

THE

House of Assembly Debates

(OFFICIAL REPORT)

FIRST SESSION 1994 - 99

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

Tuesday, February 28, 1995.

Pursuant to the adjournment, the House of Assembly met at 11:20 a.m.

PRESENT

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

J.P.

Mr. B. M. TAITT, B.A. (Hons.), M.P.A., LL.B. (Hons.)

Hon. O. S. ARTHUR, M.Sc. (Econ.), (Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Affairs, and 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. TOLL, Q.C., M.A.

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

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

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

Hon. R. C. EASTMOND, B.A. (Hons.), Dip. Ed., LL B. (Hons.), LEG (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, (Minister of Labour, Community Development and Sports)

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

Mr. J. M. EDGHILL

Mr. F. J. STUART

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

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

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN

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

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

Prayers were led by Rev. Ivan Harewood.

MINUTES

Mr. SPEAKER: The House is now in session. Minutes of Tuesday, February 21, 1995.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Mr. Speaker, Sir, the Minutes of the meeting of the Honourable House of Assembly on February 21, 1995 have been circulated and subject to any observations in respect of amendments and corrections, I move that the Minutes be confirmed.

Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: I beg to second that, Sir.

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

ORDERS OF THE DAY

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I beg to move that Standing Orders 6, 16, 18, 20, 42(5), 43 and 44 be suspended for the remainder of the day's sitting.

Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: I beg to second that, Sir.

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

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

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

ORDER NO. 5 - TO MOVE THAT THE HOUSE RESOLVE ITSELF INTO COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY TO CONSIDER THE GRANT OF SUMS OF MONEY FOR THE SERVICE OF THIS ISLAND

On the motion of Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS, seconded by Hon. O. S. ARTHUR, Mr. SPEAKER left the Chair and the House went into Committee of Supply, Mr. W. C. C. CALLENDER in the Chair.

COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY

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

ORDER NO. 5 - TO MOVE THE PASSING OF A RESOLUTION TO GRANT AN ADDITIONAL SUM OF \$3 775 409 FROM THE CON- SOLIDATED FUND TO SUPPLEMENT THE ESTIMATES 1994-1995 AS SET OUT IN THE SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES NO. 6 OF 1994-95

Hon. Dr. R. L. CHELTENHAM: Mr. Chairman, when the Estimates of Expenditure 1994-95 were prepared and approved by this Honourable House last March, Sherbourne Centre then fell under the Ministry of Education and Culture and the sum of \$5 300 000 was provided to meet the continuing cost of construction at Sherbourne. The \$5 million was for structures and the \$300 000 was for professional services. These sums proved insufficient and we are now seeking to supplement the Estimates to the extent of \$3 775 409. The sum of \$3 135 632 is needed for structures and \$639 777 is needed for professional services. Put differently, Mr. Chairman, the money being sought is to pay the contractors for a lot of the physical works, for example, on the Administration Block, the Conference Block and the Link Block, and also to pay for external services such as work carried out on the car park and the guard wall in preparation for the Global Conference on Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States

which took place here in Barbados last April. A smaller sum of that total is needed for professional services in the sum of \$639 777 as was provided for the engineers of structural, electrical, air-conditioning works and also for the landscaping and the acoustics and theatre specialists among others.

I ought to say at the outset, Mr. Chairman, that ever since construction work at Sherbourne Centre commenced sometime around August 1988 the Sherbourne Centre has been enveloped in controversy and the stance taken by the Barbados Labour Party, that it was a misplanned project and that it represented a misallocation of the country's resources, has turned out to be correct.

You will recall, Mr. Chairman, that when the concept was first mooted, it was supposed to be a multi-puipose centre to accommodate examinations, conferences and to be the home of a National Philharmonic Orchestra. At that time, 1988, there was no National Orchestra in existence and at this time February, 1995 there is not yet a National Philharmonic Orchestra in existence. We had argued in Opposition that there was no need for an Examination Centre because there is a large amount of unused capacity in the halls of many of our secondary schools in order to cater to examinations a few times in the year. Even though there was a case for a Convention Centre, to the extent that it was not connected to any hotel or situated in the midst of a hotel village, it would always wear serious limitations in relation to its appeal and its use. Because although it is a fact that many abroad are interested in having conventions in destinations such as Barbados, they need to have the Convention Centre either connected to a large hotel or in the midst of a hotel village. When you have to be transported 20 minutes away either from the west coast, in our case, or the south coast in order to get to the convention centre, that constitutes a disadvantage. It lames its appeal and to that extent it is an asset that we have, but it would be very difficult to sell it as a convention centre for the reasons I have mentioned. 11.30a.m.

The original concept of Sherbourne, such as I have given, seemed to have changed over the years and with it the dimensions have also changed quite dramatically. For when the concept was first mooted we were thinking of building a conference hall with a seating capacity of about 400, or 800 theatre style. We were then thinking of building a 2 000 seat auditorium. The examination hall was supposed to accommodate 1 000, the cafeteria was supposed to accommodate 300 and the dining room 120 persons. In those early days the Sherbourne complex was to have been completed in three phases, Phase I dealing with the conference and cafeteria block, Phase II the examination and administration block and Phase III the auditorium. But a lot has happened between August 1988, when construction commenced, and to date, at one point the construction works were suspended towards the end

of 1990, and the site was closed in 1990 too because of what was then described as the prevailing economic situation. At that time one of the contractors - Rayside Asphalt and Paving Company - terminated its contractual agreement as a result of non-payment of fees.

When the project was first conceived, Mr. Chairman, it was estimated that it would cost \$36 million, with the consultant fees estimated at \$4.13 million. These costs were later revised to \$44.5 million for construction and \$4.6 million for the consultants' fees. The increase was justified on the grounds that there were delays in the delivery of client-ordered materials from overseas. Further there was need to extend the contract period and inflation was impacting on the new contracts to be tendered.

But the factor that seemed to have been the most important in altering the shape, the scale and the dimensions of the Sherbourne project was the fact that Barbados undertook some time in 1992-93 to host the Second Global Conference, I believe it was, on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States. That caused a significant rewriting, as it were, of the dimensions of the project. The changes included extensions and adaptations to the original features of Sherbourne in order to accommodate this global conference. In particular, the multipurpose hall which was originally conceived at 3 100 square feet has been made much larger. It was extended by two bays to accommodate the large numbers expected for the conference. The upper foyer was converted into secretarial areas by providing temporary offices. There was also the provision of additional electrical, security, audio-visual and communication services and there was added, Sir, an area of 3000 square metres behind the foyer for secretarial space. It was then estimated that the additional changes, that is, to accommodate the conference, inclusive of furniture, was expected to cost \$9 million.

The fact is at this point, Sir, Sherbourne has capacity in the west conference hall to seat 800 and dimensions of 10 472 square feet. On the east side of the building, what is called the east multipurpose hall, the square footage is 20 906 and the seating capacity is 1 030. The space for Press briefing and other facilities situated on the upper foyer is 26 824 square feet, and this represents an area where significant expansion took place.

It is very difficult, Mr. Chairman, to tell the House and the country with any certainty what Sherbourne has cost to date, because over the years the responsibility for Sherbourne has moved between several Ministries. When the project was first conceived, and when construction first commenced it was the responsibility of the Ministry of Education. That was in the period August, 1988 to 28th

January, 1991. On the 29th January, 1991 it was transferred to the Ministry of Community Development and Culture until 30th September, 1993. The Ministry of Tourism, International Transport and Culture assumed responsibility for the project from 1st October, 1993 to 27th January, 1994. Responsibility for Sherbourne was again transferred to International Transport and Culture from 28th January, 1994 to 31st March, 1994, though it should be emphasised that the financial management of the centre remained under the control of the Ministry of Tourism with the agreement of the respective Permanent Secretaries. Sherbourne was reallocated to the Ministry of Education, this is for the second time now, for a five-month period between April to August, 1994. And on 8th July, 1994 Cabinet took a decision that management of Sherbourne Centre should be allocated to the Barbados Tourism Investment Corporation, which falls under the Ministry of Tourism and International Transport, and that transfer took effect from 1st September, 1994.

The best estimate which we have, and no one is prepared to swear to it as totally accurate, is that Sherbourne to date and excluding this Supplementary, has cost about \$52 million to \$53 million. That has nothing to do, it must be emphasised, with the Supplementary of \$3.7 million which we are seeking today. That it will cost some \$30 million at today's prices to complete the auditorium, sometimes referred to as the exposed back side of Sherbourne, and that in addition we are going to have to come some time in the course of the next financial year in order to seek money for the waterproofing of the roof which was not done, because of a very tight schedule for the conference, and also to pay the retained fees on the project is not in doubt. Were we to complete this project some time in the next two years or so, with the impact of inflation, Sherbourne could well cost \$90 million or beyond. I hear a voice from the other side asking whether that is all, and perhaps the question is well grounded, because when all the documents related to cost are found, spread as they are over several Ministries, it might very well be that we are talking about a hundred million dollar project. 11.40a.m.

The timing of it, we have already condemned. There was no doubt that coming as it did, it represented a misallocation of resources. I feel very strongly about that. But more than that, there was no clear purpose, as it turned out, for Sherbourne. We have inherited a large, expensive, incomplete and under utilised resource.

Asides.

Hon. Dr. R. L. CHELTENHAM: You can rest assured, Mr. Chairman, that I won't be distracted. I need to restate that point for the benefit of the House. We have inherited a large, expensive, unfinished and under

utilised resource that constitutes a major challenge to the Government and to the country - for it belongs to all of us - as to how best to market it and how best to give it a rewarding role and purpose.

I think it is fair to say that no one now believes that Sherbourne could be used, or is to be used, as a home for a national orchestra. I do not think that anyone today believes that it is either necessary or ought to be used as an examination centre. What we are thinking is that it must be seen as an addition to our tourism product. We have to rely on the well known features of Barbados as a tourism destination and put it in that context and market it, relying on the fact that we are, for example, known as a quality and well established destination, relying on the fact that our telecommunications system and our transport system are sufficiently well developed to constitute a major asset, a major appeal, relying too on our proximity to the United States of America market. It is in that context that we are attempting to develop a business plan for Sherbourne, because the point must be made that we have inherited a Sherbourne that is not only unfinished but for which there was no business plan or stated function or purpose.

I fear, Mr. Chairman, that Sherbourne is going to be with us for a long time representing a drain on our resources and a challenge to our marketing ingenuity. The month to month costs of running Sherbourne are fairly horrendous. The insurance alone on the building is \$34 925.87. The electricity bill alone is \$31 000 per month and the total running costs with a skeleton staff are really in excess of \$90 000 per month. So no one must be in any doubt as to the enormity of the challenge which we have inherited or be in any doubt as to the difficulties which we have in trying to market Sherbourne as a conference, convention and related business centre.

As I said, the major problem arises not because there is not a need in Barbados for a medium to large size convention facility. That need does exist, but ideally the facility should be located either in a tourism village where you are within walking distance of the facility or alternatively attached to a major hotel of 500 rooms or more. Located as it is, many persons who are interested in Barbados as a convention centre will tell you that it lacks appeal, because they have to bus people to the centre from 20 minutes away either from the hotels in the West Coast or from the hotels on the South Coast.

Notwithstanding that, Mr. Chairman, the Government cannot just be content to level strictures at the past Administration or to make criticisms, however legitimate they may be. The real point is that the resource is there, unfinished, under-utilised. It is expensive to maintain and we have a responsibility to try to put it to productive use.

