he is not a lawyer unfamiliar with the law as some may be - and when he made the statement about it being the primary policy making agency for rural development in

Barbados, I wish him when he is responding to correct that, because I do not accept that he intended to say that. There is only one policy making agency in the Ministry of Agriculture and that is him. The Minister is the policy making instrument and must be the policy making instrument for rural development, so the Prime Minister's utterances do not move me in that regard. I wish the Minister to confirm when he gets up that this Commission is going to be nothing more than another parastatal agency created to satisfy certain political necessities.

Now, Sir, that brings us to another aspect of this. If the Barbados Labour Party wishes to do it this way, that is their privilege, but do not make it seem like if this is some new original development which is being brought to bear by the combined capacity of this acuity which has been suddenly discovered and different from anything we have ever had in Barbados. Let us recognise it for what it is. I do not know, and we will not know until the staff referred to in this draft has been put in place, we will not know what is the shape of this Commission, but this Commission cannot be that different from other parastatal agencies which we have seen, and therefore the public, least of all the people who live in the rural areas, should not be misled into believing that somehow a Daniel has come to judgement, and whereas the Minister for Transport and Works has not been able to get a road done or a light put in, that this Commission is going to be able suddenly to get these things done, because in the final analysis ...

Asides.

Mr. B. M. TATTT: Now the Honourable Members are saying from their seats that that is what will happen, and that is my complaint, because I have been trying to get a light in 6th Avenue, Peterkins for the last year. Do you mean that when this Commission is set up the people who live in Coffee Gully will be able to get their light through the Commission? So who would the people that live in Eagle Hall get their light from? Am I to continue for the next five years under the bureaucracy begging and pushing to get a light in Peterkins where they have some real crime, as opposed to the Commission? You are now saying that there is going to be a real division in Barbados. You are now addressing the imbalances for which a former Minister was pilloried in this country when he said that there are certain imbalances which have to be redressed. But here comes the Barbados Labour Party Government saying that for all of these years the people who live in the rural areas have been ill-treated, neglected and left holding the bag, so they bring this massive piece of legislation to redress the imbalances.

Aside.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am asking questions. I am making no statements, I am seeking to find out how do we redress ...

Aside.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: He lives in an urban development area. The Honourable Member for Christ Church South belongs to both rural and urban. He has discovered how, in the words of one person I heard, to put one foot in the refrigerator and the other one on the stove. He knows exactly how to handle these matters, so do not be misled by him.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, what I want to know is this. My colleagues over here who represent rural areas are in fine grazing. They no longer have to knock on the doors of any politicians over there, they need only now deal with the Commission. But that is the rural representation. My problem is that I represent a very urban poor community. They have no jobs. Is this Commission going to be able to bring some jobs for us?

Aside.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Well, I had a few little jobs and you shut down the place. I had a few with a few jobs in one place and you shut it down and said there were too many people from my constituency working there, so you shut down the whole place which would have helped to contribute to the rural development, but you say you do not need that particular rural development. The young women who live in St. Lucy and St. Peter are not to have their pap smears. The young people who live in St. Andrew and St. Thomas have to journey into Bridgetown if they want to get certain services, but this is going to be rural development. The Commission is not going to deal with such mundane things as health and welfare, the Commission is going to be concerned with a much greater and a much more fundamental aspect of people's lives, according to what the Prime Minister just said.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, my question is, if we have a certain amount of funds in this country, if this funding has been dealt with in a particular way up until now, if the Prime Minister says that the rural development is coming off the top...

Aside.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: The "and urban" does not appear in this legislation, the "and urban" is a presence of mind reference by the Prime Minister as he is making a speech. My question is why have you not included the urban? Why did you not bring the two together? You are redressing imbalances. I have no quarrel with that I am arguing for and asking the question on your behalf, Mr. Deputy Speaker, so that we can show the fallacy of the argumentation which we have heard so far, not only in here, Sir, but outside. Your Honour represents

my constituency where I was born. I grew up in a gap where you had to have two pairs of shoes to go to church also. You are aware that they only had tar road in Fairfield in 1976. In Fairfield, Tudor Bridge, in Grazettes, in areas which you represent, Sir, you know that that is as rural and has always been as rural as any pan of Diamond Corner or Black Bess.

Aside,

Mr. B. M. TAITT: I accept before that. Between 1971 and 1976 is when they started fixing the roads in the whole area surrounding Tudor Bridge, so when you talk about rural Barbados, when you look about at rural Barbados, there are people who are less than 30 years old who live within 1 mile of Bridgetown who could discuss rural activities with more clarity than people who live in Ellerton, St. George. There are people who live within 1 mile radius of Bridgetown who only saw electric lights in their streets within the last 10 years. As a matter of fact, for 12 years when the Barbados Labour Party was the Government and I was representative of St. Michael South West which became St Michael West we had no lights in the whole area, and the Honourable Member is familiar with that. 5.00 p.m.

We talk about rural development We can go to St. Michael South Central. The Honourable Member must remember that it is only between 1971 and 1976 when his predecessor was in office that they started not stumping their toes in the villages around which formed St. Michael South Central.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, it is only a matter of understanding. You don't have to go further than Passage Garden. In Passage Garden and across the street in the City of Bridgetown there were canes growing only a few years ago because you could not tell the difference between the roadway and the back ways. This business of having pit toilets is not something that is related only to people who live in St Thomas and St. George. There are people who live within. 2 miles of Bridgetown who up until very recently had pit toilets. If Honourable Members wish me to carry them and show them I can show them even now, today. I am not proud of it. No Honourable Member is proud of it but it is a fact that there are people in St Michael who still have pit toilets. There are people in St. Michael who have no electricity and who are using a lamp with a wick.

How can we suddenly while talking about this piece of legislation start to pit one set of Barbadians against the other while saying that you don't want to have 2 Barbadoses. Why put me in a position where I have to be defending or appear to be defending urban Barbados versus rural Barbados? Which of the Honourable Members in here

does not have a friend or members of their family who live in poor, rural and urban Barbados?

I take it that the Barbados Labour Party has more representation in the rural areas and necessarily must seek and seem to be representing them at a high level but it does not behoove any of the Honourable Members in here to leave the impression that somehow we must make, as my mother would say, "fish of one and fowl of the other"¹. It is not right It is not proper and it serves no useful purpose if we are discussing unity in this country, if we are discussing one Barbados, that 257 000 people should be talking about rural and urban as though we are reading some book that was written by somebody who lives in a country where there are 250 million people.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I do not know if anyone can remember when we used to have the Road Board; but there used to be a distinction, if you pardon the expression, between the workers who work for the local authority and those who worked for the Central Road Board. The distinction that used to be made used to leave a gulf between one set of workers and the other. Indeed, it is the trade union movement in this country that had to come to a single understanding that all the people who work for any aspect of Government in this country should be treated in the same way.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we must be very careful that in our utterances in here we do not lead people to believe that people coming from one part of Barbados should be treated in a different way from those coming from the other, especially in the area of transportation. Part of the reason why we have a problem with the so-called minibuses and the **ZR** people is because they grew up in this country a concept that transportation for people in the utmost parts of this country ought not to be dealt with in exactly the same way as transportation going to those people who lived nearer into town.

All the governments of the day have been forced to consider, and I take the point the Barbados Labour Party has made a clear decision on this that a person who lives in Connell Town has no less right to have transportation to Bridgetown than a person who lives in Tudor Bridge. Indeed, I accept the Honourable Member's suggestion that they have more right, because a person who lives in Tudor Bridge can walk. That is what Government is about It is not about one part of the country against the other part.

Now I don't think the Honourable Members intend that result but it is bound to occur once you start to discuss these issues in the terms in which they have been discussed in here so far, once you start talking about rural. The Honourable Member for Christ Church West has on the coast of Christ Church a number of urban people who

form part of the hierarchy of Barbados but not more than a half mile inland, the Honourable Member can point to people who can only be described as part of rural Barbados.

It is necessary to have instruments that take account of what we need to do in this country to continue the fantastic development which we have had in this country. But it is not necessary for us to distinguish between one set of Barbadians and the other to the detriment of either set in order to make a political point I want to say this in finishing, Sir. The ouster clause which the Honourable Member for St John spoke about is something which I hope the Attorney General will take very seriously. There is no reason whatsoever why this particular clause 16(1) has to appear in this legislation.

Aside.

Mr. B. M. TAITT:... If it did, then I am not familiar with it off the top of my head, but we have been moving towards a more modern approach and in any case the Honourable Member, the Attorney General, knows that this legislation as it stands will make no difference to any court in Barbados however framed.

I think that he has a duty to ensure that we do not put the courts and the legislature at loggerheads over issues that have been long decided in favour of the removal of ouster clauses.

Our failure to support this will be based on principle. We are not going to support that. We are not going to get into a big hassle either about some of the other clauses in here. I recognise that the rural enterprise fund is going to be a necessary vehicle to get some kind of movement of money from the central government to this Commission. But until we hear from the Minister and he gives us the policy of this Act.. The Minister who introduced this legislation did not give us any indication of the broad policy of the Act. How is he intending to administer this? What is intended to happen when someone reads in the newspaper tomorrow morning that there will be a Rural Development Commission? What might they expect? Is this another BMC? Is this another IDC? Is this another Tourism Authority? What exactly will it be? I have a suspicion that the Government is not too clear itself on this.

So far we have had speeches from the Minister, from the Prime Minister and except for the philosophical position which the Prime Minister takes with which there is no one who would disagree, there is no one on either side of the House and sitting in the Chair who has any difficulty with the basic principles which the Prime Minister outlined with regard as to how poor people should be seen in this country and what is left for us to do. I said

to my colleagues sometime ago that I continue in this political business because I don't believe my work is finished. If you were born where I was born and you get the opportunity which I have had, there must appear clearly to you that the work is not finished. There are still too many people in this country who have not had opportunity. There are still too many young people in this country for whom there is no immediate, clear path towards some of the things that we have enjoyed. It is still our responsibility, especially when we have been given the honour of representing people in this Chamber, it is still our responsibility to try to carve out ways and means in an extremely difficult world to help them come to their Nirvanah or some approximation thereof. So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, our position on this is that we recognise the political aspect of this for what it is. We do not accept that it is any earth-shattering movement of something different. We accept that it is the fulfillment of a manifesto and its commitment and an understanding by or for the Honourable Members, the majority of whom come from so-called rural constituencies. My own contention is that in a country the size of Barbados there can be no distinction, no major distinction, no sufficiently significant distinction between the so-called rural constituencies and the urban constituencies. 5.10 p.m.

I say that among constituencies that border around the St. Michael area, indeed there are some rural constituencies that are within the St. Michael area. There are some, as you know, Sir, that have even been put into traditional St. George. Part of traditional St. George has been brought into the description of a constituency that is a St Michael constituency. It is impossible if not hypocritical for us to be talking rural/urban and leaving such constituencies and more particularly the people who live in such constituencies suddenly to start feeling that the Government "is doing something for them but not doing anything for us".

Let us make sure that in seeking to correct a perceived mischief of there being two Barbadoses that we do not by the proposed solution actually create two Barbadoses.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Member for St. Michael North East.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I rise in this debate really to say two things. Firstly to offer my congratulations to the Minister of Agriculture on the bringing of this Bill to Parliament. This Bill, as the Honourable Prime Minister clearly indicated, represents the flushing out of the philosophical position of the Barbados Labour Party that has been consistent in stating that people living in rural communities must be given the

opportunity to enjoy the amenities that all other persons in this country enjoy but that equally there must be a level of satisfaction in their life whether it be with their physical facilities, whether it be with their employment opportunities and access to finance, or whether, Sir, it just be with their contentment with life.

It goes even further than there, Sir, because the Honourable Member who just spoke, the Honourable Member for St Michael West, would seek to have persons believe who would not know any better and who did not listen to anyone else that this effort by the Barbados Labour Party was being done at the exclusion of any attempt to improve the lot of persons within urban Barbados who may be suffering from the same consequences as those in rural Barbados. Quite rightly, Sir, there are in fact areas in urban Barbados where the level of deprivation and poverty is such that it requires a massive injection of capital funds to improve the lot of those people and you, Mr. Deputy Speaker are well aware of this fact.

There are areas of St. Michael, Sir, where people still cannot get out on a rainy day unless they put on plastic bags over their shoes and carry an old pair of shoes to walk out first. There are those pockets of poverty and there has been no denial on the part of this Government that those areas exist and there has been no denial of our commitment to eradicate those areas. But we have simply said, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that we believe that the current infrastructure of Government is not geared towards alleviating the problems that those people experience on a day-to-day basis, that even if we get around to helping some of them out the length of time that it takes for the Ministry of Transport and Works to process street lights all through Barbados that the majority of areas remain without street lights. The length of time that it takes to identify all of those persons who still go without the benefit of water-borne toilets is such that there are old people who have to go out in the night dew.

Until we can reach those people, all we are saying is this; we believe that there has to be the creation of two entities that can more swiftly address the needs of people to ensure that those persons can have those problems, that make the day-to-day living hard and onerous dealt with.

Those persons within the Rural Development Commission will have a focus that is geared only to the alleviation of hardship and the creation of opportunity for persons living in rural Barbados. Equally the Urban Development Commission, when that legislation is brought to Parliament, would have the responsibility of ensuring that all of those persons who suffer hardship in the St. Michael areas and who want the opportunity to be able to participate in cottage industries and various other things that may improve their day-to-day lot in life that they too

be given that opportunity. There has been no reneging on any of these commitments on the part of this Government.

In late last year, Sir, we came to this House for a supplementary to be able to do the preliminary work so that this Rural Development Commission Bill could be laid in this House and debated. In March of this year, in the Estimates of Expenditure and Revenue, we included a sum for the preparatory work for urban renewal in the same way that a sum was included last year for rural development. In the same way that that preparatory work was done and completed and resulted in this Bill which we are debating here today, Sir, an Urban Commission Bill, Sir, will be brought to this Parliament.

We are saying to you, Sir, that we believe that there must be an effort to relieve the hardship of the day-to-day existence of poor people in this country. We are saying, Sir, that the money therefore which Government spends must be directed in some regard to that purpose and we are fortunate to have heard the Honourable Prime Minister commit the sum of \$10 million each for rural development and for urban development off the top of the capital expenditure programme of this country.

I want therefore to suggest to you that the difficulty that the Opposition has in supporting this legislation has nothing to do with section 16 of the legislation or has nothing to do with seeking to create two Barbadoses. It has to do with the fact that they presided over a Government that never saw the individual needs of people as an urgent priority to be dealt with and it is consistent, Sir, with a decision to abolish Local Government in the 1960s where they felt that Local Government could be abolished at the alter of political expediency simply because they wanted to retain power in certain districts but that it did not matter that the persons who benefitted from the provision of welfare as well as the provision of benefits on the ground would suffer from the abrupt removal of Local Government. It is the same philosophy, Sir, that has seen them not concentrating on the individual development of people and the hardship that poor people in this country experience from day-to-day. I want therefore to suggest that I would have been very surprised had the Opposition all of a sudden determine that they would support this legislation given the history of their approach to Government over the last 30 years in this country. 5.20 p.m.