To that extent, we have been working on a business plan whereby we are hoping and are targeting to have the centre realise \$2 million in revenue by the year 2000. We are seeking to achieve an occupancy of 80% by the year 2000. Targets are 40% in 1995, 55% in 1996, 60% in 1997, 70% in 1998, 75% in 1999 and 80% in the year 2000.

The plan for the centre is being formulated on the premise that 60% of the occupancy will be generated from the North American market where the convention conference and related business activity is really big business. We are talking about \$4 billion or more a year spent in that sort of business in North America.

We are proceeding too on the premise that 15% of our business will come from the European market within the planned period and that 25% will come from the regional and local markets. Insofar as Sherbourne is being used, the House ought to know that local persons, organisations and businesses have been using the Centre and in the period of August last to December last it earned some \$64 464.84 in rental revenue. The food and beverage department earned \$58 527.10, making for a total revenue in the period August to December last of \$152 991.94. There is growing local demand and use of the Centre, but it has got to be marketed with more vigour and promoted with more vigour. We also have to promote it in the region and promote it around regional organisations located within the region and international organisations too so that they can have more and more of their conferences here because it is still, they tell me, the best facility in the southern Caribbean. It has that major weakness of being not connected to a hotel village or a single hotel. Notwithstanding that we will have to try our best to market it as it is. We are developing this marketing plan which has not yet been approved by the Planning and Priorities Committee, but it is based on the premises which I have just indicated and have the targets which I have just mentioned which will help us to realize \$2 million in revenue by the year 2000. 11.50a.m.

The marketing of a facility such as that is, as I have recently learned, a major sub-specialty and there are a few people in the world who concentrate and specialise in marketing facilities such as that. There is no doubt that we will need the assistance of some overseas consultant or expert to assist us in marketing that facility. The real truth is that around the world there are several such facilities that have turned out to be a running sore on the country's finances and there are many of them that have failed through under-use. What we must try to make sure is that though we will never be able to realise the initial expenditure, that at least we can attract business to the extent that it can meet its operational and maintenance costs.

I do not want, Mr. Chairman, to go back too much into the past because we might rightly argue that the electorate has pronounced on this and several other issues which represent misplanning,⁴ mispending of money and misallocation of resources but the point has to be made that this will remain an enduring monument of misplanning. It is a classic case of what should not have been done. It is a matter of regret, as far as I am concerned, that the files do not show that the professional class who manage this country from day-to-day ever wrote on its role that it was difficult to justify. In the end the politicians will do what they want. But I always say the professional class has a duty to say to the politicians it is not our business to stand in your way and once we are directed, particularly in writing, to go a particular path we will do it with energy; but we need to tell you with frankness and with politeness that for the following reasons this represents an ill-conceived project.

I have already warned the House, Mr. Chairman, that in the course of the next year we will have to pay for unfinished structural work including the waterproofing and that we will also have to pay for the retained fees to the contractors. To that extent we will need to come back to Parliament.

I ought to mention too, Sir, that the building has not yet been formally handed over to the Government. It is still the responsibility of the architect. Certain minor defects for the most part that have come to light are being corrected.

I have been advised, Sir, that all except one of the contractors have discharged their obligations and the relevant certificates of completion are yet to be issued. These will be issued as soon as the architect certifies that all work has been satisfactorily completed. It may now only be a matter of weeks before the building is officially handed over to the Government.

With those remarks, Mr. Chairman, I beg to move that Head 34 stand part.

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

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: Mr. Chairman, I am responding to the Resolution to indicate first of all that the Opposition will not be seeking to create any dust on the particular Resolution but I would want to make a few comments relative to Sherbourne Centre.

The Honourable Minister took some time before he reached the relevant point of his presentation to indicate that the Sherbourne Centre was a resource that is now available to the citizens of Barbados and one which we must seek to use in a meaningful manner given the

circumstances in which we find ourselves. We can go backward and forward, Sir, on the question of facilities that have been misplaced by successive Governments.

I recall some time during 1992 or 1993 while on a visit to London I met with Lord Taylor who was at the time head of a Crown Committee that provided financing to Barbados for the financing of the Central Bank building. His comments to me at that time were simply that the Government of the day had been advised that that building was not necessarily a facility that would be in fact useful to Barbados as far as the productive sectors were concerned because it was simply a facility providing staff room, desks, or office space for members of the Central Bank staff to work in. The concept of it could have been one where we could have used one of the buildings in Bridgetown that had, in fact, been abandoned where we may have been able to refurnish those buildings at a cost probably one-tenth of what it eventually cost to build the Central Bank building.

The point I want to make, Sir, is that Lord Taylor felt the Central Bank building would hang like an albatross around the necks of the people of Barbados because it was not a facility that would...

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member is asked to address the item under consideration. I have given you a little latitude for relevance but I think you are stretching yourself too far.

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: I am dealing with a capital project and I am dealing with the relevance, planning and the conceptualizing of projects.

Hon. Sir HAROLD St. JOHN: On a point of order, Sir. The Honourable Member is breaking the rules of this House. He is mentioning the names of specific people without informing beforehand the circumstances under which he is going to mention them. I want to know who Lord Taylor is because I happen to know what the Honourable Member is saying is an untruth.

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: Mr. Chairman, the point I am making has to do with the conceptualizing of capital projects that will have...

Hon. Sir HAROLD St. JOHN: Mr. Chairman, I again rise on a point of order and I am most specific about it. The Honourable Member has mentioned the name of a specific person and he has not given to His Honour or yourself the name of the person in the circumstance in which he is going to mention it because we must be in a position to check the record. The Honourable Member's reputation for veracity is well known.

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: Mr. Chairman, I have already indicated that Lord Taylor was a member of the Committee of the Crown Agents who were part of the team that had to approve the loan for the financing of the Central Bank.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member is asked to note that clearly you should really give notice that you want to mention people's names. I think you did mention the gentleman's name in a positive way.

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: Yes, I did. In addition, in terms of getting late notice I was only given notice of this Resolution today. 12.00 noon.

Mr. Chairman, the point has been made over and over by the Barbados Labour Party and the Minister again, this morning, alluded to the fact that the decision to conceptualize Sherbourne Centre was misplanned and it was a misallocation of resources and a misrepresentation of the public resources. I cannot share his view because most of us, if we compare the capital works programme, the Central Bank building as against Sherbourne Centre I think we must be fair in the concept that whereas the Central Bank building only provided office space for the workers of the Central Bank, the Sherbourne Centre is a facility that has the potential to provide facilities not only for staffing of offices in the country but providing an outlet for the artistes, the entertainers, our talented, creative persons in this society, as well as being used as a marketing tool by the Tourism Authority for the proper developmental marketing of Barbados as a conference destination.

The Government must stop seeking to lay blame on the Opposition for conceptualizing the project because last year when we held the global conference there were over 150 or 160 different countries here. Several of the delegates that were at the conference indicated that the Centre had the potential for increasing, substantially, the tourism product in Barbados. Once we are able to put a marketing plan in place which clearly would take a start up period of about 2 or 3 years, we would eventually reach the stage where Barbados would become accepted as a destination capable of providing all of the necessary facilities to accommodate those types of conferences.

What is so strange about all of this is that last night, I was in Silver Hill at the home of a very strong member of the Barbados Labour Party. The Honourable Member for Christ Church East Central knows the home that I was at. The grandmother at that home was a very strong and adamant supporter of the Barbados Labour Party and whatever they say about the Sherbourne Centre, she will repeat. "It is bad". "It is not planned". "It is not worthy". But what struck me was that her grandchild said, "No grannie."

Aside.

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: That is not hearsay. That is a fact. She told her grannie "I am to visit that Centre with my school and that Centre is an excellent Centre. I think Grannie you are wrong. You should not be minding the members of the Barbados Labour Party and saying that it is a bad building or it is misplanned. It has a lot of potential for the future." As a young person I felt proud to see at least the youth are not so confused because they can see and they have some vision. A young bright girl. She goes to Lodge School. My learned friend knows who I am referring to. He can check it out to see if it is hearsay.

Asides.

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: Mr. Chairman, Sir, this year is 25 years since my father died. He was possessed with the idea that entertainers, calypsonians, dancers, poetry readers, sculptors, painters were always perceived in this country to be the scum of the society, that they had no place. He died with the belief that we should one day elevate these persons in our society to a prominent place in our society. I think that we have a magnificent opportunity with the advent of the Sherbourne Centre to make sure that the artistes in this country are properly looked after.

When we look at the tourism product that is offered in Barbados today, it has deteriorated drastically. I recall the days, Sir, when the Police Band used to play on Friday nights or Tuesday nights by Hastings Rocks. It created a lovely atmosphere around Barbados where people would drive out in their cars and go and sit out on evenings to go and hear the Police Band. It is a shame, Sir - and you know very well how I feel on these matters - that today, in Barbados, we do not have a cabaret show of the quality that we can envisage coming from the amazing talent that we have in Barbados where the show itself held in that kind of facility should be able to attract all of the visitors to Barbados to it at least once a week.

With the advent of the Barbados Youth Orchestra, the Police Band, the different artistes coming to that Centre to perform for visitors in itself is an idea that needs to be looked at. Because that in itself is a marketing tool. Sir, you know my views on that where we would have created the "Best of Barbados on stage". At least I too would be able when I go to the great Beyond to tell my father that we were able to achieve that dream that he had for the entertainers in this country.

The Honourable Minister indicated that there was a proposed marketing plan for the Centre. I think that that is a sensible approach and I think his target is quite interesting because it is clear that by the year 2000 that the Centre would at least be paying its running cost, from all indications, if the marketing plan succeeds.

I should like to indicate that the Democratic Labour Party Government, when we turned the facility over to the Tourism Investment Corporation, we too had envisaged that the Government would have had to develop a marketing plan taking into account that local businesses, local activity would start to gravitate towards the Centre which has started to happen. We felt that it would take about 2 to 3 years with the assistance of specialized overseas consultants to assist in the marketing of the programme. In addition to that, the Barbados Government became signatory to the Tax Information and Exchange Agreement where Governments who share information ...

Aside.

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: I do not know who negotiated it. ...on companies and enterprises that hold such types of conferences would be able to get tax benefits as a result of holding conferences overseas. That was in itself an incentive for us to join and be signatory to that Agreement. I think that once we were able to again establish a time frame of about 2 or 3 years we would gradually see Barbados becoming known. Because if you are selling anything the word of mouth takes time to develop. We appreciate that you cannot have a facility, put it down overnight and get results tomorrow morning. It is going to take time.

I do not think it is fair of the Opposition to keep saying that this is a facility that is misplanned and that it is ill-conceived. We have to accept that there was...

Aside.

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: The Government. I keep thinking that we are still the Government because you all criticize us so much you make me feel that we are still the Government. You still blame us as if we are the Government.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: I accept you mean opposition with a small o.

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: I think, Sir, that we should appreciate finally that the Minister and the Ministry are coming to the realisation that the Centre is our resource, it is here to stay, and that we must in fact now seek to exploit the centre in the fullest extent. 12.10 p.m.

I wanted to report briefly on the question of location. I have seen, around the world, several centres where there are no hotel villages contiguous to conference centres. Certainly in Geneva there are hotels within a three to six mile radius. No where in Barbados is really far. If you travel the West Coast across the Highway you would get to Sherbourne Centre within 5 minutes. No where in Barbados is really far, so we would again be providing a

new avenue which would allow the transportation network to benefit by having to transport persons to the Centre. That would create a need for additional employment as far as the transportation network is concerned.

We also agreed there was need to increase the limousine service because if we were trying to upscale the image of Barbados, and we in fact have a facility like a conference centre, we thought there was a need to upgrade the image of Barbados by improving the transportation appearance. We agreed, as a Government, to increase the limousine fleet. I think the number we agreed upon was 30.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Wind up. You may speak again.

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: I will wind up now, Sir. Just let me finish the point, Mr. Chairman. We agreed the limousine service would have assisted in upgrading the image of the island because you would appreciate that on arrival and you see limousines at the airport or at certain hotels it gives the island a lift. It gives the island a bounce. That would again assist in the marketing of the centre.

I am going to have to return, Mr. Chairman, because there are a few other points that I would like to make on this Resolution.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: Mr. Chairman, I arrived at this Honourable House today a few minutes late and I was fully expecting to hear the Honourable Member for St. Joseph breathing fire and brimstone over the Sherbourne issue. I was rather surprised at the sedate manner in which he approached this particular matter. I wonder, Sir, what was his motivation in so doing. Whether he thought that it would be wise for him not to open up debate on ill-conceived capital projects which resulted in considerable cost to the taxpayers of this country over the years. In so doing, Sir, I thought he was wise and therefore I would not seek to open such debate at this particular point in time because, Sir, I am quite sure that if I were to make prolonged references to projects such as the Cement Plant, for example, that you would not permit it, despite the fact that probably over \$200 million of taxpayers' money would have been lost.

The point I wish to make, Sir, is this, that I am convinced beyond any doubt and it is part of the position of the National Democratic Party which celebrated its sixth anniversary on Sunday...

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Order, order please.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: And it would appear, Sir, that we will have to be expanding our auditorium considerably when finances become available to accommodate the large crowd. Regrettably, Sir, we could not accommodate everybody.

Part of our philosophy, Sir, is one which will be calling on the Government of Barbados to recognise that one of the major problems we have, not only in respect of our domestic debt but also our foreign debt has been the result of capital projects which did not serve or did not perform in the manner in which they were envisaged. I would hope, Sir, that except in the areas of the environment - there are some projects now on the drawing board, like the South Coast Sewerage Scheme, West Coast Sewerage Scheme and so on - that there be a moratorium on major capital projects. Let us all agree that we have reached a stage in this country where we do not have to get involved in projects of high political visibility in order to convince the electorate of Barbados that a Government is performing.

I think that as we look to the future, we have to ensure that any major capital projects embarked on in this country are properly conceived and that financing is secure. All that kind of thing needs to be looked at very carefully.

Quite frankly, Sir, I would like to suggest that any major capital project in Barbados in the future should attract the attention first of a Select Committee of this House of Assembly. I believe, Sir, in this way, if a lot of our projects in the past had been subjected to that kind of scrutiny a lot of the mistakes of the past would have been avoided.

The second point, Sir, I want to assist the Honourable Member for Christ Church South who intervened in the debate on a point of order and who quite rightly requested a foundational statement before the House on a matter in order to eliminate any accusation that the Statement by the Member for St. Michael East was merely a matter of hearsay. I believe, Sir, that I have a responsibility, having been in this House at the time in 1981, to assist you, Sir, in that kind of foundation statement.

It is my clear recollection, Sir, that the person best able to assist this House is the Honourable Member for St. Joseph himself, who during the last quarter of 1981 acted as Minister of Finance for a period and who was the person who alerted the then Government of the distinct possibility of failing the IMF test in that quarter, and who was one of the persons involved in the exercise of dispatching a legal firm to the United Kingdom at Christmas time 1981 in order to get 3 million pounds into Barbados before the end of the year to pass the IMF test. That is how the Central

Bank Building came into being. Because the Government of the day had opposed the proposal for the Central Bank, but it needed that foreign exchange desperately. That is the sum that the Honourable Member for St. Michael East is talking about. 12.20 p.m.

Aside.

Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: On a point of order, Sir. Mr. Chairman, Sir, the Member who is speaking is referring to an IMF Programme in 1981. The Government of Barbados entered an IMF Programme in 1982. Therefore, he is totally misleading the House with a false reference to tests that were passed in 1981.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: I thank the Honourable Member for St. Peter for bringing to my attention that the events which I described took place in 1982. Thank you very much, Sir. I thank you very much indeed.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Stick to the relevant issue.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: Thank you very much. I am very glad, Sir. The Honourable Member for Christ Church South not only knew of that, but he knew of the problems that developed afterwards when the Central Bank tried to dishonour responsibilities in meeting its legal fees to the very law firm. Let me move on.

Aside.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: Yes, you know. You know what I am talking about. If I may move on, Sir. I do not wish to get into this debate anymore than to help the House in respect of the foundation to the statement.

On the issue of location, Sir, it certainly is not a preferred location in my view. You know, Sir, that I always believe in a fundamental dictum about properties. When one thinks of properties like the Honourable Member for Christ Church South, one always remembers that when you are valuing property then there are only three considerations to take into account. Those three considerations are location, location and location. They are the fundamental considerations to be taken into account. The reality is that we have to live with what we have and seek to make the best use of it in the interest of Barbados, but at the same time I would sincerely hope we move away from this business of having to justify one's existence as a Government in terms of the number of physical structures that we put up during a given time. A Government will be taunted by the Opposition. A Government will be pushed by the Opposition to commit itself to that kind of situation. But I think that we have to resist it and we have to stand up and reiterate our position, and say that our position

is one that we see the human development of Barbados as a major capital project in itself. We see the development of the export sectors as a major capital project. We see the social development of Barbados as a major capital project and we do not have to have structures of high visibility in order to justify the existence of a Government. I think that that is a fundamental error that has resulted in many of the projects which have created problems for Barbados.

Sir, there are so many and I have spoken of them so often, and I must say by and large that the Barbados Labour Party is guilty of most of the bad capital projects that we have had in this country. For example, I have not mentioned CARICARGO and Caribbean Airways. I have not mentioned a whole lot of other projects. I do not want to, Sir, for the purpose of this debate because I say that the Honourable Member for St. Joseph gave a reasonable presentation and did not seek to open these areas. But I think that what we need to do is to learn from our experience in the past. I would sincerely hope that this Government will pay attention to the proposal that I make, that anytime they or any future Government be embarking on any major capital project that that project should be examined by a Select Committee of this Honourable House.

The Honourable Member for St. Joseph placed great stress on the question of professional advice and professional evaluation. These things are important, Sir, but you have to remember that a lot of the capital projects have gone wrong, in fact, had all sorts of professional advisers. I was appalled, for example, when I read the files on the Cement Plant when I was the Minister of Finance. There were all kinds of professional advisers and a lot of these professionals give advice looking to their next assignment. They know what the wishes of a Government may be and a lot of their advice conforms to the wishes of a Government.

In that regard, Sir, I believe the Honourable Minister of Health might be well advised to listen to the remarks that I just made on the role and status of professional advisers in respect of major capital projects in this country. Because in the long run it is the politicians who have to make the decisions, but also in the long run it is the politicians who have to carry the continuing responsibility down the road. You have to find the money and when it goes wrong, it is the politicians. Let me tell you something. There is not a single adviser either in respect of the Central Bank, Sherbourne Centre, CARICARGO, Cement Plant, or any others that will lose a night's sleep because of anything that is said in this House. But it is the politicians who took those decisions who will be harried now and harried for many a year over those decisions.

So that in the long run, Sir, I believe that we can avoid a lot of these problems if we decide as a Parliament

and if the Government takes a very constructive decision and enlightened decision to say: "We believe that this is a capital project that is good for Barbados. We will be coming to Parliament for money for this project. This is the information that we have before us. Let us appoint a Select Committee of Parliament and let us all take responsibility for any major expenditure of that nature in the future." I do not think that anyone can complain with that proposal. That is why, Sir, we are seeking a new social, political and economic covenant that would also embrace the operations of Parliament itself, lift it to a new level of operation, so that we would avoid these kinds of matters that should not be contentious beyond the stage of planning and decision making. We have this opportunity now to put it in place, for example, in relation to events like what took place in St. Andrew. A Select Committee - there is nothing wrong with that. Let the responsibility be the responsibility of Parliament one way or another.

Aside.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: No, I am not begging for a play. Let me get this straight. I may not even sit on the Select Committee. But the important point is to get the principle enshrined. You know things that bind future Governments, future generations that expand the obligations around the neck of future generations are things which I believe that Parliament as a whole should be seeking to take responsibility for and it does not in any way derogate from the authority of a Government. It does not in any way make you less of a Government in order to seek that kind of consensus. 12.30 p.m.

I hope during the life of this Parliament to see a very expanded role being played by parliamentarians. You have a large number of Members over there on the back bench who could be playing a far more constructive role in the parliamentary life of this country. They all have views, they should be given the opportunity to take part in this kind of decision making process. Let us make a clear departure, let us have no more of those capital projects unless they are approved by Parliament and let us have a moratorium for a period of time on any major public sector capital projects of that nature, excluding those relating to the environment which are already on the drawing board. I can assure you that you will not hear me taunting you that you did nothing because I do not see a big \$100 million building or something of that size. I give that assurance. Not even before the elections.

Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

Rt. Hon. L. E. SANDIFORD: Mr. Chairman, I hope not to be long on this particular matter, but I feel I have a responsibility to speak on this issue, because there has

been a lot of distortion, there has been a lot of politicking and there has been a lot of untruths said on this matter in many places in this country.

I believe that when we come to this Chamber we should realise, and should seek to spread the concept that just as Barbados and the people of Barbados are continuing entities, so the business of Government is a continuing business. Governments change for one reason or another, but any Government assuming office has a number of responsibilities to carry out. One is to implement those sensible aspects of its promises to the electorate. A second responsibility is to look at the existing projects and, if they are in the interest of the people of Barbados and of Barbados itself, to continue with those projects. That is part of the continuing process of politics in any country, but what we are having across the globe is a growing distrust of the political style in which one group of persons seek to say that the other group has done nothing, whether tangible or intangible, that all of their policies were in the realm of folly, and that the holders of office, temporarily - for we all hold office temporarily - are the possessors of all wisdom and knowledge.

I believe that the learned Attorney General is fully appreciative of the points I am making and he is re-learning that life is very tough. In the very few months he has been in office, from where I sit and stand, I can see him becoming balder and balder every Tuesday. So he recognises that when you are in Opposition you may speak from one particular premise; but when you come into Government - and he has been doing a good job, Sir - I am repaying the compliment, for when he was over here he paid some compliments to me but said some strange things as well, Sir - you may speak from another premise. For one thing is sure, Sir. When this particular matter came before the Parliament in 1988, he did not oppose the construction of the Centre; he admitted that there was a need for certain structures in Barbados and to address certain problems.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Sir, if the Honourable Member is referring to the speech in here when the first set of money was voted for Sherbourne, he will see that I opposed the establishment of any examination hall. I said it was a waste of time and money. If he is talking about the fact that we were told that what was being built was a facility to accommodate the CPA Conference in October 1989, that I supported. I would like him to read my exact words in context.

Rt. Hon. L. E. SANDIFORD: Mr. Chairman, I read everything and put all of his words in context, Sir.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: I guess he was on a point of elucidation.

Rt. Hon. L. E. SANDIFORD: No, he made matters much worse. He cannot elucidate anything that he has not said.