I would also like to say, Sir, that I want to make it very clear because people have a funny way of misinterpreting what I say by you, Sir. This Barbados Labour Party Government, Sir, is committed to alleviating the burden and the hardship on poor people whether they are in urban Barbados or rural Barbados. But we believe that the needs in rural Barbados can be best met

by a Commission whose sole responsibility because they have nothing else to do is to address the needs of people living in the rural areas. Equally, Sir, those living in the urban areas will benefit from a Commission who will seek to examine the peculiarities of urban Barbados as opposed to rural Barbados and be able to dedicate itself to the task of providing for urban Barbados without having to worry and be drawn off track on those of rural Barbados because there is a separate entity dealing with rural Barbados.

Sir, in 1980 or 1981 the Barbados Labour Party Government passed what was the most revolutionary piece of legislation in post-Independence Barbados and that was the Tenancies Freehold Purchase Act. And the thrust, Sir, of that legislation was to provide that persons who had been living on tenancies for a period of time and became a qualified tenant could purchase plantation land at 10 cents a square foot. Sir, this was the most revolutionary piece of legislation in the Caribbean in the post-Independence movement in the Caribbean. But, Sir, while we dealt adequately and fully with plantation tenancies, we dealt in a very *ad hoc* manner with urban tenancies and suburban tenancies.

I want to suggest to this Honourable House, Sir, that the time has come for the Barbados Labour Party to treat the urban tenancies of this country in the same way that led it to treat the plantation tenancies in 1980, not necessarily at the same quantum that was lifted then but understanding the principle that persons who had lived on land for decades and in some cases centuries should have the right to form of security of tenure and should have the right for subsidization, Sir.

Now the difficulty with the legislation, Sir, is that most of the urban tenancies were never listed and also the manner for calculating the cost of urban tenancies as opposed to plantation tenancies differed substantially. I want to suggest to this Honourable House that the time has come for us to review how best we can ensure that the problems relating to urban tenancies can be regularized in terms of the (1) total and adequate provision of services, and (2) that those persons who live on urban tenancy spots have the opportunity to receive the same level of subsidy that this Government in 1980 gave to plantation tenancies and that those persons living in St. Michael, Sir, be given the opportunity through some form or manner to purchase those lots as a matter of right. Because if you want to say anything to me, you can say that we cannot have understood that there should have been one provision for persons living in rural Barbados when it came to plantation tenancies and a different one for urban Barbados particularly when Fairfield used to grow cane within recent years.

That, Sir, is the crux of my argument as it relates to urban renewal. Many of the problems that emanate in the

law courts of this country relating to violence, black guarding abuse, *et cetera* emanate from the fact that people have difficulties a lot of the time with boundary disputes, disputes down the line of water or sewage going over to the next person's property because of an inability to have properly laid out the plots that exist in these urban tenancies. Those difficulties that pertain to boundaries have led very often to many criminal cases in this country. And it is not fair to the people living in St. Michael to have to be subjected to circumstances where the *ad hoc* development of tenancies has now contributed to the social problems that surround their existence in St. Michael.

I want to suggest, Sir, therefore that this vehicle dealing with rural development would become defused if it had to deal with those peculiar problems relating to the development of urban tenancies. I want to further suggest therefore that it would have been unwise and adding another level of true bureaucracy for us to have combined an urban and rural development commission in one because there would be so much sifting through before you could get to the point of delivery as this legislation envisages that it will do in terms of fitting the ground running.

I therefore want to suggest, Sir, that the approach taken by this Government to have two separate commissions so that they can remain focused on the remit that the legislation will give them is one that will ensure that the persons who are intended to benefit from this legislation will in fact benefit. There are some constituencies that straddle both urban and rural. Mine is one. I can be down in Military Road and parts of Bush Hall which is as urban as they come, over 5 000 people in less than one square mile living, conditions where boundary disputes are rampant, conditions where people are exploited in the houses in which they are forced to rent just to be able to remain within the locale in which they grew up. Or I can be, Sir, in the cold hole in Bournes Village in St. George where the road in the cold hole has not been fixed for over 35 years, where in the cold hole even on a dry day is a threat to one's security of limb, where the road in the cold hole on a day when it rains causes the 70 or 80 people living there to come out with plastic bags on their feet because they cannot even miss and go on the playing field next door because that playing field is susceptible to flooding.

I want to suggest, Sir, therefore that there cannot be an inflexible approach to the delivery of services according to constituencies. But there is a recognition that there are some areas on the borders of St. Michael that are distinctly rural and that some areas in Christ Church that are distinctly urban in their makeup and I would venture to say soon, Sir, in St. Philip if the further development takes place up there as is expected to. Therefore, there has to be a flexibility of approach by the members of both the

Rural Development Commission and the Urban Development Commission in respect to what has to be done because there are in fact problems that are peculiar to each. There are problems that are common to both, but there are problems that are peculiar to each. So that there has to be that flexibility of approach.

I would only wish to say, Sir, that at the end of the day this is about making a difference in people's lives. This is about understanding that Government is not only about ensuring that the economy grows or that tourism grows or that people invest on the West Coast, or that BAMC can control the sugar plantations. This is about understanding that we as parliamentarians particularly in the absence of a Local Government system have a responsibility to the welfare of each and everyone of our constituents. I would therefore suggest that I really must agree with the Honourable Member for St. Michael West when he said that as parliamentarians we are not equipped to meet those individualized needs of the constituent and that one of the greatest things that happened in this country that should have been dealt with 25 and 30 years ago, was that when the Democratic Labour Party abolished local government in this country they should have ensured that when they placed a greater burden on the shoulders of parliamentarians in here that they empowered them to be able to meet the real needs - I am not talking about political patronage in its rawest and crudest sense, Sir, I am talking about genuine needs of hardship - they should have empowered them to be able to meet them in some manner or form. I think if there is anything we still have as a Parliament to discuss is how best we can ensure the empowerment of parliamentarians to meet the needs of individual constituents. One of the reasons for the cynicism of the population in this country is the inability of a parliamentarian, not to deal with the macro-situation, not to deal with the improvement of tourism figures or sugar or education policy or whatever, but it is the inability to see that that parliamentarian can make a difference to the life of an individual in a constituency. 5.30 p.m.

I hope, Sir, that this is only the first step to that, that the second step will be the establishment of the Urban Development Commission and that the third step will be a resolve on the part of the Members of this Chamber that we must put a system in place that understands that parliamentarians must be empowered more than by just giving them a Constituency Assistant and a paltry sum for the rental of a Branch house; that being a parliamentarian, in the absence of local government, means servicing the needs of people, the joys of people, the hardship of people, all of those things in addition to what we do as Ministers of Government or in our individual professions, if you are in the Opposition or on the back bench. I hope that this Parliament can be mature enough to recognise that that

must be the natural, logical step of what we are doing here with the establishment of the Rural Development Commission, and eventually the Urban Development Commission.

In those few words, Sir, I would wish to heartily congratulate, as I said, the Honourable Minister of Agriculture. I would also wish to place on record congratulations to the persons who really carried this during the election campaigns 1991 and 1994. I cannot speak of times before, because that will be hearsay for me, but I speak specifically of the Honourable Members for St. Joseph, Christ Church West, St. Thomas and of course, Sir, the Honourable Prime Minister, whose philosophy has allowed it to blossom even further, but more importantly, whose position as Minister of Finance has made it a reality.

Thank you very much, Sir.

Mr. L. A. WEEKES: Mr. Deputy Speaker, if you were around and participating in politics as long as I have been doing, you would not be surprised at the kind of expressions and debate today. Clearly, no one would object to development of any particular area which will bring about social development and in some way enhance the lives of people, but what clearly demonstrates the problem with this debate is this. I just want to quote from the Chief Medical Officer's Report for 1990, which is really the basis for what I want to say. On page 8 it says:

"The country is divided into 11 districts called parishes and because of its size it would be misleading..."

I want you to listen to that word...

".... to apply urban/rural classification to the Barbadian population."

Now, Sir, when you study that statement very carefully, it was clear that the planners for the development of Barbados had seen Barbados as one unit, and whatever devices or methods or policies were introduced, they were introduced with the understanding that all residents in Barbados were considered equal. But on the basis of what I just read, I will continue a little further on to demonstrate the very real reason why we would have a tendency to see development in Barbados as if it is one-sided. But that is not the case, Sir, it is always the case of taking the physical structure of the country and the population development

Now, the Prime Minister made a very interesting statement this evening. He said very clearly that he is going to allocate \$10 million for these various sections, but I want to suggest that when you look at the population in

the country it is going to be very difficult to satisfy one section against the other by virtue of the needs of the people. In something you have something like 37% of the population, Christ Church 17%, and what has not come out yet is where, according to them, the urban^ural begins and ends, because you can only allocate funds on the basis of equal development if you know exactly that you are going to deal with equal areas. If you take an area like St. Michael with 37% of the population and determine that as part of an urban development, and then take other areas like St. Andrew 2%, St Joseph 2%, *et cetera*, clearly it means that one of two things has to happen. Either the development in St Michael will have to slow down, because that allocation on the basis of the smaller areas with the same amount suggests that the St. Michael areas will then be in a position not to develop.

I do not want to go into the specific details, but Barbados is not a fully developed country, it is a developing country, and obviously development will take place over a number of years and people will determine how they will settle. If you watch carefully what is happening in Barbados generally, the whole commercial development is the thrust. It is starting to move from the Bridgetown area and stretching out. Once that happens, Sir, you are bound to know that there is going to be need for services as it develops, and as residents improve their homes - and there is no doubt in my mind that you can hardly determine, if you are a visitor to Barbados, the difference between the country districts, as you used to call them, and the city districts. People actually share in the same revenues producing developments. If you go to St. Andrew you will hardly find a person who would not have benefited, even in the education system. In the health services system it is the same thing. There is an evenness in each allocation that is made and so the country starts to develop in such a way that eventually the entire country will stan to feel the benefit as it gradually progresses.

I am not satisfied that a Commission is likely to accelerate this process. For one reason, Sir, this Commission could only be another name for a Statutory Board. They operate in similar ways because they are appointed by the same people, and if I understand how they function and relate to the Minister, then obviously whatever happened with the Boards in the past is likely to happen to the Commissions that are set up. These Commissions are still going to be subject to a number of things which may very well militate against some of the implementation. If the Government feels that is the best approach, that is their policy and one has to accept that is the way they want to do it, but as I see it, Sir, the Commissions themselves will have a lot of difficulty in satisfying people on an individual basis, and most likely on a collective basis.

Two things start to happen with this Commission as I see it. It has to be very careful that it does not create

further problems in the districts and, as said before, the Commission is not an independent, separate entity, it has in some way to relate to some of the other ministerial departments from which it will have to draw some kind of support and direction, because it would be impossible for the Ministry to have one direction and the Commission pursuing another. They will have to be co-ordinating their work in such a way that there is some harmony in getting results.

It is on that basis then, Sir, that I have a difficulty in separating urban and rural. What I think is necessary in the whole exercise is to acknowledge the fact, as we all do, that there are still pockets of undeveloped areas. I could take you in my own constituency and show you roads that were left from one Government to another. They were left because, in my view, we are not handling our parliamentary responsibilities correctly. There are many cases in which Ministers from both sides seem to forget that the final result of their actions is for the country as a whole and not for who has the constituency at the time. You will find Ministers believing that it is some political weapon that they can use in order to depress each other. 5.40 p.m.

I heard the Honourable Member for St. Joseph speaking this morning. He mentioned St. Joseph. Who represented St. Joseph for a number of years? The Premier of the country represented St. Joseph for a number of years and I remember hearing that same Premier saying that the only thing that a government or a prime minister cannot do is to make a man a woman. So why are we here with all the power we have, all the facilities at our disposal and we are not able in some areas to develop some of the complaints that we are hearing?

St. Thomas is another one. The former Prime Minister represented St. Thomas and I hear in this Chamber the Honourable Member for St. Thomas complain bitterly. Do you need a commission to correct that? What you really needed was that Members of Parliament should take their responsibilities seriously. I hope, Sir, that this Commission is not a kind of insulation for Ministers when problems develop to tell the people it is not their responsibility as such but they can only be guided by what the Commission says. These are areas in which I believe we have to study very carefully because in modern day politics it seems to me that we don't want to undertake the full responsibility but we want others to take it for us.

This Government seems to be bent on commissions. My colleague from Christ Church West, we all shared the old idea of parliamentary democracy with participation as a general paragon, but you can stretch it too far because when on each occasion the responsibility ends at your door and you want to suggest a way how you can relieve

yourself from the criticisms which a lot of us are afraid of... I am not afraid of criticism. Any Member who comes into this Parliament representing people ought to be bold enough to take their criticism and not pass it on to anybody else.

This Commission may very well be an escape route for some Members and on the other hand it may very well be - from my experience in watching Government function - when you have young Ministers, that the inability of those Ministers to grab and to take hold and take full control may very well suggest a weakness in being able to get work done.

I hope, Sir, in all these things that this Commission may not see itself like some of the other Boards because I still think it is a Board. The people out there don't believe that. When you put these fancy names people believe that they are all sorts of good things. They believe that and it is for us to explain.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, ask any Member in here what is the general feeling of the general public to Statutory Boards? They have no faith in them and they behave like that, so the whole idea of the new name may very well suggest that something new may be happening. When something goes wrong, then we start to make different excuses. All I am saying, Sir, is that these commissions ought to be able to fulfil if you are going to set them up the purpose for which they were designed.

I have heard Members talk a lot about policies for the poor. Mr. Deputy Speaker, it is on record that this Democratic Labour Party of which I am a member has been credited with a statement that they had transformed this country from a village into a nation. You cannot do that without taking care of poor people because at that time the authority was right. My colleague from St. Michael West made the point the poor have always been an opportunity for some politicians to be able to make them believe that they care more for people than others. I do not use the word, Sir, because I believe that the people in Barbados are not as poor as they used to be. They have developed to a very high level and not only that, they don't even want to live in the city areas. They are now moving to the peace and quiet of what we call the country. A different concept from a country boy and a town boy.

You can hardly recognise when you pass some districts that the development that has taken place outstrips and in some way outmatches some of the developments in some of these areas. St. George. I think in St. Lucy I saw some development. The whole movement is forward but it is not moving at the pace that perhaps the Government feels it is moving. It needs to move faster. I agree, Sir, but

it cannot move any faster than it can be allowed to grow within the finances of what we have.