Sir, I have to refute the charges and accusations that Sherbourne was an unplanned, misapplied project. We can look at many projects. There are changes in emphases from time to time - this is what life is about - and in our personal lives, too, Sir. The Member for St. Joseph, the Honourable Minister, knows about these matters. He has known many changes. It is true he has clashed with his Prime Minister over the question of casino gambling, and I commend him for standing up on this particular issue and saying that this is a matter which should continue. A Government has the responsibility, Sir, to carry on some of the projects that have been left over. We had that responsibility in 1986 this Government, like any succeeding Government, will have that responsibility too, because Sherbourne is a project that touches the very soul and culture of Barbados and in time, Sir, like the unfinished work on this Parliament building itself, it will be recognised as a good project. The Parliament building itself is an unfinished project. It is still going on, and it is a project that was started by the Barbados Labour Party. The project is still going on. Perhaps you don't know the difference between East Wing and West Wing of the Parliament building. 12.40 p.m.

Aside.

Rt. Hon. L. E. SANDIFORD: I hope you will be able to complete it and we will give you the praise for it.

Let me refute any claim that Sherbourne was a haphazard project. When this particular project was started, a committee was set up for Sherbourne. There were meetings which included representatives from the Ministries of Education and Culture, Transport, Works and Telecommunications, Housing, Lands, Tourism and Sports, as well as from the Town and Country Planning and Lands and Surveys Departments. All these people and these interests were involved in the planning of the project.

There was a committee Sir, which included the Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Education and Culture, the Chief Education Officer, the Deputy Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Education and Culture, a buildings officer, the Clerk of Parliament, the Interim Director of the National Cultural Foundation or nominee, the Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Tourism and Sports or nominee, and a Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Economic Affairs or a nominee. It included the Chief Town Planner, the Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Housing and the Senior Technical Officer, Ministry of Transport, Works and Telecommunications. This was in 1987.

The job of the Committee was to plan for the establishment of the Sherbourne Facility. It was subsequently named the Sherbourne Centre, but then it was called an Examination and Cultural Centre and the brief was to provide a building that would take into account a whole host of activities. It was multi-purpose and flexible. At the time, the officials of the Ministry of Education were experiencing difficulties in managing the conduct of the examinations.

Aside.

Rt. Hon. L. E. SANDIFORD: Examinations were held not twice a year, not a few days a year but there were many examinations that took place throughout the year. But we are not getting into that. I am saying that this was one of the points. If examinations were held a few times a year, or however many times a month, the fact is that the facilities were designed so that they would be available for other activities as well. So let us not believe that there was any bad planning, or bad direction, or anything like that.

Sherbourne was a project that was well conceived and I will in due course... There have been so many distortions, and we have been practising the politics of distortion for so long in Barbados that it will be necessary to clarify the policy options and policy stances taken by Government in this country, particularly Sir, by my Government. If it is the last thing I do, Sir, I will be seeking, and I am in the process of establishing a Centre for Public Affairs in this country.

Aside.

Rt. Hon. L. E. SANDIFORD: That is an educational and intellectual project, so the honourable Member wouldn't understand it.

There is a lot of misunderstanding and distortion in this country, and these things have to be corrected for the record. I approach public affairs with no bitterness; but let us get the record straight. Barbados signed a tax information and exchange agreement with the United States and one of the benefits or provisions from that was that groups holding conventions and meetings in countries which had signed that agreement, would be eligible for some tax concessions from the United States Government.

Barbados was one of the first - I am not even sure if it was the first - to sign that agreement; but we have never in any significant way sought to exploit that particular provision. We need the facility, Sir. There is no point our trying in Barbados to go for the very big conventions because we just cannot handle those; but if we seek to pitch our objectives and aims at a level that is in

keeping with our resources, we can find our niche. We only have to look around, Sir, at other countries and other places which have benefited.

One of the very last things I did, Sir, was to take some of the officials to see convention centres and meeting places in Edmonton as well as in New York, and there are also other convention centres, Sir. I have noted or seen facilities in Hong Kong. There is no reason why Barbados cannot attract its own share of business meetings, incentive travel, and that segment of the travel market, because we have the environment, the facilities and the capabilities.

Instead of bellyaching, I believe we should try and get on with the business of government. Now that is the task of this Minister, and that is what he and the Government will be judged by, namely how they get on with the business of government. So I urge the Government in the interest of the people of Barbados to take the reins of Government in hand. Do not try to seek cover from what the Opposition or the previous Government did; but stand up like men and women. Take your decisions, but try to implement the decisions in the best interest of all. I think that is the advice I would leave with you at this stage. Get on with the governmental business in hand. 12.50 p.m.

Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Chairman, this debate has stimulated a lot of discussion on a number of matters having to do with the planning and execution of Government's capital projects and the future of Sherbourne. I would obviously want to advert to some of the issues raised on those particular matters.

I really do feel that the House has a responsibility to recognise that we are in the process of voting almost \$4 million, not for works to be conducted between now and the end of the financial year, but for work already accomplished as long ago as 6 or 9 months. There is a kind of urgency that is attached to this Resolution which this House would do well to recognise.

There are a large number of contractors, Mr. Chairman, who entered into obligations at great expense to themselves to undertake work on behalf of the Government of the day. Many of them have been virtually driven to the wall. Many of them are under financial pressure because the past Democratic Labour Party administration came to this House last March and in spite of the questions raised by the then Opposition, the Barbados Labour Party, gave us the assurance repeatedly that full and complete provision was being made in the Estimates of Expenditure to meet all of the costs to be incurred with the conclusion of Sherbourne for the purposes of enabling the country satisfactorily to hold a Global Conference in this country.

We asked about the matter, and we were given the assurance that full and complete provision had been made and was being made for the carrying out of the capital works at Sherbourne. It stands as a great blot to financial management that we now have to come to this Parliament, 9 months after the fact, after we had been given the assurance by the then Government that full provision had been made for Sherbourne, to vote now \$4 million for works not in the future, but works already completed which we thought had already been paid for, and for work the non-payment for which has put a large number of people in this country in financial distress. It is a shameful, thing, Sir, the Honourable Member misled this Parliament. He has misled the people of this country.

I think it is also a shameful thing that a large part of the expenditure on Sherbourne was by way of a Contingency Vote which I have already spoken to in this House and which I want to say must never ever again be part and parcel of any financial management scheme of any Government of this country.

I just want to enter into the record of Parliament that we are now as a Parliament voting funds, not to spend in the future as the Financial Rules require, but we are asking Parliament to vote funds for works already completed 9 months ago. I have already spoken in this House about how wrong it is for people to spend money or to commit the taxpayers to expenditure in advance of the authority of Parliament. The former Prime Minister who got up and spoke with his usual self-righteousness and foolishness should have recognised that this was about the break-down of financial management when he was Prime Minister of this country because he had a responsibility since Sherbourne was his brain child to make sure that expenditure on it should have received the prior approval of Parliament.

I hear a lot of talk from the Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central about how all capital projects should come to Parliament for prior approval. I agree. The idea is not novel. In our 1991 Manifesto, and I will refer to it, page 32, we said that before committing any public resources to the creation of any new state enterprises a full report on the feasibility of the project must be submitted to the House. I give the House the assurance that now that we have a Planning and Priority Committee in place, functioning as an executive sub-committee of Cabinet; that all new capital projects must be presented to us in full and that we will therefore be in a position to present all new capital activities by this Government to Parliament as full projects in their own right. It has to be said.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: My suggestion is that we go a little further than just bringing it to Parliament to debate

that we think in terms of establishing a select committee of Parliament to properly examine these things.

Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Chairman, the problem with Sherbourne is precisely that it was a project that was never properly conceived. It is a monument to the stubbornness and the foolishness of the Honourable Member for St. Michael South.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member is asked to withdraw the offending remark - foolishness.

Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: The stubbornness, Sir. The record will have to show that the Honourable Member for St. Michael South left office in 1976 with the view that Barbados should have an examination centre. He came back into office 10 years afterwards, despite what had happened in relation to the building of schools, the gymnasium and halls, and still felt that against all of the evidence this country should still have an examination centre and he set out to build an examination centre.

Sherbourne was intended to be an examination centre first and foremost. This business about Sherbourne becoming a convention facility is now only by indirection. That was not part of the original plan. He is now seeking to justify Sherbourne as an afterthought having regard to the fact that what the country needed at the time was not an examination centre, but it needed a convention facility and it still needs a proper convention facility that can tap into one of the most lucrative aspects of international tourism business.

It is a monument to the wrongheadedness and the financial folly of the Honourable Member for St. Michael South and it has so to be said. His now trying to convert it into what he never thought it could "have been is I think only to do greater injury to the injustice that he has already inflicted upon the people of this country. It was his notion of an examination centre. Whatever it may become in the future, history will have to say that he wanted it to have been his examination centre.

I think, Mr. Chairman, it is a real miscarriage to compare this with the Central Bank of Barbados. People set out to build a Central Bank headquarters. They knew what they were seeking to build. The Central Bank headquarters is also paying for itself. It is not a charge on our public purse. The Central Bank is able to service all of the debt that was incurred in building that headquarters. Last year it contributed I think about \$20 million or \$30 million to the Treasury. This year it will contribute another \$12 million. The servicing of the debt to build the Central Bank headquarters is not a charge on the public purse. The building of this Sherbourne complex is going to be a charge on the public purse for many years to come.

Sir, this project was never put in the form of a project that can attract financing; first mistake. If we are going to ever get the opportunity to finish it, the unfinished work at Sherbourne has to be cast in the form of a project and somebody is going to have to sit down and do an analysis as to whether the expenditure of \$30 million in today's prices, or \$40 million whenever the project is to be completed, is justified in the expenditure as an auditorium from an economic and a financial point of view. That work has not yet been done. Therefore I must say to the House that even though it is alleged that it is going to cost \$30 million to complete Sherbourne that we are not in a position... LOOp.m.

Aside.

Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: It has been estimated. I say alleged because nobody knows for sure.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: On a point of order, Sir. Is the Honourable Member saying that a Minister of the Crown earlier misled this Honourable House when he assured us that it will take \$30 million to finish Sherbourne and now the Prime Minister says that it is an allegation?

Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Speaker, Sir, all I would say to the Leader of the NDP is that I hope that his new covenant is a covenant that would enable the NDP to assist us in the fight against drugs.

Aside.

Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Thank you.

Asides.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Order, please.

Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Chairman, Sir, it is estimated that \$30 million at today's valuation would be required to conclude Sherbourne. We are not yet in the position to say whether that expenditure would be justified until we have seen an economic and financial feasibility of the recast new project. I want to say, as a matter of policy, that we are not just going to finish the project merely because it is there without some justification of its feasibility. For the next few years, until a serious marketing plan has been developed - and there was never a marketing plan with the Democratic Labour Party for Sherbourne - we are going to be saddled with the situation where we are going to have to provide for the operating cost of Sherbourne as a running financial sore.

Earlier this year, Mr. Chairman, I had to sit down and receive the submissions from the Ministry of Tourism as to what is involved now and what could be involved in the future. It is a serious problem that cannot be glossed over

by false comparisons to the Central Bank which is not a charge on any public purse. This is going to be a running sore for many years to come. If we do nothing in terms of additional construction at Sherbourne, it is going to be a financial problem because the cost of maintaining it and running it is going to grow larger and larger. And if we do something by way of spending large sums it is also going to be a problem. I want to enter those contributions to this debate. The self-righteousness of the Democratic Labour Party to this matter is shocking. It is a project that stands as a monument to financial stupidity. It is a project that stands as a monument to the stubbornness of one man and the inability of his party to tell him to come back. Because it is a matter also of public record that, on that side, many of them had an expressed open disagreement with the purposes that were being sought by the construction of Sherbourne. But one man was intent on having his way and his way was to have an examination centre. No amount of fancy words will now cause us to believe that his talk about making it into a convention facility, after the fact, justifies his lack of responsibility, as the Minister of Finance, on that occasion, for not doing what should have been necessary in the circumstances; having a full project document prepared in order to justify the expenditure of public funds.

Sir, I am going to have to get back into this debate because I am sick and tired of the philosophies being expressed by people who have no moral position to express philosophies. I am tired of the false comparisons with the Central Bank and all kinds of nonsense to justify what is, at the end of the day, the largest wastage of public funds, I think, Sir, in the modern history of this country.

I am obliged to you, Sir.

SUSPENSION OF SITTING

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Mr. Chairman, Sir, recognizing the rights of the Honourable Member for St. Michael West, I beg to move that you do now report progress to His Honour the Speaker and ask for leave to sit again.

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

The question was put and resolved in the affirmative without division and Mr. CHAIRMAN reported progress to Mr. SPEAKER and asked for leave to sit again.

Mr. SPEAKER resumed the Chair, reported accordingly and suspended the sitting accordingly. 1.08 p.m.

RESUMPTION Mr. SPEAKER:

This House is now in session.

Hon D. A. C. SIMMONS: Mr. Speaker, I had asked leave to return to the item (g) in the Order of Business - Government Notices.

GOVERNMENT NOTICES

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I beg to give notice of a Bill to amend the Companies Act.

FIRST READING OF BELLS

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: I beg to move, Sir, that the Companies (Amendment) Bill be read a first time.

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

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

Mr. SPEAKER: When the suspension was taken the House was in Committee of Supply, to that it will now revert.

COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY

Mr. SPEAKER left the Chair and the House went into Committee of Supply, Mr. W. C. C. CALLENDER in the Chair.

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

Hon. Sir HAROLD St. JOHN: I did not intend to participate in this debate, Sir, but I have been*drawn into this debate by some of the statements made by Honourable Members and I think it is important that we place on record some of the true facts surrounding a number of Government projects.

I regard this project as probably the most outstanding example which should be used on how not to spend Government money and if there is one thing that Sherbourne has done for us it is that it provides us with an opportunity to do an analysis of where and how a Government can go wrong in its planning and execution.

Some Honourable Members on the other side have attempted to compare this project to the Central Bank. I only want to say this, Sir. The Central Bank as a project is an example of what the Honourable Member for St. Michael South spoke of and that is that Government is a continuum and Governments find themselves in a position in which they have to continue projects conceived and well

on the way to execution by their predecessors, after an evaluation, of course, of the need for the project.

It is untrue to suggest that the Central Bank was a project in which there was inadequate planning, for the period of time that it took to plan the Central Bank, as the records will show, was well in excess of 5 years. The Democratic Labour Party set up a Committee in 1972.

Secondly, Sir, you cannot compare the methodology of financing of the Central Bank with Sherbourne. I have repeatedly pointed out this. A Central Bank is a unique institution. It is the only institution that I know that prints and sells a piece of paper that cost them about 5 cents for a dollar. And the more you call upon them to print the more money they make.

The Central Bank was financed by internal credit creation and also by the borrowing, on very favourable rates of interest, from the money markets who well knew when they were lending the Central Bank that the Central Bank itself was in a position to repay the loan.

I am not going to spend long on this, Sir, because I think the record should also show that the Honourable Member for St. Michael East's reference to Lord Taylor as a Member of the Crown Agents is just not correct. The Honourable Member referred to a gentleman, and I am not going to call his name, who was the Caribbean contact by a number of Governments particularly the Government of Trinidad and Tobago of the merchant bank Morgan Grenfell. That is it and he spent a lot of time through the Caribbean selling and trying to have business for his institution in the Euro dollar loan market.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: The Honourable Member for Christ Church South is not giving this Honourable House the benefit of all the information he knows about that £3 million loan therefore you are misleading the House.

Hon. Sir HAROLD St. JOHN: Sir, the Honourable Member talks about £3 million. The Central Bank, as far as I remember ...

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member is asked to note that we are discussing a matter dealing with Sherbourne.

Hon. Sir HAROLD St. JOHN: I just wanted to point out that the Honourable Minister told us here about the financial strain that Sherbourne is placing upon the resources of the Government. The Central Bank never placed any such strain because of the fact that since 1990 the net profit of the Central Bank was well over \$60 million and the more the Honourable Members on the other side borrowed from it the more profitable it was,

for in 1992 when they borrowed so largely from the Central Bank they also contributed to the profit margin of \$30 250 000 in 1992. So that anybody who seeks to compare a central bank development with another Government department fails to appreciate that a Central Bank is a unique institution and has its own particular means of making money.

Now, Sir, there is no doubt about it at all that we in Barbados have to have an examination on how we conceive, how we manage projects. There is no question about that at all. But this problem is not unique to us. Only recently I came across an article written in the *Parliamentarian* which highlighted the steps that were taken in New Zealand by successive Governments to ensure that there is financial responsibility and fiscal responsibility. I believe that our greatest examples that we should use to do an examination of what we are not to do are projects such as Sherbourne, projects mentioned by the Honourable Member for St. Michael South as CARICARGO, because that project was a project that in this Honourable House a former Prime Minister and Minister of Finance gave this House in 1986-87 Estimates a very clear indication that an examination of its performance from its inception up to that time showed that it was profitable. The Honourable Prime Minister and then Minister of Finance - (check the records and you will see.) That up to that time his information was that and it is another example as to how Governments can be led into a false sense of security by their advisers, for that institution which was so profitable in 1986-87 then became by 1989 an albatross on the finances in Barbados. Well, it is a simple thing. We must manage somehow or the other as politicians and be able to have a re-evaluation of some of the advice that we get. I heard the former Honourable Prime Minister and Member for St. Michael South saying that Sherbourne was from its very beginning a project which was well conceived and he read out a whole list of institutions and individuals whose collective contributions went into the planning of Sherbourne. I have no doubt that is so, but what I say that we should now have an examination and re-evaluation of the quality of the contributions that they made. That is the point. We do not wish to have a repetition of that. I am all in favour, Sir, of the American method of expenditure in which you have factual experiences in the form of actual cases so that students can benefit. 2.25 p.m.

Aside.

Hon. Sir HAROLD St. JOHN: I have learned, Mr. Chairman, to look at other examples of American products other than the Honourable Member for St. Michael West and I have found that there have been some good, Sir. That is a very important point. Too often we find ourselves in the position in which it is after we have been pushed into

an impossible situation that we seek to find out why. So that I hope that during the course of this Parliament that some kind of elaborate examination will take place.

I do not believe also, Sir, that we should hide from the public the fact that it is going to cost a tremendous amount of money of some \$30 million so far that is estimated if we want to finish Sherbourne. It is true that it is a challenge as to what we will do. A decision obviously will have to be taken as to whether it may not be better to take down all of the steel that is there and to concentrate the finished portion and to make sure that that finished portion is finished to a standard which would allow it to be operational. There is no doubt about it that there is scope in Barbados for the attraction of conventions and I mention this also because I want to put on record the fact that there was no necessity to expend the amount of money on Sherbourne in order to have a Convention Centre to exploit the opportunities created by the double taxation agreement and exchange of information agreement with the United States of America. Because the private sector had started to exploit that in the form of the hotel group Marriott building a convention centre subsequent to Barbados signing that. In addition to that, it must never be forgotten that the Government had the Dover Convention Centre which itself was rebuilt in order to make it acceptable for that market.

Thirdly, it must never also be forgotten that the Government had the option on some 12 or 15 acres of land to the north of Hey woods in 1986 which land could have been acquired for less than Bds. \$1.5 million and upon which Robinson Ward Architects had designed a building of which the total cost including the land would have come to less than \$6 million. You would have had a Convention Centre next to your largest hotel which at that time, if my memory serves me right, would have been able to handle up to about 2 000 people. Then you had Marriott's who could handle somewhere around 800 to 1000 and you had the Dover Convention Centre which was rebuilt. So that we had a diversity of opportunities.

Aside.

Hon. Sir HAROLD St. JOHN: I do not know why you as Minister of Finance did not see with your knowledge of property the wisdom of buying that land instead of wasting money and giving back \$150 million to your friends.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member is asked to address the Chair. I do not have any friends with such money.

Hon Sir HAROLD St. JOHN: That is true, Sir. I have a great fondness for memory in respect of the activities of the Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central

and the damage that he has done to this economy. That is the only bit of evidence that I admit, Sir, that goes in mitigation of the disastrous act that the Honourable Member for St. Michael South perpetrated on Barbados. He had a bad heritage from the Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central.

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

Hon. Sir HAROLD St. JOHN: Now, Sir, the position is that we must accept the challenge of trying to see how we will market this. It is true that it would have been far more desirable for this Centre to have been placed in the hotel belt. But I have been to conventions in other countries in which one has to travel to go to convention centres. This is not the most desirable but I want to make it clear that the responsibility for doing that is going to be on the Government. I do not mind what they say in the TDC or whatever institutions they have here in Barbados. None of them are going to undertake the responsibility of trying to make this successful. It is a challenge that the institutions of Government have to accept and we in here must understand that it is our duty to make sure that we try to make it as less expensive to the taxpayers as possible. That is a challenge, Sir, that I hope the Honourable Member and the institutions under his Ministry will accept and I wish them well, Sir.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Mr. Chairman, Sir, I am grateful to you for giving me the opportunity to participate in this debate. I listened quite attentively to what has been said so far and I would like to congratulate the Minister for the demeanor in which he brought the debate of Sherbourne Centre. Even though I disagree and will show that I disagree with some of the things he said, he sought to place the debate in a framework that will allow the country to examine Sherbourne without the emotional fervour that was attendant upon the election campaign. I believe that this country cannot continue to have an election campaign throughout the next four or five years; it has to settle down into continuing development. 2.35 p.m.

Mr. Chairman, if you examine Barbados as it is today, you will find that we, when it is convenient for us, boast of the very laudable position we are in: we boast of being the 20th most desirable place on earth to live, according to the UNDP's Human Development Index, and we are No. 1 among so-called developing countries, far in advance of a number of countries such as Italy and such other countries, and we have to answer the question "what does this mean for us?" with rational and reasonable answers. You cannot aspire to be a developed country without recognising the cost which such position must

mean for the country and therefore the citizens of the country. If you are No. 20 in the world and No. 1 in the developing world, you cannot then expect to have expenditure that is akin to what they find in the nethermost parts of Africa or in Haiti or in some other countries that have not reached that level. Therefore, I think it is unfortunate that when we look at projects such as the Sherbourne Centre that we are still approaching these projects with the kind of penny ante mentality that allowed us 25 years ago to cut each other's throats over issues which have subsequently faded.

I give you an example, Sir. I recall rather vividly the political fallout which came from the Tom Adams Highway, the Adams-Barrow-Cummins Highway. Your Honour is not too young to remember that in Opposition we railed against the decision to put the highway where it is and the large quantity of funds that would be used in the development of that highway. I recall that I was in the vanguard of railing against the decision. And now today, as one drives along the ABC Highway, one wonders how the country could possibly have survived if we did not have something like the ABC Highway. So it is perfectly normal in political terms to rail against these projects as one perceives them from different perspectives. When you are in the Opposition all projects proposed by the Government apparently appear, if you pardon the expression, terrible and then you become the Government. That is why I started off by saying I applaud the Minister for seeking to take a little bit of the heat out of the Sherbourne Centre and we can discuss it rationally, just as with the ABC Highway, which apart from one or two little problems, like the roundabouts being wrongly designed, etc., is now taken for granted.