The Democratic Labour Party did not deliberately decide not to do tenantry roads. They had already gone into contract with a Venezuelan company to do the tenantry roads and it did not work. Like many projects some come off well and others do not, but you have to be very careful when you are moving into these developments that you take the people along with you.

There is a place called Lammings in St. Joseph. I attended a political meeting there one night. It was one of the first developments of street lighting in that area. To show you how comfortable the people felt in their minds in their environment, some of them complained that when the lights were switched on because they were fanners it disturbed their pigs. They would not sleep at night. They felt that that was something not desirable but we could not allow them to feel that they should remain in that backward state and so street lighting is nothing new. It is something progressive. It is something that is going on all the time. It does not take a commission to do that.

Road works the same thing. It is a question of priorities in the Ministries. There is no question of getting somebody to tell somebody what to do. You have a road to be done and it can't take any longer than a month and your Ministry sends you, turns you all around and does all sorts of things when the Minister has the power - this is the important thing - to determine what to do. If a Minister would get up and stop believing that a ministry is a little small kingdom where he operates and behaves like a governor and would start to behave as though his responsibility is not only to win a seat but, whether win or lose, that the country must benefit from that expertise that he has placed in his Ministry and most of all the policy directions that he has given.... That is what is wrong with our political system. The Parliament here is to give the sanctions but the Minister must be able to do that and I am saying to young Ministers when I see them that they need to exert themselves beyond reading and book work. They must now strive to get into the whole idea as to what the concept on which the Cabinet does things. 5.50 p.m.

Sir, I said all of that to say this, that if we are not careful we may soon have a commission set up to deal with this commission because as long as we start to shed responsibility it never ends. It keeps going on and on and on and people become lazy. I am saying we have some lazy politicians. I am saying this because over the years that I have served in Parliament I have had my disappointments and I also have had my satisfaction but there is no reason why one street light should take ten years between two Governments to be installed.

What makes it worse, a business goes there and sets up near the same place and by the next morning a light is put there. Yet still the Minister is saying he has no money, he cannot do it because he has no money. That could not be right. Whether you are in rural Barbados or wherever the important thing is direction and the ability to get work done. That is what Ministers are there for,

Sir, I have no difficulty in accepting a Government position in the direction in which they want to go but I will make my own comments based on my own observation as I see them. There is no way that you could believe that one Government would hate the poor people and the other would love them. We all have to deal with them as individuals and not the status that they have. We have to deal with them as they relate to the country because from some of those same poor come some of the same Members who sit in this Parliament.

The Democratic Labour Party has laid a foundation, not only for one section of Barbados, but the entire Barbados. Its policies have reached that far that only with time and you must always remember, Sir, that delays come with change of Government. Every time you change a Government that programme is delayed and it has to start all over again. More so if that programme has been relegated to a different priority.

These are the problems that have faced this country in terms of its overall internal development. When schools are built, they are not built for the urban area specially all the schools are alike. The children themselves demonstrate a kind of development that I was unable to believe it could be achieved in such a short space of time. Things are moving and we must tell the people when things happen, the reasons why they have happened and the truth. We must tell people what to expect and we would not be in this position spending more money because there must be a cost factor involved in setting up this Commission.

No one has said what the cost factor is likely to be. We hear what money was used for development but what is the cost factor. We do not have charitable people who come and do voluntary service we have to pay people for their services. To my mind, Sir, if we are saying that we do not have enough money to spread around we should be very careful in setting up these bodies which we are not sure will in the end cost less if another route had been taken. One thing I do know is that this Bill will not bring back to Barbados... We may understand the new words "urban" and "rural" to people of the past we hope that it does not connote to them the country boy who could not come to town and behave like a normal person. We must not try to get that we are trying to separate the country in two areas. Just as I object strenuously for any development to have the rich on one side and the poor on the other side,

it does not lend to harmonious relationships and development. There is no need why there should not be housing areas in some of the outer districts. There is no reason why but you will know, Sir, that the culture that most of those people adopt, even in our own areas in the city, we have taken long to get people to live in groups. People who are accustomed living in separate units still have to develop and cultivate a feeling of living in units together. So even if you are talking about that kind of development you have to take the people along with you. You have to educate them to these developments. Just as we graduated from the standpipe days to the water borne system they too will develop that way.

Now, Sir, I only entered the debate on the basis that one Government believes that they think more of the poor and the other does not and hence we have a problem in these two divisions. I have friends in St Thomas, I have friends in St. James and wherever I go, Sir, I feel as if I am at home. The facilities are there. Whatever you can think about shows an upward movement so the Commission cannot change all of these things in one or two years. It is an on-going process and I hope that when we conclude our deliberations on this matter that some of the points that have been raised in respect of the establishment of this Commission will be giving some consideration because they do not see everything that could happen. We can see some of the other things that can go wrong. And one of the dangers we have to avoid, Sir, is that we do not get home to people that we are now dealing with Barbados divided into two sectors.

I want the impression to go abroad that we as Barbadians are moving as one people hoping to achieve the same goals though probably not at the same time in the same areas but over a period of time we will be able to develop and achieve those goals which we think are desirable not only for the individuals themselves but for the image of the country and when people come here we hope that they will be able to take a comfortable view of Barbadians as a whole and its development.

I think, Sir, my contribution could be summarised in one or two words and I will go back to what I read. I think, Sir, that it is misleading to say that we can divide ourselves into urban and rural areas. I stay with that. I do not have any urban friends in St. James or any rural friends in St. Lucy. We are all Barbadians, sharing and enjoying together the same hospitality no matter how you look at it. Least of all we must not set up a division in the minds of the people that the Government is favouring one sector against the other.

I can assure you, Sir, that if \$10 million is adequate for what they consider a rural development St Michael,

St. James and Christ Church with 37% of the population - Christ Church with 17.5% and St. James with 8%, St. James cannot be considered as a rural area so somebody has to explain to me when they say rural what they mean. What makes an area rural? That is what I would like to hear from the Minister? Where does the demarkation line end? How do we separate urban from rural? Because you can only allocate funds in a reasonable way if you know exactly what areas you are dealing with to allocate the funds. Until we know that exactly I will state that we are one Barbados, with one concept, one outlook and one people.

We believe that there should be no attempt one way or the other to make people feel that one area is going to benefit more than the other. I believe that if not carefully spelt out the people in St Michael may probably take the view, as the Honourable Member for St Michael West has said, well from the political stand point the Democratic Labour Party has been favourable with that. I hope, Sir, that son of thing will not happen and somebody on that side will make it right and we will know that we have one Barbados dealing with the same issue, developing the same facilities for everyone. Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Mr. H. deB. FORDE: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I rise in this debate in order to express my delight that the Government has so early in its parliamentary life seen fit to start to implement this Manifesto pledge.

I find it mighty strange that the Democratic Labour Party Opposition should seek to convey in the mind of the public that the establishment of a Commission whose principal goal is to modernise rural Barbados signifies that there is going to be a division of our people into urban and rural. It is a simplification that suits the Democratic Labour Party's political thrust. It is untrue and it is unworthy of the Democratic Labour Party to take ...

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Mr. Deputy Speaker, on a point of order.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Two Members are on their feet.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I do not wish to interrupt the Honourable Member. The Honourable Member was not here from the beginning of the debate but it was not the Democratic Labour Party or the Opposition that sought to do that. From the very beginning the Barbados Labour Party, in this debate, established the division between rural and urban.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for the City.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, on a point of order. It is true that the Honourable Member

for Christ Church West was not here at the very beginning of the debate but it was no division. It was a distinction, a distinguishing between rural aspects of life in Barbados, suburban and urban.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you very much. The Member for Christ Church West

Mr. H. deB. FORDE: I listened to the debate in the precincts of the House and I heard summaries of the speeches of principal spokesmen on the radio and I am not going to be thrown off my point

I do not want to speak very long in this debate but I am going to make the point that I do not think it is worthy of the Democratic Labour Party to suggest that where we are trying to redress imbalances that have occurred in the physical development of Barbados principally, that redressing those imbalances is a further separation of what has occurred in Barbados.

Now, Sir, Barbados has made progress since I was a child in its physical and other developments. It is obvious for all of us to see. But only the purblind among us will fail to recognise that the development in southern Barbados and in western Barbados, for whatever reasons, has been at a greater pace than similar development in physical facilities in what is recognised as essentially rural Barbados. That does not mean that in some of our areas as urban Barbados has expanded we do not have rural areas. Let me take Christ Church as a classic illustration of what I mean. It is obvious that when you are in Gibbons Boggs or if you are in St. Davids for instance you are still in basically rural communities although around these rural communities they are now surrounded by quick development So that rural communities exist, not only as the Honourable Member for St Michael North West was making us to believe not only in St. James, St. Thomas and St George but there are some rural communities in St. Michael and Christ Church as well as there are in St James.

Let us take the parish of St John where I live. Although St. John has had Democratic Labour Party leadership for over 25 years, development in St. John has lagged behind development in other places to a very large extent Sir, we have recognised this and we are going to accentuate the development that must occur in those areas that are behind hand.

Let me make this point, Sir. In St. John, the only time we heard of a development plan for St. John was when the then Right Honourable Member died and there had to be a by-election. Take Society where I live, Sir, other than the road leading into Holy Cross Church, the other areas have no amenities, the people have to take in strands of pipe up to now.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: On a point of order, Sir, the Honourable Member is misleading the House. The Honourable Member said, and I quote, "take Society where I live", Now anyone who heard the words that followed would believe that the Honourable Member is living in some shack in some poverty, I think that is not fair to the House, Sir. 6.10 p.m.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Continue, Sir.

Mr. H. deB. FORDE: Sir, I want a serious debate. I really am not trivializing this matter, Sir. I am dealing with a very serious point because the people who live in this area take it seriously.

Now the Labour Party recognize this disparity and we proceeded in the period of 1976 to make some start on it by putting in place the Freehold Tenancies Purchase Act. Because we believed that if you gave people the right to own the land the Barbadian industry and initiative would lead to self-development in itself. I am happy to say that that legislation which is the most radical piece of social legislation that I have seen in the House since I have been in the House for 24 years has already started the transformation of rural Barbados. You will see houses going up and people putting in wall houses and making the changes where they did not exist before. We are giving them up to now the right to buy land at 10 cents a square foot. Pool Tenantry, if I may cite one, also Colleton Tenantry - now people believe that they can invest and own their own homes and now the Government has been following and doing the other development that is necessary. But there are large areas of the real rural Barbados that has lagged behind. We have spent more in capital projects in southern Barbados and in western Barbados than we have in capital projects even in northwestern Barbados although St. Lucy has been quite happily attended to during the Barbados Labour Party time. But we have spent more and concentrated more in that type of development

I have heard Honourable Members on the other side talk about the drift that has occurred and how people have migrated in our small island from the parishes of St. Andrew, St. Joseph and St. John into the parish of Christ Church and St. Michael and sometimes parts of St James because they believe that the opportunities available were not there.

Sir, why do Members consider that there is some arterial motive behind this bit of legislation? Let me take another example. Within the European Community, you will find the Community directs special development funds and special development authorities for those parts of a country within the Community that have lagged behind

other parts. So they have what they call Special Regional Development Funds to deal with parts of Ireland, parts of Britain and parts of Portugal that have lagged behind. Within our own country, we have to deal with the problem. We started it as I said in the Freehold Tenancies Purchase Act We started it with a scheme to upgrade the agricultural areas like in Gibbons Boggs and Sturges in the 1976 to 1986 term of the Barbados Labour Party because we had to put in the water, lights and the roads, and a market system.

This Commission will allow us to access funds particularly for this purpose and now that we are being graduated out of the World Bank and elsewhere we will be able to say to them for concessional funding - here are the genuine poor in our rural community who still lag behind the average GNP per capita of the other Barbadians. It will possibly provide us with the opportunity to access those concessional funds to help with the quick development of Barbados.

Now, Sir, I represent a constituency that is basically suburban and I would not come into this House and support legislation if I thought the purpose of the legislation was to penalize suburban or urban people. Because we do have the suburban poor and we do have the urban poor. We have urban areas that also lag behind in development and they are very depressed. You will notice that this manifesto addresses some of the urban problems as well and the urban development that is necessary in the community. But I think that Members will be mistaken if they see this as a political ploy instead of looking at the substance of the matter.

I want to make one other point, Sir, in this debate and it is a point that all Barbadians must take serious note about. One-seventh of the land mass of Barbados is in the Scotland District. It stretches from St. John to St. Lucy. The Scotland District is not simply St. Joseph and St. Andrew. There are large slippage areas in Bath and Coach Hill and going right back down almost to Pico Teneriffe. So that the Scotland District is a danger zone for the future survival of Barbados and yet it has tremendous potential if we properly manage the slippage that is occurring there and we go for a development of that district.

Now part of the purpose of this Bill is to concentrate on the problem in the Scotland District area. The Party has clearly said and the Government is giving vent to its manifesto's promise to the public that we will rehabilitate the Scotland District and convert it into an economically and socially vibrant region of Barbados. That I think should be one of the primary goals of this Commission. We have to spend money if we are going to preserve that one-seventh of our land mass and maintain its beauty and maintain its development for Barbados.

Sir, my intervention is simply to say this. This is part of a plan that those of us who came into leadership positions in 1976 sought to effectuate in order to make sure that we did not have two Barbadoses. It is not to create two Barbadoses. It is to ensure that we will never have two Barbadoses. I take just the opposite view from my friend, the Honourable Member for St. Michael North West in that regard. I do not mind, Sir, who wants to claim paternity of the phrase "two Barbadoses". It is irrelevant as far as I am concerned. I hear a lot of people also claiming paternity of the phrase "economic enfranchisement". I have been in politics long enough to know that everybody wants some place in the political firmament and therefore people have short memories. But good research will tell you where both phrases originated. The more important thing is not the phrase. The important thing is the ideas that go behind it. If you go back, you will see the concept in the manifestos of this Party and discussed among a lot of us around the table looking at what kind of Barbados we would like to see into the 21st century and beyond as early as 1976. Even more important for me than the concept is to ensure that whilst I am still in political life my political colleagues will honour the philosophy and the concept by implementing.

I congratulate the Government for doing an excellent job and the Minister of Agriculture for introducing this in the House, the Prime Minister and the Cabinet for voting money and I would like to see more money for it next year and the plan go rapidly. Do not put too much bureaucracy around it. We do not want a lot of people around it and spending the money just on bodies. We want the money spent for the benefit of the people. So that when I drive through St. John, Sir, before I meet my Maker and wake up again with the Right Honourable Member for St. John who has now deceased I will be able to tell him that the St. John he left is a St. John that we have convened into a Barbados that all of us could be proud of. Thank you very much, Sir. 6.20 p.m.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER left the Chair and Mr. SPEAKER resumed the Chair.

Mr. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for St. George North.

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: Mr. Speaker, I have lived all my life in a rural constituency, and I now have the honour to represent a rural constituency. I believe that there are so many problems within the rural areas, many of which have been addressed by Honourable Members here today, and I do not want to go through and identify and itemise each one. I want to say though, Sir, that I believe the Prime Minister clearly articulated the problems that are seen within the rural areas today.

I also believe, Mr. Speaker, that when one looks at Barbados as a whole one sees there is some difference in terms of economic development between the rural areas and the urban areas, and although Honourable Members on that side would try to say that there is a division and we are trying to divide Barbadians, I believe that culturally, historically there has always been a difference between the urban Barbadian as well as the rural Barbadian. For example, the same problems that exist in rural Barbados do not exist in urban Barbados. The same problems that exist in housing, for example, within urban Barbados do not exist in rural Barbados. The problems of lighting which exist within rural Barbados do not exist in urban Barbados. The problems of transportation, Mr. Speaker, which have been a problem in rural Barbados do not exist in urban Barbados, and therefore one has to try to reduce the imbalance which existed for a number of years in Barbados between the urban and rural areas.

That is why I believe, and the Prime Minister has made the point, that this Commission must be seen in co-partnership with the Urban Renewal Programme and Members must not forget that earlier this year we were told that the Urban Renewal Programme would be coming later this year. In fact, I believe that over \$150 000 was earmarked for the Urban Development Programme and so far Members must know that work has begun within the Ministry of Housing on the urban programme. Right now there are a number of workers in the field looking at how to develop infrastructure within the urban tenancies, so it is not true to say that nothing is being done within the urban areas of this country.

This Commission is important, Mr. Speaker, because I see it not only empowering the rural poor. Since the Tenancies Freehold Purchase Act of 1980 this is the one Commission that will not only empower the rural man but will take the Tenancies Freehold Purchase Act into the new century.

Mr. Speaker, when you look at places in St. George like Golden Ridge, Roach Village and Airy Hill - and I heard Honourable Members talking about the paving of roads - but there are some places in St. George where no roads were ever built. There are some places in St. George where people have to pass through gullies and grass pieces without roads. The Prime Minister knows very well because he went during the last election at Golden Ridge, and we know that every time you open the newspaper you see the name Golden Ridge highlighted. Therefore it is untrue to say that the type of problems that exist within rural Barbados still exist in urban Barbados. We understand poverty exists in urban Barbados, but the type of problem which exists in rural Barbados is not the same problem that exists in urban Barbados. They are two different problems, they are not to the same degree and they have to

be addressed. That is why we say that this Commission is a co-partnership with the Urban Renewal Programme, but things have to be done systematically.

I believe, Mr, Speaker, that a lot can be done through this Commission. I see it as having a hands-on approach where a number of fundamental small things can be done up front. For example, let us look at bus stops. If you travel through the country tonight there are many young people and old people who have to get off at bus stops and cannot see where the bus stop is. I am saying that where you have bus stops some shelters can be erected, some small bridges, pavements, all these are things I believe can be addressed within this Commission,

I also believe that the rural person needs employment. There was a time when unemployment was nil within rural Barbados. There was a time when there was no unemployment in St George, because everybody looked forward to agriculture. They went to the farm, they planted their own crops and so on. Today many persons are unemployed because agriculture is almost nil among small farmers. This Commission is important because it will provide some land for those persons who want to get into agriculture. But I also believe that the Commission should go a step further, not only providing land for small farmers but also providing Extension Officers. There was a time when Extension Officers from the Ministry of Agriculture came around to find out if a tree needed to be sprayed, if a man had a sick pig, sheep or cows that needed attention. Extension Officers visited the area to find out what was happening. These are things Extension Officers did a decade ago. Today, Mr. Speaker, there are no Extension Officers and I believe that this Commission should not only provide land for the farmers, but provide technical assistance beyond land.

Honourable Members were talking about who is the rightful father of this Commission, but I believe that the Prime Minister must be congratulated, because it was he who more than any person else tried to revive this idea of making sure that rural Barbados gets its fair share of the economic cake. 6,30 p.m.

I also believe that the time has come for rural Barbados not only to be linked, but we need to have cottage industries. We need to have industrialisation, as the Honourable Minister talked about economic dualism. Today we see it in Barbados where there are almost 2 Barbadoses. We need to understand that if the rural man is to progress we need to find jobs for him through industrialisation. That is why I must say that the decision not to close Bulkeley Factory was indeed a good decision.

I hope that as long as this Government continues in office that Bulkeley Factory will continue to remain open

because one has to understand that it is the St. George Valley which produces the most canes. Nothing else can be grown in St. George Valley but canes. For years it has had the biggest crops. Therefore, I believe more can be done around the St. George Valley to bring in agro-industries.

The Honourable Member for St. Lucy talked about an agricultural processing plant. That is a good idea but that could only come if you have small holdings where young people get back into agriculture and I must say that I have met a number of young people, now getting back into sugar production. This will help to promote employment within Barbados.

I also believe that this Commission when it gets going and it has the right technical persons, because we need people who understand what it is to develop and live within a rural community. We need people who will understand the rural person. We need people who will understand that within the rural area there is a need not only for an economic side but also for recreation. In most country areas there are no pavilions. I think someone spoke on that today. In most country areas you have a piece of ground where the guys go to play cricket but there is no actual pavilion and therefore the need is for recreational facilities with proper playing facilities and pavilions for the young guys to play on.

I also feel that as we develop as a modern country, recreation, jobs and also other facilities to help the people of Barbados will benefit in the long run and, therefore, I believe that there are no 2 Barbadoses. There is one Barbados but we have to understand that the needs of the rural person are quite different from the needs of the urban Barbadian.

When we take all these needs into consideration - for example I have travelled through the city and I saw the needs of those persons living in the city. I have travelled St. Michael. The needs are quite different. The man in the country needs some land to work and the type of housing programmes that can be put in the country will not necessarily be put in a city. The countryman does not need terrace units. The city person needs terrace units. We need to understand this. The man in the country needs a piece of land as well as a house. The guy in the city needs work and a house. It is completely different and in the final analysis we need to understand and help the poor working citizen in Barbados and that is why I want to assure the Honourable Member that the Urban Committee will help address some of the needs of the people from the city. Thank you very much.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member for St. Philip North.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: On a point of order, Sir, I would just like to draw to Your Honour's attention the Honourable Member would need the leave of the House to speak having spoken already, The Honourable Member seconded this Resolution, Sir.

Mr. SPEAKER: Please, let me rule.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: When the Honourable Member seconded the Resolution he did not seek to reserve his right to speak and it is my...

Asides,

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Sir, I am appealing to Your Honour. I think the House would give the Honourable Member the right to speak but it should be done that way, Sir.

Mr. SPEAKER: I would like to bring to the attention of Honourable Members to my left Standing Order 28(15) which states that a Member may second the motion without prejudicing his right to speak.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Mr. Speaker, Sir, the manner in which that has been done, with the greatest respect Sir, is that when the person seconds the Resolution he indicates that he intends to speak by reserving his right to speak. This has been a tradition in this House for as long as I have been here in the last 20 years. It is not a question of rights. I believe that over the last 20 years that I have been here the manner in which that rule has been interpreted was that 0 person who is seconding a resolution who intends to speak will indicate that he intended to speak by reserving his right.

Aside.

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

Mr. B. M. TAITT: In the interest of the House, if the Honourable Member wishes to speak and had forgotten to reserve his right that leave can be given in this House. If we are going to be changing the patterns of this House as we go along it means that...

Aside.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: It is not antiquated foolishness. That is how it has been done in this House from the time I have been here.

I believe, Sir, that it would be in the interest of this House to maintain the standards which this House has had with regard to that particular rule and I think it would do

no injustice if the Honourable Member sought the leave of this House to speak again. Otherwise, Sir, Your Honour, I submit, would begin a new approach where persons will be allowed to speak twice in a debate, I draw Your Honour's attention for what it is worth.

Mr. SPEAKER: Just let me clarify this before we move on. While of course we do recognise and accept the traditions of this Honourable House the Rule 28(15) clearly states that a Member may second a motion without prejudicing his right to speak and there is nothing in that Rule that states he has to reserve his right to speak. Could we proceed please.

Hon. R. N. OREENIDGE: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I believe that this BUI to establish Rural Development Commission is a classic example of the way this Government feels about people because it meshes quite comfortably with my philosophy on rural development. Rural development to my mind is about people first. It is not merely a matter of putting a road in a district or putting a street light around the corner. People, Mr. Speaker, form the core of rural development and it is around them that the development takes place. Rural development says in crystal clear terms to my mind that no set of people in Barbados should be made to feel that they are second class citizens and that every citizen should have access to certain amenities such as electricity, water, proper collection of garbage, accessible roads and indeed the whole works. Rural development is an attempt to bridge a pre-existing gap where amenities for people are concerned. 6.40 p.m.

Mr. Speaker, the point about people cannot be made strong enough. I represent a rural constituency, Sir, and I am a country boy and I want to join with the Honourable Member for Christ Church East and I make no apologies for it in saying that when as a first former I was at a city school that people like myself were always reminded that we were country bucks. And it did not stem from any hatred of the fellows from the country. It did not stem from any hatred of the country bucks. We were told that we lived behind God's back. It had nothing to do with distance. It had absolutely nothing to do with distance. All it means is that the area where I came from was sadly lacking in amenities. That is all that it had to do with it. We were told that we lived behind God's back because we did not have electricity. I learnt my Latin with a kerosene oil lamp and the other fellows had, and that is what they were trying to tell us. Now it just meant, Mr. Speaker, that we were of lesser status than others.

So those who try to trivialize this particular Bill now, Mr. Speaker, do not understand the problem which we would have endured as country bucks in those days. We should not run away from the fact because there

was clearly a time when the people from the rural areas were marginalized. We cannot get away from it. It is part of our history and we cannot live it down. Indeed, a lot of people in those days thought that it was more appealing and far more beneficial to move into the city area and live and work there. They felt as though they were doing something important. They felt that they had arrived when they came back up a Saturday or Sunday to tell us that they were living in town.

So rural development as I see it, Mr. Speaker, is aimed at destroying the last vestiges of that archaic and outdated way of thinking. It is aimed as the Honourable Member for Christ Church West has said to create one Barbados. So that I should not be misunderstood, Mr. Speaker, I want to make the point too that Barbados has indeed come a long way. A lot has been done in the country areas and a lot has been done in the rural districts. Districts which used to be in complete darkness now have shining street lights. Those of us from the country who used to read our Virgil and Cicero by lamps now watch our children play the electric video games. We have come a long way, Mr. Speaker, and indeed the standpipe has gone generally speaking and most people have running water. It is a fact and the trek could very well be seen now the other way around as some people have said where people are moving into what we refer to as the rural areas. Without politicizing the whole matter, I can safely say that both parties are to be commended for the progress which we have made and which the people in the rural districts have made. But we must not relax and we should not think, Mr. Speaker, that our job is over. We still have some work to do. In particular, a lot of finishing touches remain to be done.

I do not see in Barbados what I have seen in other Caribbean territories. It is a fact that in certain Caribbean islands when you drive into the country you can see that it is country. Some of them are almost primitive and as I said both Parties are to be commended for bringing us to where we are. We still have some work to do. I have received about 100 requests from certain areas of my constituency for street lights. It is a fact. We have a lot of work to do. People call about the roads almost daily especially the tenantry roads and some of them beg you to just drop a load of marl for them to get out. This is a fact. They call and they say all that they want is a load of marl to patch the hole in the road. That is all they are asking for.

We are disadvantaged in quite a lot of instances, Mr. Speaker. Let us take certain World Bank projects where you are getting a loan to do road repairs. One stipulation could very well be a traffic count and if there is not a certain volume of traffic on that particular road in St. Lucy, St. Philip or St. John, you will not qualify for road repair under that particular loan. These are the areas in which we

are disadvantaged and this is why this particular programme which is earmarked specifically for the rural development in Barbados is such a strategic one. We simply cannot talk about having a developed country when some of our population still have no running water. Some are still without, not a lot. But let us put the finishing touches on it. As some 3 or 4 Honourable Members have already said, we still have people using outside pits as toilets. I believe, Mr. Speaker, that a country's development must be measured and must be seen in terms of that country's entire development with no pockets of significant difference at all.

The Rural Development Programme, Mr. Speaker, is therefore a continuing effort at the unification of our population. That is what it really is to try to unify the people of Barbados. So we cannot build up certain areas and leave others in the dark ages and we need to understand that development must continue throughout the length and breadth of this country if we are to go forward as a single unit.

Mr. Speaker, over the years the people in the rural districts have sought to better themselves. You have to commend those country folk. They are a special kind, those hawkers in particular who used to walk to town when I was a boy to sell their produce from places like St. Philip to make some of us what we are today. Some of our fore-parents fell flat on their faces at night while carrying heavy baskets on their heads across bumpy roads where the shining light was not from a street light but from the stars above. That is a fact, Mr. Speaker. I can talk about it because my grandmother fell and I say that with a certain amount of feeling. No roads while walking home from town, she fell flat on her face. I am speaking because she told that to me.

So when I hear people talking about the country, I know what I am speaking about. They do not know, Mr. Speaker. Even today some of us in rural Barbados cannot get out of a vehicle without having to walk a long and muddy track to get into their houses. It is a fact. Go up to Vineyard or Lynches and certain tenancies in the country which are in need of a basic network of roads. This Rural Development Programme aims to address that problem. Lynches, River, Bushy Park, Vineyard, Moncrieffe, Chapel Land, Padmore Village are all crying out for tenantry roads and I believe that this particular programme will go a long way to benefiting those people. Irreparable damage, Mr. Speaker, is very often done to cars which attempt to do the impossible in the roads in some of those districts that I have just referred to. I have had to go into a particular district because the chap called me to show me what the holes in the road did to his car, one wheel off and all underneath where the chassis is raking on the ground because of the roads. A lot of the tenantry roads in this country are badly in need of repair.

Mr. Speaker, the best agricultural lands in this country are obviously rural lands and I believe ideally that there should be some spin off where small farmers who make the country area the food basket of Barbados should be taken on board with money generating schemes even more so than some of the very nebulous projects that some people come up with and actually get funding for. I believe that the small farmers in the country deserve assistance and I do believe that the Rural Enterprises Fund will go towards benefiting those people.

The other point that I want to make, Sir, is that obviously rural development being as wide as it is there are going to be a lot of constituents for it. Indeed, everybody is going to want a slice of the cake. Everybody wants a piece of the action. I do believe, Sir, that it will mean prioritizing the projects and I hope that this will be done with some care. You have to prioritize the projects which you are going to embark on and you have to be careful about putting certain constituencies ahead of others.

Sir, I just want to say that I lend my unstinting support to this Bill which has one main object. It has as its main objective, Sir, to enhance the quality of life for the inhabitants of rural Barbados. Thank you, Sir.