The Central Bank? God knows if we will ever discover the actual cost.

Aside.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Do not mind what the books say. The Honourable Member knows that we believe the Central Bank was \$110 million and moving, they have said it is \$60 million and dropping. These are matters which have been political divides and so Sherbourne having formed the basis of political propaganda by the Opposition of the day, it seems necessary that the Government of the day which was the Opposition of the day must now put Sherbourne in sufficient "perspective" as not to lose their credibility. But the fact is, Sir, that Sherbourne produced for Barbados, if nothing else, a place in the history of countries when we held, for the first time for a country of our size, we were able to hold a United Nations International Conference here in Barbados and we provided the facilities, and it is to the credit of both sides and the whole of Barbados that that Conference was successful.

Aside.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: The fact that my friend, the Honourable Member, the Attorney General, Acting Leader of the House, we had to beg him not to march during that time, he must get the credit for christening "Mount Stiokeroo", he was going to march during that time to show the world at large that he does not make sport. He did not march because he recognised that we were...

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: On a point of order, Sir. I did not have to prove anything to the world, whether I make sport or not. I had a position to represent on behalf of my constituents and I felt that a conference on the environment and sustainable development was the appropriate place to mark down the outrage of my constituents at the behaviour of the Honourable Member for St. Michael West as the then Minister of Health.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Sir, I have learned to concede to the Honourable Member on these issues, because he was born on 28th April. He, Hitler and a few other people, so they have that. Anyhow, Sir, the point I am making is that when political discussion has subsided it is important that we examine these issues rationally. It makes no sense to me to be having this concept of the back side of Sherbourne being exposed, because the Labour Party is in a position now to control the public information and the private information which goes out. All of that kind of propaganda is fine, but when we are analysing the issues I think we have to be a lot more serious than the mere propaganda.

The Honourable Members cannot deny that up until the coming of Sherbourne Barbados was not in a position to even raise questions in the market place of conventions of a certain level and size. I recall when I was Minister for Tourism in 1986-87 that the Baptist Convention made a commitment to come to Barbados to hold their convention as soon as we had facilities that could accommodate them. When you go to one of the Baptist conventions you are talking about 7 000 people converge on a place, they make a joyful noise to the Lord in a convention place that could hold 7 000 people comfortably, and I find it remarkable that we discuss two or three thousand people with such awe when we could then watch on television something like the Super Bowl. An astrodome that would contain a Super Bowl, we are discussing nearly the population of Barbados contained in one place.

Barbados has put a substantial part of its store of development in the tourism programmes that we can design. We cannot move to the next sphere of development if we do not have the vision to put in place the facilities to attract the numbers that will make tourism in this country

really meaningful. I read where the Prime Minister says that tourism on the south coast is not benefiting as substantially as it should from what has been going on. 2.45 p.m.

Mr. Chairman, I recall vividly that when we sought to bring Air Tours to Barbados there were negative utterances about what would not happen. The fact is that Air Tours came and changed the complexion of summer tourism. All I am saying, Sir, is that we need a certain vision for where we are going to be in the 21st century. And unless we have facilities such as those at Sherbourne we are not going to be able to participate and compete with the rest of the Caribbean, to say nothing of the world.

If you go to Jamaica and you stay at the Pegasus Hotel, the people in the Pegasus Hotel can have a jazz programme that can house 1500 people in their hotel environment to listen to a jazz programme and not have to bat an eyelid. The most we can have in any hotel in Barbados is about 500 people. Sam Lord's can accommodate 500 people in their biggest ballroom and that is with a squeeze.

Aside.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: I didn't know that the Right Honourable and Gallant Member had moved into that sphere Sir, but I have been away a little bit.

The point I am making, Sir, is that we have to move away from this blameworthiness, this business of saying that "the last Government did this or that". The fact is that even if it was started as an examination centre, the Government of the day had the prescience to make the shift, to recognise that we can use it for the purposes of development. This investment - and I don't accept the \$90 million figure which the Honourable Minister kind of leisurely brought out. But I don't know the figure. Give or take \$10 million - when you are discussing the development of generations to come, \$10 million is not a large amount of money. I don't understand how in this country we discuss money. The Honourable Member for Christ Church or the Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central don't get upset about \$1 million. They have the kinds of thoughts about money that don't let them get nervous about a million dollars. When you are discussing a country's future you cannot let \$10 million start to worry you.

We are misleading our people if we don't let them understand that you have to make an investment.

Aside.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Mr. Chairman, the lawyers are discussing fees and I am not able to discuss that.

Mr. Chairman, the point I am making is that we really should move the debate to another sphere. We should move it to a different plateau and we should start to recognise that if we are going to satisfy our needs into the 21st century the level of investment which we have to make cannot be the same as what we made in the 1960s. This convention centre was proved beyond the slightest shadow of doubt to be acceptable at the highest level when we successfully put on the Global Conference. It is now our duty and, indeed, it is the Government's duty to ensure that this convention centre is successfully marketed.

I was pleased to hear the Honourable Member saying that they have a business plan. Let us suppose that everything they say about the Democratic Labour Party Government's inability to produce a plan is true. Let us suppose that is true. What is important is that they must now have the plan and the programme because it is now their responsibility and it is their duty to use whatever assets and resources we have for the betterment of the country. So I want to hear what programmes they have and the Minister started. It is unfortunate that...

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

Mr. B. M. TAITT: It is unfortunate that some other Honourable Members on that side feel that they need to go backwards, but the fact remains that the approach to conventions in the Caribbean might extend beyond just simply "using". I am here discussing the point that the Minister raised about not having a hotel next door.' It is not necessary any more to have a hotel. We demonstrated during the Global Conference that proficient use of road transport can move large numbers of people from one place to the other, in a short time, efficiently. We were able to do that. We demonstrated it.

Indeed, there is nothing to preclude the property that is immediately east or in front of the Sherbourne Centre from itself becoming a hotel. There is nothing which says that in Barbados all hotels must be on the beach and, in due course, there is nothing to prevent it. Julie'N is building a massive project not far from there and somewhere on the other side there can be a residential hotel that will bring benefits to the large numbers of people that live in the immediate vicinity of St. Michael East. So we must not bog ourselves down into concepts that were 25 years ago. We have to look to the future.

Movement of people by airconditioned buses and limousines is the order of the day for countries like ours.

I go further. I recall discussing with my colleagues in the Caribbean that we would bring an international conference here, that part of it would be in Barbados, part would be in St. Vincent and part would be in Trinidad and Tobago. At the Heads of Government Conference we talked about the Commonwealth Heads of Government Conference where they would spend time here in Barbados for the first two days. They would go to St. Vincent for the retreat and they would come back to Barbados for the final plenary so that we in the Caribbean instead of bypassing and giving up constantly the Commonwealth Heads of Government Conference for example, we could hold it and Prime Minister Mitchell and Barbados and St. Lucia discussed this as a matter of course.

The point I am making here is that we have to think in those terms in the Caribbean where we can have functions that are inter-island related. We do that now with cricket. Nobody recognises that when we have a West Indies tour we in fact use each island as part of the total tour. In that respect, far from having only one Sherbourne, Barbados needs at least a second Sherbourne. If you are going to talk about the 21st century, I recommend to the Government that they start putting on the drawing boards now a second Sherbourne. You may call it something else, but I don't agree with my colleague who talks about a moratorium on capital projects, because the young people of this country, the 30 000 who are not employed, will need employment and the only feasible way of bringing real numbers into this country is to move off into areas such as that.

I will speak to that some more, Sir.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Chairman, Sir, I rise in this to seek to try and refocus the issue of this debate. This supplementary for some \$4 million has been brought here today as a result of the inability to contain within the vote of this year's estimates the amount that should have been spent on Sherbourne. Indeed, Sir, the recollection as to the debates during Estimates last year clearly showed that there was an indication that that sum of money that the House was being asked to support at that time would have been the total sum.

We have seen, over the course of the last seven years or more, since 1988, all sorts of discussions and all sorts of *ad hoc* planning, and we still see the *ad hoc* planning continuing today when I listen to the Honourable Member for St. Michael West speak about a hotel opposite Sherbourne at this point in time. When we listened earlier today too to the Honourable Member for ... 2.55 p.m.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: If the Honourable Member would give way. I hope the Honourable Member does not regard me as a major planner. I was merely indicating that in

the future there is nothing wrong in having a hotel inside Barbados which could, in fact, be opposite where Sherbourne is. That is all I was saying.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Sir, I do not regard the Honourable Member for St. Michael West as a major planner. Clearly according to his former Leader, John Major did consider him as that.

Rt. Hon. L. E. SANDIFORD: On a point of order, Mr. Chairman. I have never said that in any debate in here so I would like that to go on record.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Sir, I have never accused the Honourable Member for St. Michael South of ever having said that in a debate but it does not distract from the truth of the matter that he might perhaps have been better placed there than within the Cabinet of the former Prime Minister. Nevertheless, the point I want to make is this, in all seriousness.

We have seen too much chopping and changing in respect of the purpose of Sherbourne and in the costing of Sherbourne. I believe that the fundamental issue in this debate that we must focus our minds on is our capacity to plan capital projects properly, our capacity to hold to that plan in the execution of those projects and indeed to understand that not only must we look at the recurring expenditure that these projects will cause but the question of the revenue which it has the capacity to generate must be considered at the initial point of planning the project. Therefore, to hear the Honourable Member for St. Michael East refer to the fact that a marketing plan now needed to be put in place at the time of the completion of Sherbourne is the greatest example of the misplanning that took place in relation to Sherbourne. You do not wait until a project is finished to determine what is its revenue bearing capacity, nor do you wait until a project is finished to determine what are your marketing options in respect of that project. That, I submit, is part and parcel of the problem with Sherbourne. We had a project that we did not know one year whether it was going to be an examination centre, an auditorium, a home for the Barbados Symphony Orchestra or indeed a convention centre. These are all things and uses that have been referred to during the course of the last six years in Hansard in this country.

Having said that, Sir, if you do not know what the purpose of the building is going to be, you are at odds to be able to produce a revenue earning plan for the building because you do not know how you are going to use it. You do not know how you can market it and all of a sudden after the United Nations Conference started to come on stream, we then heard that its main purpose was to be a

convention centre. Even at that stage one would have thought that persons who were seized with the responsibility of planning for Government, not only in terms of how to spend Government's money but indeed responsibilities as to how to maximise the revenue of Government, would have ensured that the business plan of which the Minister now speaks would have been put into place from as early as two years ago, or three years ago when the initial plans were concretised to put it into a convention centre.

There is no doubt, Sir, that there is need for convention facilities in this country. There is no doubt that there is need for it in particular to maximise the benefits under the Taxation and Exchange of Information Agreement under the Double Taxation Treaty which, incidentally, the same Honourable Minister of Tourism was responsible for negotiating under a previous Barbados Labour Party Government. But the question of location was and remains critical to the success of a convention centre.

What is even more, Sir, to speak now about putting up a hotel or putting other facilities in place to be able to maximise the potential of Sherbourne is folly of the highest order and we would have now found ourselves in a Catch 22 situation where almost in excess of \$70 million has been spent on a building, where to sit down and do nothing with it will cause further financial losses because it is a major capital investment. By the same token to run it will also be a major cost to Government. This is, as the Honourable Prime Minister has said, an example therefore of the folly of seeking to proceed with a project without knowing what is the true purpose of the project, what is the revenue side of the project as well as what is the recurring expenditure cost to Government.

I want also to refer to the point that the Honourable Member for St. Michael East sought to make in respect of Sherbourne. It is unfortunate that he has sought to justify further completion of Sherbourne and Sherbourne itself to date with the plight of the artists of this country because I believe that anyone who closely examines what is required by the artists of this country will fully appreciate that it makes no sense to seek to spend all of that money on capital projects when there is still a considerable amount of training to be absorbed by the artists of this country in order to allow them to go further in their arts both in terms of their discipline of the arts as well as in terms of the business of the arts. To that extent, Sir, to spend \$30 million or so purely on an auditorium would reduce any amount that would be available for us to invest in further developmental training of the artists of this country.

I would offer the suggestion that any money for a venue for the performing artists of this country would

be better spent in the refurbishment of the Empire Theatre than building an auditorium for some \$30 million at today's cost. I want to stress that point because the Empire Theatre, if refurbished, could hold at least 1 500. In terms of the cycle of performing arts events in this country which are required to be enclosed, that is more than enough than would be required. Therefore the capacity to service that debt would be far more realistic to Government than the capacity to service a debt of \$30 million.

You see, Sir, perhaps they do not even think of servicing debt because we must remember that this is the same party that in 1990 started 13 capital projects across this country without identifying any source of foreign financing external of Government's Consolidated Fund. All of it was on budget. We saw the results of that decision to start those 13 projects across Barbados without securing funding outside of the Consolidated Fund.

We are in fact, Sir, still paying for it because the Ministry of Education headquarters there is a running cost on the suspension of the contract and that is why we have taken a decision that we cannot continue to have that money running particularly since there has never been any funding identified for the completion or indeed for the commencement of that project. We have taken a decision that we will seek to complete that project as soon as possible because it is costing us in excess of \$40 000 a month, as is the St. Thomas Secondary School, just to keep the suspension of the contract. If we were to terminate both of them the termination cost would be in the region of some \$2.5 million.

These are the kinds of situations we are left in when capital projects are not planned properly, when sources of financing are not properly identified and when things are just allowed to operate in an *ad hoc* manner. That is why I say that we have run away from the fundamental issue in this debate and that is the proper and effective execution of capital projects to which Government has committed itself.

We have also to determine where we can find the possible sources of financing in respect of the completion of the St. Thomas Secondary School and we will be doing that. The last Government started all of these projects without being able to identify funding for the construction of these projects - Sherbourne, St. Thomas Secondary, the Ministry of Education headquarters, all of them. I would like to suggest to you that we have as persons seized with the responsibility of being accountable to this Parliament for the monies voted each year to be more responsible in our actions when it comes to committing the people of this country. But then again, Sir, the Honourable Member for St. Michael West has said that \$10 million in terms of

a capital project for the future is no big thing. So that we can... 3.05 p.m.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: On a point of order, Sir. They like to put words in the mouths of people and they want the press to put out that I said \$10 million is no big thing.

Mr. Chairman, I am sure you recall that I said in the context...

Aside.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Why can you not put it like that? I did not say it is no big thing. Ten million dollars will always be a big thing. But I was saying that if you have vision and prescience...

Aside.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Why can you not put it like that? I did not say it is no big thing. Ten million dollars will always be a big thing. But I was saying that if you have vision, prescience, that is all I was saying. Do not misrepresent me.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Sir, at one stage I was beginning to wonder whether the Honourable Member for St. Michael West was confusing vision with obeah, Sir.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Sir, I can appreciate that the Honourable Member, in her fledgeling way would have some difficulty with certain concepts. I have no quarrel with that. Press on.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: I readily concede that, Sir. Because I could never understand the concept of starting a project that was going to run you some \$75 million to \$80 million without knowing whether it was an examination centre, a home for the Barbados Symphony Orchestra, a home for a Convention Centre or indeed an Auditorium for artistes. I confess to the ignorance that is associated with being a fledgeling Member of Parliament when it comes to seeing how you could start a capital project like that without knowing what were the possible sources of revenue, what was the likely expenditure, what was the likely recurrent cost, what was the business plan in place, what was the marketing plan in place and indeed, at the end of the day, they did not even know who was going to manage it and which Ministry was going to manage it properly.

But I want to get back to the point. The Honourable Member for St. Michael West stated clearly that you cannot let \$10 million worry you when you are dealing with planning for the future of this country. I am saying that that reflects, in my view, a cavalier attitude to the planning of capital projects and that that kind of attitude is what has gotten us into problems in the past.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: On a point of order, Sir. I really hate to disturb the Honourable Member. I invite the Honourable Member to turn to a Debate of Tuesday, October 25, 1988, as published here and the Honourable Member would have a much fuller and clearer understanding of the details in this debate. I do not want to go into details. The First Session 1986-91, Tuesday, October 25, 1988. The Honourable Member would have a much better and clearer understanding of the points that were being made in the fifteen minute allocation.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Sir, I do not know what point of order that is but I give the Honourable Member the undertaking that I will read that and anything else he has for me to read. But it does not distract from the point that at the time when this building was conceptualized and since the time it was conceptualized that it has been referred to as the possibility of 4 different uses. Those uses have ranged from an Examination Centre, to home of the Barbados Symphony Orchestra, to a Convention Centre, to an Auditorium for artistes. That fact remains clear. All of the debates since 1988 reflect that.

But I want to go back to the point because he is not going to distract me from making the point that I want to make. And that is that when he speaks in the manner in which he has spoken in this debate about the cavalier attitude with which money relating to capital projects, you cannot worry about the \$10 million, that is what has gotten them in trouble over and over. I hold firm to the view that it is the runaway expenditure with the capital projects particularly as we approach 1991 along with the regrading exercise that caused this economy to go through the kind of turbulence that it has been through since 1991.

Therefore it brings into sharp focus the need for fiscal propriety in relation to capital projects. It brings into sharp focus the need for bodies such as the Planning and Priorities Committee which can prioritize Government's capital project programme as well as to seek to continue to monitor them in a way to ensure that there is not vast cost overruns as we have seen with every capital project that the Democratic Labour Party executed within the last few years of its office.

Aside.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: At the end of the day that is the difference between the Barbados Labour Party's Administration and the Democratic Labour Party's Administration.

I would hold firm to the view that it has been a monument...

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member is asked to wind up.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: ...not only to madness, Sir, but it has been an example of a flight of fancy undertaken by the Democratic Labour Party and if I did not know better I would wish to describe it in other terms which might be considered unparliamentary. I will not do so in here today.

I would wish also to make the point that we have found ourselves, as I said, in a Catch 22 situation. We are not going to behave in a reckless manner on the assumption as the responsibilities of Government and therefore it is our duty to find proper uses for a building that has incurred in excess of \$70 million to date. We have taken the bull by the horns and ensured that a business plan has been ordered to see what kind of revenue earning capacity that building can now have.

I believe that the Honourable Minister has now taken steps as well to determine the marketing potential of that...

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member is asked to note that her time has expired.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: ...building. And we therefore will do our best in ensuring that we can salvage from an extremely bad situation what is possible.

But we will have to take decisions as to any future construction on that site, as the Honourable Prime Minister has indicated. But I still hold fast to the view that if I have to choose between an Auditorium that will cost another \$30 million, primarily as a home for the performing artistes and the renovation of the Empire Theatre which can also hold about 1 500 that there is wisdom in the economy in choosing the Empire Theatre over spending \$30 million or more on Sherbourne.

Thank you, Sir.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: I want to make note that this debate comes to an end at 3.30 p.m. The Honourable Member for St. Michael East.

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: I will come in quickly. Mr. Chairman, I am grateful to you for allowing me to make a few comments in rebuttal to some of the things that have been said by the Members on the Government side. I would not prolong the debate because I am aware that some other Members might want to make a few comments.

The common theme that continues to permeate the debate seems to be one where the Members on the Government side seem to have departed from the level of debate progressed by the Minister where the Minister himself recognized the need to put aside the frivolous arguments that tend to confuse political campaigns and face the realities that, as a country, that we have, as a matter of priority to seek to put in place in this country facilities, institutions, private sector investment or whatever you can to enhance the product of the tourism industry.

Clearly there is a great opportunity for this country to recognize that Sherbourne Centre has, in fact, been designed as a multi-purpose Centre. That theme has been coming through throughout the campaign but Members on the Government side seem to want to prevail with the idea that we have simply just put up an examination centre which will be used for 2 or 3 weeks in a year and then it is shut up for the rest of the year. It is sad that the argument has gone down that frivolous road.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Sir, no one from the Government side has indicated in this debate that the Government put it up solely as an examination centre.

We have said from the beginning that Government first articulated it as an examination centre and then went on to other uses. The debate has clearly proceeded along the basis that its final usage was to be a convention facility and we have dealt with that matter, Sir. He is misleading the House.

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: Sir, when I first got married I had one child then I had two children, then I had three children. I did not have three at the same time. I crept along.

But the point that we must make, Sir, is that in any project that you have whatever you do, you creep along. Everything does not come at once. There is a beginning and there is an end.

The point we have to make in this country is that the project was conceived with a variety of useful areas in mind and it is that we must focus on. The problem that the Government seems to be confronted with is that their focus seems to be on the fact that the building itself must generate revenue to sustain it or to provide a just argument why it should have been conceived in the first place but

they are missing the point that the facility is of a tremendous benefit to the country as a whole, because as a result of the facility there will be increased arrivals through the airlines. There will be increased need for airport workers. There will be increased need for hotel workers. There will be increased need for restaurant workers. There will be increased need for transportation facilities and also to the distributors in Bridgetown. There will be a whole network of benefit to the country as a whole. 3.15 p.m.

I will make this point that if you look at the foreign reserve position immediately coming out of the hosting of Global Conference last year you would notice a significant increase in the foreign reserve revenue to the country. That is a mere example of what benefits this country can derive if we are able to capitalise and market the place properly because the flow will be in place and that is why there is also a need.

In addition to Sherbourne there are facilities like the one that was proposed at Bushy Park and maybe one or two others. I think that is the point that my Honourable colleague was seeking to make, that Barbados needs in the 21st Century to focus on facilities that will gravitate business to the whole country.

So do not think that we should be confused and we should seek to trivialise the debate into saying that to spend \$30 million on the artists is too much, that they are not worth it. You are telling me that the artists in this country are not worth \$30 million?

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Sir, on a point of order. The Honourable Member for St. Michael East is behaving true to form and having difficulty with understanding the veracity of statements made in this Chamber. Sir, he is misleading the House and I have never at any stage in this House, Sir, said that the artists were not worth \$30 million. I made it clear that if we were to spend \$30 million on a single capital project for performing arts venue when we could spend much less, that we would have less funds available to do developmental training. But you see, Sir, he has an unfortunate association with this and perhaps wants Sherbourne to be renamed the Joe Tudor Centre.

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: It would be appropriately named because he was the leader and he is the one who stood up for the dignity of entertainers in this country. That is what it should be named but you prefer to carry them in Bridgetown instead of having them in a state of the art auditorium. I do not expect any different from you.

The point, Sir, that we have to make is that we must move away from the silly argument of focussing only on what revenue the facility can in fact generate. We have to look at the whole benefit to the country as a result of having the facility put in place. I do not want to belabour the argument. I am going to quit the debate but I certainly hope that from here on in the Government will accept the responsibility.