SUSPENSION

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

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

The question that this Honourable House be now suspended until 8 o'clock was put and resolved in the affirmative without division, and Mr. SPEAKER suspended the House accordingly. 6.55 p.m.

RESUMPTION

Mr. SPEAKER: The sitting is resumed. The Honourable Member for Christ Church East Central.

Mr. D. CARTER: Mr. Speaker, I rise first of all to support this Bill before this Honourable Chamber, the Rural Development Commission Bill. I would also like to congratulate the Minister of Agriculture on his presentation. Obviously the genesis of this Bill started way back when members of the Barbados Labour Party conceived the idea and it is good to see a party like the Barbados Labour Party having the people in the rural areas at heart, knowing that they always lagged behind in relation to development.

As far as I am concerned, Mr. Speaker, this rural development in my constituency is all about roads, lights

and jobs for the workers in the area. As you know, in this country the Police Force is having a difficult time with crime, and certainly in my area where there is a shortage of lighting facilities, quite recently in Kingsland there was the breaking of cars at least four times per week. I would like to say that this Bill has come at the right time where at certain strategic points we could have lighting in areas like Kingsland, Durants and Edey Village. I have been written several letters from the area in relation to this sort of thing.

We have to think about the young people and the old people of this country. One Member alluded to the fact that old ladies cannot go to church now because of the bad conditions in the country areas. I can say that in my area, where there are a lot of young people, especially young ladies, the time is right when this Bill would play a very important part where our young people would be able to walk about on evenings and do their social things without any harm being done to them.

Mr. Speaker, we also have a problem in relation to the road situation in the rural areas where many people in the country districts, and the villages in particular, use their land for renting people house spots. In doing so they did not really have any roads for the people to get to and from easily during the rainy season. I think the time has come when this Government should try wherever possible to help those people who, as we heard before, when it rains heavily have to use things other than shoes, like plastic bags, to get from their respective homes.

We are all talking about rural development. In the Vauxhall area in particular, and certainly in the Church Hill area there is a situation where houses valued over \$70 000 were built and it is a shame to see that once it rains those people cannot get to and from their respective homes.

I believe also, Sir, that the time is right when the young entrepreneurs, in relation to all the unused spots, could now take the opportune time to use the land in the area where for the first time opportunity could be given to those people in the district who cannot get employment otherwise. As you know, this administration preached...,

Aside.

Mr. D. CARTER: The Barbados Labour Party preached that Job No. 1 is jobs and I believe with this rural development the people in the country areas will have the opportunity to do the small things - as I said, young entrepreneurs - who with a little guidance and help from the Government would be able to give themselves meaningful employment. I am quite happy with how things are going in my constituency in relation to development and jobs. The Barbados Labour Party in its thrust in

Christ Church East Central has just made it possible for several of the factories in the Newton area to be working at maximum efficiency and because of that drive by the Barbados Labour Party, and certainly by the Minister of Trade, I can say that that is a very enlightening thing in relation to the Rural Development Programme.

Mr* Speaker, also in my area where some of the big plantations went out of cultivation quite recently, the strain in that area is such that we have to use all the very small things in the area whereby, as I said, people in the villages can find employment such as farming, sheep rearing, the breeding of cattle and so on.

I believe that the Barbados Labour Party in its wisdom, looking at Barbados *in to to*, is actually going down the right road to make sure that all the rural areas stretching from Christ Church to St Lucy, and even in the urban areas where things are very tough. The Prime Minister said in his presentation that he is quite willing to put some \$10 million into this programme in the next year and I believe with that sort of money, if properly managed, we in this country will be able to be a better people in relation to social amenities and certainly work in general. I am quite sure that the Government in its wisdom, the managers responsible and the Minister of Agriculture, who will be responsible for administering these funds, in respective areas will see to it that the Members representing rural areas will get the money to their needs. I am quite sure that the Minister will be able to help some of those Members on the other side. We are a party looking after Barbados as a whole and not only the Members of the Barbados Labour Party.

I am sure that the Member for St. John, seeing that he and his predecessor did not do anything in St. John for the past 10 or 15 years, will be happy that this administration will be prudent enough to look after areas like St. John and others in the country. I know we have heard about many things in that area, about a development plan and so on, but I am quite sure that the people in those country areas would be happy to learn that the Barbados Labour Party, the party which always looks after the ordinary people in this country, the party which is going forward, would do something tangible so that the ordinary people of this country can feel proud.

Some Honourable Members were trying to make the point earlier that we are going to leave out urban area, but that is not so. From what I have gathered, the urban areas had the first step and we in the country areas are only trying to come on par, but I am quite sure that the Minister in his wisdom will release the funds so that all of us in here would be quite happy. There is only one gain from this, the people of Barbados in general will benefit from this Development Plan.

I know that the Tenancies Freehold Purchase Act was one of the great pieces of legislation passed and I am happy that those same people who had purchased land in the country areas, and certainly in my constituency, places like Vauxhall and Lodge Road, would be happy to know that there could be great improvement now that the rural development is now on stream.

Sir, I am happy also that I am part of this administration and I am happy that this Labour Party is on the right road in such a development

Thank you.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Mr. Speaker, Sir, if a Rural Development Commission comes, can an Urban Development Commission be far behind? I welcome this legislation and would add my voice to those congratulating the people who conceptualised this and who drafted it so that it is before us today. 8.15 p.m.

There has been much talk in the Chamber during the course of the day seeking distinctions between urban and rural. In my opinion rural in a certain sense in Barbados of necessity must be merely notional. In an island 14 x 21 rural can only be notional. But as Parliamentarians, and I believe I speak for all Members, on both sides of the House, there are very real distinctions between urban, suburban and rural. The Barbados Labour Party, Mr. Speaker, Sir, has from its inception been the party of decentralisation. This is not the first time I am making this statement here, but it needs to be made time and again so that it is not forgotten or mistaken. We are the party, on this side, of decentralisation. The Democratic Labour Party on the other hand are the great centralisers. So I can understand, Sir, why Members on that side would have difficulty with even the concept of rural development.

It was the Barbados Labour Party, in earlier administrations, that decentralised social services into rural Barbados. It was the Barbados Labour Party that first built public housing in a place like Belleplaine. It was the Barbados Labour Party that first established health centres. It was the Barbados Labour Party, as a Government, that first established secondary schools in rural areas of Barbados.

The modern history of Barbados, Sir, must of necessity reflect this. On the other hand it is the Democratic Labour Party who are the great centralisers who forced everyone to come to Bridgetown for services. It was the Democratic Labour Party indeed that abolished the system of local government which we had in 1969. The Barbados Labour Party, Mr. Speaker, Sir, came back into Government in 1976 and found that it had to again decentralise services into suburban and rural com-

munities from St. Lucy to St. Philip. It was the Barbados Labour Party who between 1976 and 1986 modernised the health centres by developing a network of polyclinics which is the envy of the Caribbean today. It was the Barbados Labour Party who embarked on a school refurbishment and rebuilding programme in this country which also at the primary and secondary level is the envy of the Caribbean today. It was the Barbados Labour Party that decentralised more public housing in those years between 1976 and 1986. It was the Barbados Labour Party that took playing fields and pavilions and social centres and the like across the length and breadth of Barbados, from Boscobel right through to Bathsheba, right through to Wotton and several areas in the suburban St. Michael. But, as in every community, there remained pockets of poverty.

I remember when I first went to the City of Bridgetown in 1976 that I saw homes with dirt floors. I am happy to say that today nobody lives in a house like that in the City of Bridgetown any more although I can still take you to the now abandoned houses which had dirt floors in 1976.

When I came to the City in 1976 there were people, particularly in the up-town area who lived in barracks, Sir. Barbadians found themselves so embarrassed by the last remaining barracks as they drove up Bay Street, that it was pulled down just a few short weeks ago. A barracks is a house, Sir, with several small rooms, each with a padlock on it and each padlock representing a family with communal bathing at the public bath and communal cooking on stones in the backyard. That is what I found when I came to the City of Bridgetown in 1976 in what was alleged to be modern Barbados and I am talking inner city, Sir. This is real urban now. This is not suburban. This is not like your Constituency, Mr. Speaker. This is as urban and inner city as you could get in the Caribbean.

The fact is that in suburban Barbados and in urban Barbados you are dealing with a patchwork of tenancies. Bridgetown comprises a patchwork of tenancies and the same is true of suburban St. Michael and St. James and parts of Christ Church. In your Constituency, Mr. Speaker, Sir, you can count on several fingers the number of suburban tenancies still existing and tenancies in which urban renewal can be the only solution.

It was the Barbados Labour Party, going back to the 1950s starting in the Pine and Grazettes which started a programme of public housing for ordinary Barbadians. The City of course never enjoyed any of that and it was only in 1976, after I became a Member of this Honourable Parliament in a then Barbados Labour Party administration that for the first time ever a Government saw fit to bring a concept of urban renewal.

Electrification, right in the City of Bridgetown, The City of Bridgetown that I represent, Sir, is not Broad Street and Swan Street and Roebuck Street. I am talking about the New Orleans and Greenfield and King William Street and Beckwith Street and Chapman Lane and Lighfoot Lane and Lakes Folly and King Street This is where people live. There was a time before our time when there was very genteel living in part of the City of Bridgetown, River Road and Bay Street where the town houses were and then further on the outskirts into Pine Hill and Belleville and so on. All of that has changed. In my 19 years I have seen it all change, where now large tracks are going commercial and industrial. But I say what I have always said, cities cannot remain alive without people living in them.

We have, I think sometimes, a distorted notion of a city. You go to the City of London and you drive for 20 minutes and you are in the country side and you see cows grazing, pigs in the field and fields growing. Up-state New York the same thing. 8.25 p.m.

All the major modernization metropolitan areas that you can think of are supported by the strong rural development and it is not a matter that people are ashamed of. But I have seen in my time an attitude grow up in this country so that people felt embarrassed, ashamed, inhibited about the fact that their roots were in the country or that they came from the country. We heard talk about that already in here today about who was called a country bumpkin and who was not. That stigma too attached to people who lived in the inner city. To this day the worst things are said about the people who live in my constituency in the City of Bridgetown and I take umbrage when I hear it I come from a family that started in the City of Bridgetown. We came from Reed Street and it is a matter of pride. There is no need for being ashamed of that. We are proud about that. Those social attitudes, Sir, informed the treatment that successive Governments going back to what we used to call the bad old Colonial days live on today.

I agree with the Honourable Prime Minister when he says that he is not interested in any high rhetoric, that he is interested in the basic needs and the basic services that a Government can and must provide in our community. We are living, Mr. Speaker, Sir, in a very interesting time now. We are on the cusp of a new millennium. We are perhaps fortunate and privileged that our generation will see Barbados out of the 20th century and into the early 21st century. And in the early 21st century I believe, Sir, that in this country like in many others in our part of the world and maybe even further afield the order of the day will be an integration of rural and urban. It will become more and more difficult and it should become more and more difficult in some ways to distinguish between the quality

of life in urban Barbados and the quality of life in rural Barbados and this is what the Rural Development Commission must be about.

I believe that we are moving toward a time when there is going to be even greater collaboration that we have seen already in our time between the public and the private sectors. We grew up in a Barbados where there used to be more of a divide than we see today between the public and the private sectors. We grew up in a Barbados where the rise of NOOs and what they have done to underpin private sector/public sector development cannot be denied. We have grown up now in a Barbados like so many other places in the world where what is called the civil sector or the NGO sector is a recognized and respected entity which must work hand in hand now with the public sector if the kind of development to which we all say that we aspire is to become a reality.

This rural development concept, Sir, is in my submission about the empowerment of people. It is about people identifying with projects and programmes and taking ownership of them. I wish to say openly, Sir, that I do not favour the return to Local Government in any guise or form. There are people who remember it fondly. I do not. I cannot think of any good reason why we would want to go back to that kind of system and nobody has suggested any modernized version of it which appeals to me. But I believe that in a population of 256 000 people and just over 166 square miles that with a social democratic Government such as successive Governments have been over the past 40 years in Barbados and with a commitment to an ideal which ebbs and flows, we believe that we are now afloat. On this side of the House, we believe that over the past 8 years there was a long period of ebb. People point their finger from one part of Barbados to another. A lot has been said about St. John. St. John is really a sad case in rural Barbados where successive representatives appear to be dedicated to the under development of that parish. The late Right Honourable Errol Barrow used to boast that he did not want anybody to suggest anything for St. John. He did not want any development in St. John. Leave it alone. The people up there did not need anything. I hope that kind of thinking is behind us. Although sometimes when I listen to the Honourable Member for St. John who sits in this Parliament now...

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. I was very much enjoying the Honourable Member's speech but I do not think she should be distorting the record in this way. My understanding of those comments from the former Honourable Member related to the period when the Barbados Labour Party was in office between 1976 and 1986. But prior to that, St. John was one of the first constituencies in this country to have

lawn tennis facilities for working class people, to have beach facilities at Bath in St. John for working class people and to have all kinds of other social amenities which areas did not have and subsequently there have been those kinds of developments. But I do not expect her to put my case or his but I think she should be clear, Sir, in saying the period that he referred to that he did not want anything from the Barbados Labour Party was 1976 to 1986. I have not made the same claim yet. I would like the polyclinic finished and I would like the same commitment from the Barbados Labour Party's rural development to include St. John and any other part of Barbados because I represent taxpayers and people who care about the development of this country. Thank you very much for your graciousness, Mr. Speaker, Sir.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Mr. Speaker, Sir, the Honourable Member for St. John is full of post prandial delight and in this state of post prandial delight his imagination has run a little riot with him. I am not aware, Sir, of any lawn or other tennis facilities for the working class in the parish of St. John.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. There was a tennis court in St. John in the 1960's when every other tennis facility in this country was reserved for fee paying persons. It is in Gall Hill in St. John and it was extended since I was the representative to include volleyball, basketball and tennis.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: The Honourable Member made mention of Bath, The Democratic Labour Party's manifesto of 1961 spoke of holiday homes for the workers at Bath. The only holiday homes we ever saw at Bath related to the Democratic Labour Party and were for members of the hierarchy and some of them are still occupied today. But that kind of selective rural development is not what this concept is about.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. When I spoke of Bath in St. John perhaps the Honourable Member did not understand but I know you did, I was talking about changing beach facilities for average Barbadians that was used by average Barbadians and is still used by average Barbadians. It was the first facility which had toilets and baths for the citizens of Barbados. It was the first in St. John.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: It is not my recollection. You know, Mr. Speaker, St. John has a very interesting history in this connection. The first bath was built at Rosegate in St. John. The Minister of Social Services, my late father, delivered the opening address. He was heard to say that the then Barbados Government looked forward to the day when there would not be another such facility built, and Barbadians were shattered and shocked and could

not understand, as we would say now, where he was coming from. But we saw it as a temporary thing. 8.35 p.m.

Aside.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: It cannot be a claim to fame that it is still there. It is derelict. Development in this country has come to a place where we now convert public conveniences to other uses, because it has been overtaken by the development process.

I have heard talk, Mr. Speaker, about urban development. This is critical and I am delighted to hear the Honourable Prime Minister speak of an Urban Development Commission or its like. This is very important. The majority of people who live in Barbados live in suburban and urban Barbados. St. Michael, St. James, Christ Church, to some extent parts of St. George and St. Philip are the areas most densely populated. These are the areas where we have seen the most rapid physical development over the past 30 or 40 years, but as I have said, there remain very severe pockets of poverty. It is possible to walk not ten minutes from this Chamber, Sir, and walk on roads that are unpaved. All the things I hear the Honourable Members from deepest rural Barbados describe can be found in urban Barbados as well, so in many respects the physical needs are no different in suburban and urban than they are in rural. Persons like myself and the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East and the Honourable Member for St. Michael North have to make the case for urban renewal, as you would, Sir, if you were not in that Chair and over here. You too would be making a case for urban renewal.

It is urgent. People are linking it to tourism, they are linking it to the environment, it is being linked to almost any and every sector of our economy which has implications for urban renewal in this country. We are as needful of a decent road system, in some areas we are as needful of electrification. As happened only over the past few days, we are as needful of a water supply, we are as needful of decent housing as anywhere else, and other social facilities as well.

I see this legislation before us, Sir, as a natural successor - and I think other Honourable Members may have made this point - to the tenancies freehold legislation of an earlier Barbados Labour Party administration. Like I said, suburban and urban Barbados is just a different kind of tenantry. Life is different in suburban and urban Barbados. Lots are small. Where in the country somebody will give you a breadfruit or a pepper or a lime, in the City of Bridgetown if you do not have the money to go into the marketplace and buy it, you are not going to get it, unless you have a lot of family living in the country.

In suburban Barbados there are large developments where this is true as well. We have small, what we used to call, subtowns. A place like Eagle Hall, Mr. Speaker, a place like Bank Hall Cross Road, which would be familiar to Your Honour, Bush Hall. There was a song at one time about here where they used to talk about Eagle Hall, Bank Hall, Bush Hall, Harmony Hall, Wes Hall. The word "hall", Sir, spoke to a colonial past when those estates flourished and the hall was the Great House. There are some people living today who can remember canes growing in Grazettes, Tudor Bridge and Bush Hall. People can remember those estates. Those tenancies are still marked out. They are not tenancies in the way of urban tenancies with a curtilage where you could plant a breadfruit tree and some pea trees, we are talking about a St. Michael with premises, houses, chattel houses cheek by jowl, with palings in common. In the country everybody is surrounded, empaled with their own paling. In the City you have communal walls, communal palings, the 40 x 60 chattel lot is the reality of life in the City that still remains today, where people have to pay land rent. In some of these tenancies the ownership is in flux and doubt and in many cases they do not pay land rent any more, and I am hoping that when the time of the Urban Development Commission comes that one of the first things it will examine is the structure of the urban and the suburban tenancies. The same order that we brought to rural tenancies I hope will come to suburban and urban Barbados.

There are people who have been living on their properties for generations. I remember in the last campaign, Sir, September 1994, speaking up in the Long Gap on this matter and holding this Manifesto in my hand and reading from it about using lands at the Belle and at Waterford to create small farms for landless farmers who would be provided with irrigation and fencing and who would practise organic and other forms of farming; talking about encouraging the sale - and I am reading from page 29, Sir - encouraging the sale of tenancies to tenants. I will never forget it. There was an old man sitting on a step listening to the meeting and he put up his hand and he said: "Yes, Mistress, I want mine tomorrow morning." Because, you see, there is an attitude that in the City and in the surrounds of the City and in suburban Barbados people do not care about those things and they are prepared to rent until they die and all that kind of foolishness. Do not believe a word of it, Sir, and I know that you do not, because your constituency too is part of this large patchwork of suburban tenancies. They too, like everybody else in Barbados, want their piece of land to be able to pass it from generation to generation and to develop it. It is a tough thing when you see people converting wood to wall and doing it deliberately in the knowledge that they do not own the land and not at all sure that they are ever going to own the land, but the will and the desire to improve one's, lot and to leave something better for the generation

coming after it is stronger sometimes than what prudence would dictate, that you really need to make sure that this is your land before you put something substantial on it. People are doing it in defiance of reason and logic on a daily basis. There is no Member of Parliament, Sir, in this Honourable Chamber, who represents a suburban or urban constituency who could fail to be harassed on a daily, weekly, monthly basis by people from those constituencies who want house spots. So that need is dire. 8.45 p.m.

The City and the St Michael and other suburban constituencies and districts surrounding it, Sir, are now some 15 years behind rural Barbados in terms of tenantry reform and it is urgent that we catch up. So I would like to impress upon the Honourable Ministers who would be implicated in this, the Ministry of Housing and Lands, the Ministry of Finance, Economic Planning ...

Mr. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member has two minutes.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Thank you, Sir. All of those Ministries, Sir, I would like to make as insistent and as large a case as I can, as urgent a case as I can for similar legislation to this coming before this Honourable House. There are plans in the Ministries for which I have responsibility, which speak to a Bridgetown re-development programme and a Speightstown re-development and St. Lawrence Gap and other things which now is not the time to go into the many details but what I am saying is that what this administration is putting on the ground now is a master plan, a blue print for the entire re-development of this country. All I am asking is that urban and suburban Barbados be nudged up in the order of priorities.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, I am pleased to support the Bill.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I recall sometime towards the month of August or September 1990, in the House of the then Leader of the Opposition in St. John a number of us, including the Honourable Member for Christ Church South, the present Prime Minister and the Member for Christ Church West and myself among others were preparing a manifesto for the Barbados Labour Party and we were grappling with two problems, the question of whether there should be a form of local government in Barbados, having regard to the pace of development and the number of services that had to be delivered.

Secondly, apart from the question of local government we were looking at a mechanism that would assist in the delivery of services to constituents and we discussed local government, we discussed the establishment of various committees and ministries drawn from a wide cross-section of people to help advise Ministers and to get input and

while all of that was being discussed and tossed about it became clear that at that stage of our development the establishment of a local government structure, properly so called, was not then viable but we remembered our history and we remembered that with the abolition of local government came the proliferation of parastatal organisations to fill the gaps caused by abolition of local Government.

We had the Cemeteries and Sanitation Board organisations such as that which then received funds from the central government to perform services which had previously been performed by local government councils. Having regard to the fact that the parastatal organisation, as a concept, had not really failed Barbados we thought that in order to redress some of the inequities in Barbados that rural Barbados should have been dealt with as a separate part of Barbados in terms of the provision of services which had been denied. And so on page 40 of the Barbados Labour Party's Manifesto for 1991 these words appear, and I quote them, Sir, because it is in this context that we have to understand this Bill:

"It is quite clear that the rural communities of Barbados stretching from St. Philip across the agricultural heartland of St. George and St. John, into the Scotland District, St. James, St. Peter and St. Lucy, have not benefited as much from national development as the rest of the society.

As a result, the old, long-standing rural communities of Barbados, which have traditionally been the bedrock of our stability and progress as a nation, have started to decline. The breakdown in our communities poses considerable difficulty for us in maintaining law and order and in sustaining the stability and prosperity of the rural society.

The Barbados Labour Party accepts that one of the major challenges facing our country over the next decade and into the 21st century is that of building in rural Barbados, strong and vibrant communities in which our people will find it highly desirable to reside, work and play."

Then we set out 12 specific matters to fulfil that basic objective.

"Item No. 1 - create at the Barbados Development Bank at rural enterprises fund, specifically to assist in the financing of new projects aimed at generating new business and jobs in rural parishes and,

Item No. 12 at the very bottom of the page - establish a Rural Development Commission to implement our rural modernisation programme and to generally advise Government on all matters

concerning the improvement of the quality of life of people living in rural Barbados,"

What you see here today in the shape of this Bill is directly related to the Manifesto, not so much of 1994 as the Manifesto of 1991. You read the two together because nobody knew that we would have an election in 3 years. In 1994 even the manifesto was not as expansive as in 1991, this matter was canvassed throughout Barbados and particularly in rural Barbados and the attitude of the public of rural Barbados to matters like rural modernization is reflected in the number of seats that we have on this side representing rural Barbados, 8,55 p,m,

Mr. Speaker, what is envisaged in rural modernization? Perhaps again I have to deal with this matter historically because people forget, I do not think anybody in here has mentioned it today. Somebody tried to talk about redressing imbalances. But really we all forget that one of the things that led to the recession of 1991 to 1994 was the wild spending that took place in this country from 1989 right up to the election in January 1991. One of the persons who was responsible for that wild and extravagant spending...

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. I do not wish to challenge in entirety the Honourable Member's facts. But my recollection is that 1994 was a year of phenomenal growth. The Democratic Labour Party left this economy growing at 4.1 per cent. Right now it is growing about .4 per cent according to the Governor of the Central Bank and may not even achieve .5 per cent growth. So I think you mean 1991 to late 1992 or you could even go into 1993, but 1994 was a year of major growth not recession for this economy.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Mr. Speaker, I am not getting into that argument now. But I am not agreeing with you. You wanted to make that point for the Press. You have made it. But, Mr. Speaker, in 1991 to 1994 all kinds of thousands of civil servants and other persons were sent home and when we came here in September they were still home. Look in the yellow book and see what the figures are showing for manufacturing.

Mr. Speaker, I must return to the point that I was making. From 1989 or it may have been slightly before 1989, the Minister responsible for Transport and Works in this country in that period, Don Blackman, carved out a plan that saw the repair of all the roads in St. Michael and most of Christ Church.

Aside.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: I am glad that the Honourable Member has reminded me.

Mr. L. A. WEEKES: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. The Honourable Member is misleading the House by saying that all the roads in St Michael. I am sure that St. Michael North West was not in that.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Most of the roads. We remember the campaign, Sir, and the choice of sites was very careful. As the Honourable Member for Christ Church South was saying, they did not do certain areas where Labour Party candidates were likely to run or win and certainly where Labour Party persons held seats were completely ignored. No roads were done in St Thomas, none in St. Peter and so on. We remember very clearly. That was the way that Government's expenditure was spent in that period, Sir. People forget Only at the end of last year we were having big arguments in this House of Assembly about Mount Stinkeroo and people forget that for 6 years the residents of Arch Hall, St Thomas rural Barbados were allowed to suffer 3 to 4 times a year from stench and other noxious emissions from the garbage dump at Mangrove under a Democratic Labour Party Government. Now with that history of deliberate neglect, with that history of deliberate attempt not to provide services that were needed in rural Barbados, the Barbados Labour Party decided that the time had come in our historical development...

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Mr. Speaker, Sir, on a point of order. The Honourable Member seems to be on a roll this evening in misleading the House. I wish to give an example, Sir, of the way in which he is misleading the House. The constituent of St John - rural Barbados, Mr. Speaker, includes St John, St. George, St Philip and I will get a list of the tenantry roads done in St. Philip. But in St. John - they are Cliff, Colleton, Lemon Arbor, Pool, Wakefield, Knight's Village and we started Clifton Hall. There were tenantry roads done throughout rural Barbados in the period leading up to 1991 under the then Minister of Transport and Works, Dr. Don Blackman, and at least 36 tenantry roads had either been completed or were almost virtually completed by the time the company Inversionnes was unable to complete it Those tenantry roads were throughout Barbados.

I believe the Honourable Member is also misleading the House because there was a tenantry road in St Thomas over which debate has taken place in this House. I cannot remember the name of it

Aside.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Lion Castle. Was it then done by the Democratic Labour Party? There had been some tenantry road that had been done. So it is not entirely true to say that no tenantry roads were done and

the Honourable Member must be fair. We have all tried to do them. This is a major cross and we have all tried.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Sir, I did not say no tenantry roads were done. I pointed out, Sir, that tenantry roads in areas represented by Barbados Labour Party persons, and I called St. Peter and St. Thomas, were not done. They made an attempt in Lion Castle and put down marl and the rain washed it away. You did not try to bind it and we have determined that that will stop and that rural Barbados must get services.

Now this Bill is not just about putting in roads, water and light. Rural development as we conceive it involves the development of integrated communities in rural Barbados, as the manifesto has said to develop communities where people reside, work and play. We intend to carry business activity as well as basic infrastructural development to rural Barbados.

Now everybody who has spoken today has made the point, Sir, about what they want to see and so on. I am not getting into that. I am more concerned with how this will operate. The Honourable Member for St. Michael North West seemed to have a difficulty with it because it is called a commission and he thinks that it is like the one that they are looking into tomorrow in Court. This is a parastatal organization. It is called a commission rather than something else. We have the National Conservation Commission.

Mr. L. A. WEEKES: On a point of order, Sir. As people understand it, they may become confused with the original terminology like boards and that sort of thing. That is the only point that I was trying to make that it could be misunderstood. 9.05 p.m.

Aside.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: And they will call this RDC in time, just like the NCC.

Mr. Speaker, the establishment of this Commission will allow the Ministry of Finance to make provision for direct funding to the Commission in its own name, as when funds used to be given to the National Housing Corporation money was voted for NHC, money is voted for NCC and so on. The Minister will develop policy and give a broad framework of policy to the Commission. I would hope that in due course the Commission will see itself sufficiently broad-based - and the Act provides for the appointment of Committees - to develop little subcommittees, if you do it on a two-party basis or whatever, a committee representing two parishes, St. John and St. George, St. Thomas and St. Joseph, and so on, and these people would be able to feed

to the Director of Rural Development and to the Commission itself ideas, information about needs and wants in the various districts, so they would have an input coming up rather than the Commission feeding down to them, and so to a large extent we can really get participatory democracy in operation through this. It depends on the capacity of the Commissioners, it depends on their willingness to work to spread the interest of the Commission broadly, to get inputs from a broad cross section of persons on a regular basis to inform the work that they are doing.

As I say, water, roads and light are simple things. We know what we can do for \$750 000 in terms of street lighting, and that is one that can be done quickly. Surveys have been done in the Ministry of Agriculture to identify what roads in rural Barbados are in need of urgent repair, and, believe me, there are very, very many. But where I would like to see the Commission have an impact that is really different from the provision of ordinary infrastructural services is in the creation of employment opportunities,

We have a number of old factories, for example, in Barbados that are not being used. Carrington Factory in St. Philip, Vaucluse in St. Thomas. I would like to see the Rural Development Commission get hold of those properties, by whatever means, acquisition or lease, renovate them create in that space an opportunity for rural youth to work, to do their trades, display their craft or whatever and have centres, as it were, a set of emporiums all around rural Barbados as outlets for self-employment

I would like to see on an organised basis certain lands, starting with those lands which were formerly Government plantation lands, being leased to persons who are genuinely interested in farming to develop a cadre of farmers once again throughout rural Barbados who can make a living and sustain themselves from farming, and I hope that when these kinds of things are done that there is a linkage between that and the marketing or the agro-processing that will become necessary from the production of increased produce.

I want to make the point to the Minister of Agriculture that I have made years ago, and I am more and more convinced that I am right, it is no point telling farmers in Barbados to produce more unless you have markets for them. The great failure of the Democratic Labour Party when they had the okra and hot pepper projects was that there was no proper marketing arrangement in place. I used to grow the okras and hot peppers at home and I would call and say to the lady up at Spencers that I have a garage full of hot peppers. She would say: "We are coming for them today", and they do not come for three days. By the time they come

the peppers have started to shrink and I have to sell them to Peter Miller to grind up for hot sauce. That is not good enough. I want to get across to the Ministry - and I see certain officials here - this Bill will provide through the leasing of lands to many impoverished Barbadians an opportunity to get agriculture at the small farmer level active and moving again, but it will be a disincentive to the farmer if they tell him to grow his things, he grows them and then he has to plough them back into the ground because he cannot get them sold.

Hand in hand with this the Ministry of Agriculture has to look two years down the road when this thing is going and you have so many fanners doing various things and say that what this means is that we are going to have a glut in okras or peppers or whatever and we have to plan for it. They have to plan now and put in place the facility that is going to deal with that increase in agricultural production which this Bill can spawn, otherwise you are spinning top in mud and it is a waste. I have sent the warning, based on bitter experience, early to the Ministry to have a co-ordinated and integrated plan that moves from one stage to the next. I am sure the BAS and organisations like that would be delighted to be involved in the implementation of some of these agricultural projects.

Rural development for the Barbados Labour Party in 1995 must not be seen purely at the mundane level of putting in water, roads and light, but must be conceptualised at a higher level involving an inter-relationship of activities and services that will, as the Honourable Deputy Prime Minister said, such as will empower a lot of people who are presently, as it were, economically powerless in rural Barbados.

Mr. Speaker, I understand that there were some comments made about the use of language in the drafting of the Bill. It has been drawn to my attention that Clause 16 is one that caused some concern, and then paragraph 14 of the Schedule.

Aside.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: No problem with the Schedule. The first point I wish to make about section 16 is a section that appears in many Bills which establish or incorporate statutory corporations. You will see, Sir, in the Board of Tourism Act which was brought by the Democratic Labour Party in 1993, the First, Schedule paragraph 21 is identical with this: "Any act done or proceeding taken by the Board under this Act or Regulation may not be questioned on the ground of...." It talks about the existence of any vacancy in the membership of or of any defect in the constitution of the Board; and

(b) any omission defect or irregularity that does not affect the merits of the case."

That one as I say was passed in 1993.
9.15 p.m.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Mr. Speaker, I wish to elucidate the matter for one second. I do not want the Honourable Member to be confused about it and perhaps we could save time in Committee. That section in the Tourism Board Act I do not have much problem with because a defect in vacancy as with *de facto* as distinct from *de jure* powers and so on, I do not feel strongly about it as long as the entity is acting *bona fide*. All I am saying is that we already have an Administrative Justice Act which sets out the categories to which review can be sought I know the Honourable Member is familiar with it. This does not add anything to the rights of citizens. It does not even that much take away. I am talking about section 16(1) but what it does is, it confuses people that there may be some limitation, some shroud over them. I am not comfortable with it. I do not think citizens should feel that members of a commission are in a better position than elected parliamentarians. Nobody should feel that a member of a commission has more rights and privileges than the Minister who is the policy maker. That is all I am saying.

The section 2(a) concerns me because what it is saying is that where an act done or proceedings been taken under this Act, and let us say a contract is awarded and a person does not disclose his interest in relation to that contract that it cannot be questioned.

Now, I accept paragraph 14 of the Schedule. I am very much in favour of it I like it and I give you 100% support I think it is a positive development. Do not water it down. Let us make it clear to people serving on Boards, as we expect with Cabinet, that there are clear standards that we want applied. That is all I am saying. Let us not go and water down this scenario. Let us make sure that we do not appoint persons who are clothed with protection that policy makers do not enjoy and who cannot engage in acts which people may view as immoral without them being questioned. I really think that some reflection should be had on that. I do not mind the section "Any omission, defect, or irregularity not affecting the ..."

Mr. SPEAKER: So your point of elucidation has been made?

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Thank you, Sir.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I understand the point that is being made. I will give the Honourable Member the assurance that I will examine this very closely, not only with the staff but also myself. I will give it some thought because there is another way it

could have been done and this is to provide for an indemnity for the members of the commission. But this is what they are accustomed doing. I would still want the Bill to go as it is now and then, if necessary, we would look at the whole thing later on. In fact I will probably refer it to the Law Reform Committee for their study and recommendation.

I know what they are trying to get at. They are trying to take account because you are treating a parastatal in some respects like a company. They are trying to provide coverage for those principles that flow from the rule in Royal British Bank and ??? that an outsider dealing with the company is not obligated to check whether internal matters have been complied with. He is expected to assume that the omnia (??)... and therefore what they are trying to get at is that where, for example, the point was made by the Honourable Member where somebody has a contract with the commission as a third party. The mere fact that a member of the commission may not have disclosed his interest should not tender that contract null and void because the outsider could not be expected to concern himself with the indoor management of the company. That is what is behind that but it is not as clearly expressed as perhaps it could have been.

We are going to look at it, Sir, because it is an interesting point that has been made and even though my friend on the other side will accept the point that 16(2)(b) dealing with merits, there can be no ouster clause that will affect the merits of something because even if there is an ouster clause you can still get to the heart of the matter. If, for example, natural justice was breached the court would put it another way and say, well there was no jurisdiction.

Sir, we will pay attention to the point which is a useful point. It is more than an intellectual point but for the time being, since it has been used in other legislation of this type, Sir, I would want to give it a lot more study than presently. There will have to be an amendment, Sir, to 16(2) to add the letters "ed" to word "question".

Mr. Speaker, I am grateful to the Honourable Prime Minister for his commendations today. In a way this Bill is disappointing because this Bill should have been in here about 4 or 5 months ago but the systems of Government and the machinery is so slow as the Honourable Leader of the Opposition must appreciate that with the best will in the world we could not get it here until now, not because of any problems of drafting, the Bill was drafted within 2 weeks but the other procedures and so on that one has to go through. Now that in itself is the reason why we need a commission. Because historically and even now all of us must concede that even at the level of road works, light and water, MTW has proven itself incapable all of these years of delivering services throughout the country. What

we need to do to ensure that people in rural Barbados are brought up to some reasonable comparable level with persons in the rest of Barbados is to find a mechanism that will allow flexibility of action, allow for autonomy and at the same time be speedy in the delivery of services. This Commission can easily say that we identify that Pineland Road should be done, a road in St. John, a road in St. Philip North or wherever and we have so much money for the balance of the financial year. We have had some preliminary studies and we believe that this road can be done for \$150 000 or \$200 000. Let us go out to contract. Go out and have the tender notices, award the contract and tell the private sector to go and do the road and get the road done. But if you are going to wait on MTW, God help you. I can tell you what is happening down in Courts now. It gets me tizzy. If we rely on MTW, the people in rural Barbados are not going to get their services delivered at the pace that they ought to be delivered. 9.25 p.m.

So this Commission is a mechanism ancillary to the work of the Ministry of Transport and Works. It has come about in the desire to promote efficiency and effectiveness in the delivery of public services to the people of Barbados and particularly the disadvantaged people of rural Barbados.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, with those words, I of course support this Bill and I look forward to the work of the Rural Development Commission with great expectation and indeed some anxiety. I feel that whoever is the director and ultimately appointed as the commissioners will have an exciting time. They will have an opportunity to feel content in themselves that they have been able to help so many thousands of people across rural Barbados. If they organize themselves well and work in a structured way, the Rural Development Commission will be a fine example to how poor people can be empowered and rehabilitated in Barbados. This will be a fine example then for the Urban Development Council when that comes.

With those words, I am obliged to you, Sir.

Hon. R. C. EASTMOND: Mr. Speaker, I am very encouraged by the tremendous enthusiasm which Honourable Members demonstrated in debating this Bill. I should say, Mr. Speaker, that there were two points that I made which at this point I propose to clarify because I do not think that I made them as clearly as I ought to. The first one is the question of execution of policy. In my exuberance, Mr. Speaker, I really intended saying that the Commission when staffed will be executing policy. As you well know, Mr. Speaker, Clause 18 says that the Minister will give policy directions and I was not clear enough in my opening speech to indicate that the Commission will be executing policy. I gave the impression that the

Commission will be a policy maker and I must apologize to Members of this Honourable House for having made that slip. At the same time too, I believe that in relation to Clause 171 may have given the impression that widespread use will be made of the services of the civil servants. I did not intend it that way. What I intended to say, Mr. Speaker, was that Clause 17 preserves the rights of those persons who are civil servants who will be seconded to the Commission and they will be able in going back to their substantive position of the Civil Service to have their rights preserved during the tenure that they would have occupied with the Commission.

There are a number of things, Mr. Speaker, which briefly I would like to look at. The Honourable Member for St. Lucy who I believe is the principal spokesman on the other side for rural development did say that to him to limit rural development to agricultural development alone would be a mistake. At no point did any Honourable Member on this side or myself give the impression that rural development meant agricultural development exclusively. I believe the Honourable Member for St. Lucy misconstrued and misinterpreted the position. I indicated that agricultural activities will be pursued among other things.

At the same time the Honourable Member for St. Lucy said that we on this side have given the impression that rural Barbados as it, is right now is a place where people should not live. No Honourable Member on this side as far as I can remember ever gave that impression. What we were saying is that taking into account the contribution that rural people have made to our economic development in this country overtime that they deserve a better deal and that the quality of life that they currently enjoy needs to be enhanced. But one very encouraging thing, Mr. Speaker, which emerged in this entire debate was the question of the Honourable Members of this Parliament indicating clearly that rural development was about developing people and at the same time about linking a number and range of activities to community life. I feel heartened, Mr. Speaker, that Honourable Members saw the policy as reflected in the Commission as meaning something in the development of people and the enhancement of community life. At least 4 Honourable Members indicated quite clearly that quite separate and apart from the installation of facilities we should have a number of activities especially economic activities available to rural people to better enhance their life.

The Honourable Member for St. Lucy when speaking suggested that if agricultural production increases the first thing that will happen is that prices of goods will be lowered and the second thing that would happen will be that we will end up producing surplus. He suggested that the time has come for the re-establishment of an

agro-processing plant. Mr. Speaker, I would like to inform this Honourable House that recently a study on agro-processing was undertaken by Cass Consultants and the report resulting from the study undertaken by Cass Consultants on the feasibility of an agro-processing plant should be before Cabinet very, very shortly as early as this week. Cass Consultants had been hired to look to see whether an agro-processing plant was warranted. The study was funded out of Kuwait Funding and the Government at Cabinet level should soon be looking at that report. But any suggestion that we have come to the stage where we need an agro-processing plant is a suggestion that is taken by us on this side in good faith.

Mr. Speaker, at the same time I would want to inform Honourable Members that this debate has seen a number of Members of Parliament indicate quite clearly that rural development can be far reaching and can have a number of implications. Bearing that in mind, agricultural and management consultants are doing a study on an integrated rural development programme for Barbados, I repeat that, Mr. Speaker. Whilst we are here tonight debating this Bill, an entity called Agricultural and Management Consultants based I believe in the constituency of the Honourable Member for Christ Church East is doing a study with the aim being to propose an integrated rural development programme for Barbados which will no doubt take into account the various provisions in Clause 4 (a) to (f) while at the same time suggesting to us what rural development should entail on a long term basis.

Some Members who spoke in this debate, Mr. Speaker, were curious to wonder whether any provision is being made for the establishment of producer cooperatives in rural Barbados. I would like to inform this Honourable House that Clause 4(0) which says: "To do such other things as are necessary to effectively carry out the purposes of this Act would be wide enough to address the question of producer cooperatives in rural Barbados". However, Sir, in the context of how our economy functions, co-operatives are largely private sector entities and any parastatal or Government input will have to be at the level of the provision of incentives, possibly the provision of regulations, and encouragement given, but we would want that persons in rural communities, inspired by Government's determination to assist, will band together to help themselves in a co-operative framework, and clearly where we see evidence of this emerging we will offer help. 9.35 p.m.

In recent times some producers of pork and pork products have banded themselves into a co-operative and other people have formed themselves into ordinary farming co-operatives, having broken ties with the Barbados Agricultural Society. Right now in the parish of St. George there is a fanners' producers co-operative that is about

to take off, and in a situation where financial co-operatives have established themselves well in Barbados, we need to do our best to encourage producer co-operatives and such entities would be given the closest scrutiny, first of all, and after that the greatest encouragement possible by Government.

There were a few other things, Mr. Speaker, that emerged in the debate, I was very thankful when Honourable Members on this side saw that the passage of the Tenancies Freehold Purchase Act, which impacted positively in rural Barbados, was very much an early step and a precursor to the types of programmes that we see evolving here. I must remark that the contribution of the Honourable Member for St. George South is noteworthy, because for years, especially in the context of sanitation in rural Barbados, the Honourable Member for St. George South always spoke out about the need to modernise sanitation facilities in country districts.

Generally speaking, outstanding contributions were made by almost every member on this side. The Opposition itself did not particularly show any serious objection to our proposal, even though the Opposition had its own way of engaging in the debate, and I am heartened, Mr. Speaker, that we have come to a stage where an entity empowered to execute policy is very much about to be established and to take off.

Some Members of the Opposition were of the view that it is incorrect to treat Barbados as either urban or rural, but I heard the Honourable Member for St. Michael North West refer to country and countryside, and in any contribution where a Member can refer to country and countryside, he obviously has at the back of his mind somewhere else which is not country or countryside.

The Honourable Member for St. Michael West was adamant that there is no need for us to distinguish between urban communities and rural communities, and I believe he, above all other Honourable Members, was blissfully aware of the provisions of his party's Manifesto for the last election, because the Honourable Member for St. Philip North and myself searched the Manifesto of the Democratic Labour Party for the 1994 election and nowhere did the word "rural" appear in it at all. Nowhere in it was there any policy on rural development, so that when they come and say they do not see any need to distinguish what is happening in urban areas and what is happening in rural areas, it can be taken in the context of the fact that their Manifesto failed to address the issue.

Now, there were Members of the Opposition who suggested that rural communities had had some infrastructure. Even where this is true the infrastructure has deteriorated and there is obviously a case where new

infrastructure is needed in many areas, Mr. Speaker, I think the Members on this side who spoke are clear as to what they see rural development to be entailing, the Members are clear that it would mean a lot of social amenities, but at the same time it must have a strong economic component

I am satisfied, Mr. Speaker, that the quality of debate we have seen exhibited here today shows the commitment by Members of the Barbados Labour Party who are in Parliament to the question of the party doing its utmost to develop people in the rural communities beyond where they are right now. I go with the view that we cannot have two Barbadoses any more.

With these observations, Mr. Speaker, I humbly beg to move that this BUI be read a second time.

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

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

On the motion of Hon. R. C. EASTMOND, seconded by Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS, Mr. SPEAKER left the Chair and the House went into Committee on the Bill, Mr. W. C. C. CALLENDER in the Chair.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: This Honourable Chamber is now in Committee.

Clauses 1 to 15 inclusive were called and passed.

Clause 16 was called.

Hon. R. C. EASTMOND: Mr. Chairman, I beg to move that Clause 16 stand part

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

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: During the Second Reading, Sir, the Honourable Attorney General explained his view and drew reference to the similarity between part of this section and other legislation which should be in place before and explained the reason for it. I still wish to say that in view of the perspective which the Prime Minister and other Honourable Members on that side gave to the question of flexibility which they wish to give the Commission, I am still uncomfortable with this. In fact, I would think that if you are going to give the Commission greater flexibility in relation to the expenditure of funds and the conceptualisation of projects and so on, then you should ensure that the applicable checks and balances are in place. Therefore, we really in view of that, or against that background, cannot say that we are comfortable at all. I should put it as high as saying we cannot support

clause 16 as presently exists. I think the Government has been quite frank in explaining what it wants to achieve, but at the same time, in view of the history of matters of this sort in Barbados, the recent history and the kinds of experiences we have had as a nation, the allegations that are made against public officials, the allegations that have been made against public officials, allegations made against statutory corporations that in my view it is sending the wrong signals to the public if legislation seeks to oust or appear on the face of it to oust the jurisdiction of the courts. Indemnities are given regularly. Those people who sit on the Pine Hill Dairy Board get indemnities. The people who sit on Barbados Mills Board, the Minister of Finance, and the former Ministers of Finance signed indemnities regularly, proxies, these things are part of the normal arrangements where Government has Directors on boards of private companies or even publicly-listed companies or whatever. 9.45 p.m.

Now, in relation to this, as I say, the Attorney General has explained that this section should be considered in relation to an indemnity and also he has made the point that a person who enters into a contract with the Board, where the decision to award that contract has been wrought by what may be questionable circumstances, where a member of the board may not have disclosed an interest that person should not be disadvantaged^A I assume on that basis alone to accept that point but I am still concerned that it does not appear then that there is a penalty applicable to the person who fails to disclose.

In other words what we are doing is, we are saying in this legislation in the schedule, paragraph 14, that we think it is vital that a member of the board comes clean and says, look, I have an interest in this matter which is what we expect. These are the standards of public conduct we expect. But that should not affect a contract which is entered into by the Board with a third party. Invariably in Barbados that third party, so called, is going to know. In other words, those situations arise where the third party has used influence of a member of the board to secure the contract. So you are really defeating the purpose for having the clause 14. I cannot think that there has ever been an allegation, well there has not been any justifiably made, but I mean one that would be justifiably made in which it would not be that the member of the board would have functioned in collusion with the so-called third party or in which the third party would not have had knowledge that a member of the board had some financial or other interest with his company. I do not know if the point that I am making is understood.

Now, these things may be applicable and may be very relevant in large societies where, very often, the financial relationship between individuals and companies

may be different. For example, in large countries a fellow may own a couple of shares in a large public corporation for which a contract may inadvertently have been given to a person, and at the time when it was being given he did not know. We have had many cases of this in recent times where the sensational tabloid press seeks to make a connection between the person who has a few shares in a large public corporation in the United Kingdom or elsewhere and does not himself recognise at the time of awarding the contract that he should have disclosed an interest. But in a country as small as Barbados where you have 15 or 16 publicly-listed companies on the stock exchange and where by and large most of the businesses which tender for contracts from Government to provide these services are privately owned businesses with identifiable directors and shareholders, then a clause like this does not have the same relevance as it would have in a larger economy with a capital market, as I said, in which people may invest in a unit trust or some other thing.

The real point I am making is that perhaps what has been imported here is a provision which may have relevance in a larger society but for a small country like Barbados I think, if we want to keep that level of transparency then the paragraph 14 is not ideal. This is what we want. Let us not water it down any further by giving the impression that the jurisdiction of the courts or any inquiry is being ousted.

Hon. R. C. EASTMOND: Mr. Chairman, in his second reading speech I got the impression that the Honourable Member for St. John was crystal clear in relation to section 16. The reservation he expressed on clause 16 in his second leading speech was clearer to me then than now. However I want just briefly to respond. When I first read 16, naturally I read paragraph 14 of the Schedule along with it and initially my reaction to it before the intervention of the Honourable Member for St. John was that even where a member of the commission failed to disclose interest that the proceedings would not be vitiated or invalidated by his mere failing to declare his interest. Clearly that is the intention behind the Act. However the point made by the Honourable Member for St. John on ousting the jurisdiction of the court is a point I personally take in good faith. I myself do have difficulty with ouster clauses. The experience in the Caribbean is that ouster clauses get through the courts in the Caribbean easier than in England and the Anisminic case to which the Honourable Attorney General referred was a case of ingenious judicial interpretation just to protect the integrity of the courts and prevent the courts jurisdiction from being ousted. Anisminic went real far to make sure that the courts in England did not easily have their jurisdiction ousted.

However I have seen cases in the West Indies where ouster clauses succeeded. In fact right now,

Cap. 190 has an ouster clause preventing the behaviour from immigration officers at the Airport from being called into question by a court. Now, in view of the objection by the Leader of the Opposition to the ouster clause here and to his submission that we could be blurring the true intent, the Learned Attorney General has given an undertaking that we look at it I myself too do not feel ever comfortable about ouster clauses. I do not think that a court's jurisdiction should not be ousted like that I believe that these matters are matters that a Court should entertain usually. On reflection too, if Clause 16(2) is read like this: "No act done or proceeding under this Act should be questioned on the grounds of any omissions or orectic regularity not effecting the merits". Then that could very well mean that we are condoning procedural irregularities and, again in Administrative Law, Courts do not let the notion of procedural irregularities foul up administrative decisions. So it seems as though the Leader of the Opposition does have a point here in relation to seeking further clarification of the expression of the wordings of this and I will defer it to the learned Attorney General who says that we should look at it once more. We will have to dress it up better in a manner which is crystal clear on a literal interpretation. 9.55 p.m.

Mr. Chairman, I do beg now to move that Clauses 17 to 20 stand part.

The question that Clauses 17 to 20 stand part was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

Hon. R. C. EASTMOND: Mr. Chairman, I beg to move that the Schedule be the Schedule. I now beg to move that Paragraph 1 of the Schedule stand part

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Mr. Chairman, I am sorry but I wanted to make one point about Clause 18.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: I think that we have agreed to that already. We are now dealing with Clause 16. We have just approved Clauses 17 to 20.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Can you recommit Clause 18?

Mr. CHAIRMAN: We have passed 18 already.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Sir, Clause 16 was not put to the vote. I just want to mention that in 16(2) we should add the letters "ed" after the word "question".

Hon. R. C. EASTMOND: Mr. Chairman, I beg to move that Clause 16 as amended stand part

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

The question that Clause 16 as amended stand part was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

Clause 17 was called and agreed to.

Clause 18 was called.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Mr. Chairman, I do not have 100 per cent support for my own view on this either in my own parliamentary group or on that side. But I noticed that in recent times in legislation in the Commonwealth that where there are provisions like this which permits the Minister to give general policy directions to an authority that very often what is being added is that a Minister within a specified time of giving those directions lays those directions in the House. Now we have had a long history in this country of statutory corporations like this functioning on the basis of directions from the Minister but we have also had some grave problems in the public perception of Ministerial interference so called and also in the case of the Government as a political party allegations of tyranny being placed at the feet of Ministers who seek to give directions to statutory corporations whether it is in relation to the appointment of Chief Executive Officers or a range of other directions.

Now in that regard I was one of those persons who supported in recent legislation the removal of a provision which gave the Minister power to give general direction. I was also a firm proponent of the establishment of private companies to run the sugar industry so that the level of interference, sometimes misguided, would not obtain in areas where you are seeking to draw on technical expertise and on which policy considerations may not be paramount.

In the presentation of the Minister of Agriculture at the beginning, he did give the impression, and I am not sure if he acknowledged that it was an erroneous impression but the impression that this entity would be making some policy decision. Let us assume that it has to make some policy decisions and I assume that will be so in any event. Where the Minister gives directions to the Board, I see absolutely no reason why within a specified time those directions cannot be laid in Parliament so that Parliament can have full scrutiny of the policy objectives of the Government in relation to statutory boards and statutory entities. Because I would assume that if for example a person wrote to a board and asked for reasons for its decision in relation to any matter it can very well say that the Minister gave us directions to do X, Y or Z. So why is it that the public cannot have the benefit of the Minister's directions in any matter?

I have seen this development in the Commonwealth. I am in favour of it. I know that many older Ministers do not like that approach but I am speaking now as I said

not with the full support of my own parliamentary group and I know with not much support on that side. But I believe that we need to move in the direction in Barbados where if we appoint persons to serve on statutory corporations and they are also going to be subject to Ministerial directive that those directives be known in the public domain of the direction which the Minister wants to take and that Parliament if it wishes to discuss that policy directive can by Private Member's Resolution note it and have a discussion on it. That should lend to full accountability. What we have in Barbados is a system where Ministers give directions on a file or otherwise and boards act supinely in accepting those directions without offering the best possible consideration of the issue.

So I wish to recommend, Mr. Chairman, not reluctantly but very strongly that the Minister be a path breaking young Minister in this country by amending this section such that where he gives the Commission directions of a general nature in respect to the policy to be followed by the Commission in the performance of its functions under this Act that within a specified time thereafter those policy directives be laid in the House of Assembly, so that we can have the widest possible public scrutiny of administrative action in Barbados and have scrutiny of the policy objectives of the Minister without any secrecy or without it being shrouded in less than transparency.

Hon. R. C. EASTMOND: Before asking to move, Mr. Chairman, that Clause 18 stand pan, just a few observations in response to the Honourable Leader of the Opposition. The Honourable Leader of the Opposition clearly is very much a fan of administrative law and also a fan of what he calls transparency. I personally have never heard of any instance where policy directives or policy directions are laid in Parliament for parliamentary scrutiny. I have never heard about that even though the Honourable Member for St John is saying that it has now developed as a habit in the Commonwealth. 10.05 p.m.

The other thing that is interesting in what the Honourable Member said, and he obviously knows what he is talking about in relation to this, he is saying that in instances where a Minister acts in bad faith, taking into account irrelevant considerations and such like, that there should be some record of this behaviour in the public interest. He did not say it directly, but I inferred it I believe that sufficient machinery exists in law without having to change this for that type of behaviour to be dealt with if it occurs. I believe the files and evidence of a general nature will point to any act of bad faith by a Minister as occurred in the case of *Roncarell v Duplesis* and other cases like that. If a Minister takes into account irrelevant considerations or if a Minister acted illegally - the Honourable Attorney General mentioned the CCCU

case, things like that - but I believe in the system of Government that the evidence will be available, I do not think there is any need to amend this to take into account that type of thing, but I really admire the flair of the Honourable Member for St John and his addiction to administrative law, which I think in this instance he is taking a little bit too far.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Thank you. Having been a former tutor; at the University of the West Indies in that subject, you are quite right I have always taken a great interest. But I would like Ministers on that side to study very carefully the implications of that scenario that just took place in St Lucia. It has happened in other circumstances. You have somebody saying that a Minister takes up a telephone and gives directions to a Chief Executive or a Chairman of a Board or a diplomat to establish an account and the Minister quite unwittingly may from time to time have given him other directions but denies that he does that. In other words, it is becoming much more complicated, administrative action, omissions, the record now is becoming more and more important in matters of this sort.

We had a scenario in Barbados where for years the wrong procedure was being followed under the provisions of the Financial Administration and Audit Act, corrected by the COW Williams case. Probably arising out of events in a couple of days you are going to have a correction of the procedures in relation to other matters. Who is responsible for policy in these affairs? It is a serious matter, because sometimes the Minister thinks he has responsibility for things he does not have and sometimes the Public Officers themselves think they have responsibility, or act wrongly and then seek to say that they have the Minister's authority based on some unsubstantiated conversation and so on. This is why I am saying that it seems to me desirable, in the context of what is happening, safeguarding the rights of citizens and so on, that these procedures start to be developed.

There must be a reason why in other Commonwealth countries where Ministers give directions of a general nature to a Board it is now becoming a requirement that those be laid in Parliament. It does lend to transparency, because if the Minister says: "Look, I want the Board to concentrate on X, Y and Z with the funds available to it," Parliament can then scrutinise those policy objectives as against what has been achieved. Other than that, the only time we have a chance to determine what policy the Board is following is when a matter may come up by chance in Parliament by way of a Bill, maybe a Resolution or some other area. I am only saying it should be considered. It is a development that I am attracted to, but I know that the old hands in this matter prefer it to be muggy and grey.

so that they can continue to exercise maximum authority as Ministers without maximum scrutiny.

Hon. R. C. EASTMOND: Mr. Chairman, Sir, noting those remarks I beg to move that Clause 18 stand part.

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

Clauses 19 and 20 were called and passed.

The Schedule was called.

Hon. R. C. EASTMOND: Mr. Chairman, I beg to move that the Schedule be the Schedule to the Bill.

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

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

On the motion of Hon. R. C. EASTMOND, seconded by Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS. Mr. CHAIRMAN reported the passing of one Bill in Committee, and Mr. SPEAKER resumed the Chair and reported accordingly.

On the separate motions of Hon. R. C. EASTMOND, seconded by Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS, the Bill was read a third time and passed.

ADJOURNMENT

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I beg to move that this House do now adjourn to Tuesday, the 8th day of August at 2 o'clock in the afternoon.

It is proposed, Mr. Speaker, speaking on the Adjournment, that lunch should be available for Honourable Members here from 12.30 p.m. on Tuesday, August 8 and that the House would meet from 2 o'clock. I am mindful that this weekend is the major Crop-Over weekend and I hope that Honourable Members and staff will not "Kadoo" to excess to the point where they might not be able to attend the Business of the House at 11 o'clock in the morning, so out of an abundance of generosity, 2 o'clock in the afternoon of Tuesday, August 8.

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 adjourned the House accordingly. 10.15 p.m.

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R. L. (St. Joseph) CLARKE, Mr. G. A. (St. George
North) EASTMOND, Hon. R. C. (St. James North)
FORDE, Mr. H. deB. (Christ Church West)
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