I applaud the Minister for taking charge of the debate in the manner that he has done it. He should certainly have convinced his colleagues to follow his lead rather than take an individual position in the House. From very early in the planning stages all of the relative information made available to us suggest that there was a decision to make the centre a multi-purpose facility. There was no intention for it to be just simply an examination centre. But for purposes of political campaigning it is expedient to suggest that we have gone and put up a white elephant that is an examination centre. It makes no sense. It is effective on their part in terms of their marketing to the public what we in fact sought to do. They were successful. The public has spoken but the reality of the situation is that we were trying to put a facility in place that would be of a significant benefit to Barbados even if not right away. We were tiptoeing in the exercise, we were pulling money from various heads. I had to release all of the contingency funds in the Ministry of Public Works. That is true. I do not have anything to hide. It was a matter of saving face. We were holding an international global conference and we had limited funds and we had to get it from wherever we could get it from. I do not feel embarrassed to be part of that. We had to forfeit all of the contingency funds. We needed to do it.

Aside.

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: Precisely. It is a magnificent orchestra that we have in place today, started without any funds at all.

But, Sir, I will allow the other Members to have their say because I am aware that there are only a few minutes. I just hope that the future of Sherbourne will be based on common sense and all of the political rancour that has come into the centre should be removed immediately and allow the centre to be developed to the benefit of Barbados as a whole. I thank you.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member for St. Joseph will now wind up.

Hen. Dr. R. L. CHELTENHAM: Sir, I propose to wind up the debate at this point. I want to begin by saying that except for the justified heat with which the Honourable

Minister of Finance spoke, I wish to thank all Honourable Members who have contributed and for the restrained manner in which they have done so.

The fact is, Sir, that whatever errors were made in the planning of Sherbourne and in the execution of the project the reality is that we, as a Government, and as a people now, have to make the best use of it.

It is the responsibility of this Government and my immediate responsibility to make sure that the facility is properly marketed and that we get the best use from its presence here.

I do not think, because we will have many opportunities in the future to revisit this subject, that any useful purpose will be served in pursuing some of the provocative statements made by the Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central, for example, except to say that the more he speaks in opposition the more he gives us the impression that he is convinced that he will never return to Government.

As for my friend the Honourable Member for St. Michael East, I am not persuaded that there are any necessary causal links between having the Sherbourne Complex and the increase of workers at the airport and in many other parts of Barbados. I will allow that to slip by for now.

I just want to give the House the assurance that the Government has accepted it as a challenge to use its ingenuity and to use any assistance it can get from outside, in making sure that we make a success of the facility.

I was particularly attracted to the idea made by my friend the Honourable Member for St. Michael East that we should really try to have an outstanding show there for cruise ship visitors and others during the day. The Best of Barbados is at work in that field. That is perhaps one of several ideas which we ought still to pursue. So, with those remarks, Mr. Chairman, I wish to move once again that this Head stand part of the Estimates.

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

On the motion of Hon. Dr. R. L. CHELTENHAM seconded by Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS, Mr. CHAIRMAN reported to Mr. SPEAKER, the passing of Head 34 in Committee of Supply and Mr. SPEAKER resumed the Chair. 3.25 p.m.

ORDER NO. 2 - TO MOVE THE PASSING OF A
RESOLUTION TO APPROVE THE DRAFT
ELECTORAL AND BOUNDARIES COMMISSION
(REVIEW OF BOUNDARIES) ORDER, 1995

Mr. SPEAKER: At this point, I would like to invite the Honourable Deputy Speaker to take the Chair now.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for St. Peter.

Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, the matter before Parliament is a Resolution concerning the Draft Electoral and Boundaries Commission (Review of Boundaries) Order, 1995 and I need before asking the House to approve the Order to put the matter in context. On November 28, 1994 the Electoral and Boundaries Commission submitted its second report to Government. This report, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is submitted in accordance with Section 41(d) of the Constitution which sets out the procedure and process for the review of constituency boundaries. This section states, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that the Commission shall review the number of the boundaries of constituencies into which Barbados is divided and submit to the Minister for presentation to each House reports either showing the constituencies into which it recommends that Barbados shall be divided or stating the alterations to the existing number.

Sir, Section 41(d) of the Constitution requires that the first report of the Commission should have been submitted not less than one or more than five years from the date of appointment of members of the Commission and in the case of all subsequent reports not less than 2 or more than 5 years from the date of the submission of its last report.² It is also stated, Sir, that not later than two months after the Commission has submitted its report the Minister shall lay before each House of Parliament for its approval a draft of an Order for the Governor-General to give effect to recommendations maintained in the report. The Draft Electoral and Boundaries Commission (Review of Boundaries) Order 1995 and the Commission's Report were laid in this House on Tuesday, January 24, 1995 as required by the Constitution.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, this second report deals primarily with the Commission's review of the constituency boundaries carried out in accordance with the provisions set out in the Third Schedule of the

Constitution which as you are aware, Sir, states that as far as practicable that constituency boundaries shall not either exceed 110 per cent nor less than 90 per cent of the total electorate divided by the number of constituents contained therein.

A review of constituency boundaries was started in 1993 but was interrupted by preparations for and the conduct of the General Elections in Barbados. On the resumption of the review, it was found that the basis for the analysis of constituencies in Barbados had changed considerably. The register of voters published on August 31, 1994 comprised 206 642 persons. When the formula set out in the Third Schedule to the Constitution, Sir, as applied to the Register, it produces an average of 7 380 with an upper range that is 110 per cent of 8 118 and a lower range of 6 642. So that on the basis of the last register of voters, the constituencies which are below the 90 per cent index as set out in the Third Schedule to the Constitution of this Bill are: St. Michael South which had a registered electorate of 6 638, St. Michael Central 6 260, St. Michael North West 6 634, and St. Michael West 6 594. The constituencies which are above the index established, Sir, are Christ Church East which has a registered electorate of 8 348, St. Philip South 8 645, St. James South which has an electorate of 8 764. So that if judged in accordance with the provisions of the legislation, Sir, the constituencies of Christ Church East, St. Philip South and St. James South will obviously have to be adjusted because they are too large and the constituencies of St. Michael South, St. Michael Central, St. Michael North West, and St. Michael West will be judged to be too small.

Sir, as all of us here in this Parliament know, there are lots of defects and I now use the stronger word like "defects" in the existing register of electors. There is obviously a need for a comprehensive enumeration exercise to be undertaken. A large number of persons on the electoral list are persons who are living abroad and in some constituencies there are still a number of persons who are dead that are on the list. Therefore, the Commission has come to the very sound conclusion in our view that under such circumstances that before any decision is taken about amending constituency boundaries or in changing the number of constituencies, there is the need for the register to be purged and updated and for a comprehensive enumeration of electors to be carried out.

Sir, those basically are the recommendations of this report. The report simply therefore is not recommending at this stage a change in constituency boundaries nor a change in the number

of constituencies in Barbados. It is simply recommending that a comprehensive enumeration exercise be carried out to get the existing register purged before this matter is attended to. Now on this particular matter, Sir, the political parties were written to as well as the then sitting Independent Member of Parliament.

The report indicates that responses were received from a Mr. Leroy Trotman who was then serving as an independent member and was of the view that Barbados does not need to be divided into additional constituencies. The Barbados Labour Party responded - our response is shown at page 8 of the Report, Sir - that the Party considers that it would be unwise to pursue any adjustment of the number of boundaries of constituencies without a formal enumeration process being carried out. 3.35 p.m.

The Democratic Labour Party responded, and that is recorded on page 9. On 30th May, 1994, the DLP response was that the matter would be discussed by the Executive Council at its next meeting and a submission if one is agreed on may be submitted and the National Democratic Party is reported in the Report not to have made any reference to the question of constituency boundaries.

In the circumstances, I believe that having regard to all the facts as we know them, the recommendations of this Commission in relation to the need for a comprehensive enumeration to be undertaken before we deal again with the question of boundaries or numbers of constituencies is one that I think should find the entire favour of all Members of this House. I therefore have the responsibility to recommend that this Resolution calling for the approval of this Order, embodying the recommendations of the Commission to that effect, do now pass.

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

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Opposition will not be opposed to this Resolution. In fact, we will be giving support to it.

I want to take this opportunity however to say, in the event that it has not been said as part of the public record, that by and large as a political party which participates in the work of the Electoral and Boundaries Commission and also as a political party which participated in the last general election, we should like to thank those officers in the Electoral and Boundaries Commission as well as the Chairman and members whose terms of office are shortly coming to a close, for the work which they did during the period in which they served and, in particular, with respect to the staff and officers of the Electoral and Boundaries

Commission for their work during the course of the period of the General Election.

The Electoral and Boundaries Commission functions under the authority given to it by the Constitution, and there is an ouster clause which protects the Commission from suit in the event that an issue relating to the validity of the performance of any function of any member of the Commission cannot be raised in a court of law. I have never myself supported the concept of the ouster clause, a minority position which I took when we further amended the legislation some time in 1989. I had said that this ouster clause in my view should not be there and we should not protect the work of the Boundaries Commission for the simple reason that it is much too widely drafted and is something that is undesirable in that the Commission should at the end of the day still be subject to certain rules and procedures and should ensure that its work can withstand public scrutiny.

I have never supported that particular provision. In that regard, I think that one has to appreciate that the work of the Commission so far has been by and large beyond reproach. In recent times, however, there have been grumblings in the Electoral and Boundaries Commission in relation to matters relating to the staff which could affect the confidence which we repose in that organisation. I am very concerned, and wish to make it clear that I hope that actions are not being taken - and I have no reason to doubt that it is not so far - under the cloak of an ouster clause which does not permit either the courts or anybody else to enquire into the functioning of the Commission, which are subversive of its work.

We will be paying very close attention as the Barbados Labour Party and other political parties have always paid to the work of the Boundaries Commission. I want to make it very clear that I have no reason to question it at this stage, but there have still been grumblings in the Boundaries Commission and the work of the Boundaries Commission cannot be viewed as being part and parcel of the normal affairs of Government if its work is protected by an ouster clause which ousts the jurisdiction of the Court.

The point I am trying to make is that there are decisions about the functioning of the Boundaries Commission which are made sometimes outside of the Commission. There are powers which are conferred on other people to do things, maybe make appointments, etc. Those actions, in my view, should not be covered by that particular piece of legislation.

The second point I want to make is a matter which concerns me greatly about public authorities in

Barbados, including authorities like the Electoral and Boundaries Commission. I have just written a letter to the Honourable Attorney General about this. Having resumed practice, I have noticed that there is a very callous disregard for the provision of the Administrative Justice Act by public authorities. I am not saying that it has happened in recent times, but when citizens ask for reasons for decisions taken by a public authority sometimes these reasons are not given at all which means that they are ignored. They take months to give the reason even though the law is very clear that it must be given within reasonable time and, very often, the reasons which are given are not reasons, but they then try to circumvent the situation by imposing new conditions and very often the reasons which they purport to give cannot withstand scrutiny.

I recently had to write to the Electoral and Boundaries Commission to ask them for reasons for a decision and have waited since October last year and the reasons have not been given. I have written to other Ministries, including the Ministry of Public Works, the National Conservation Commission. The only reason why I raised this with the Attorney General is not because I place any blame at his feet, but as the Chief Legal Officer, I believe that many of these Government offices should be alerted to the provisions of the Act. It is very frustrating for citizens of this country who want merely to know why a public official has made a decision which affects them adversely and they have to wait four and five months while the correspondence is either totally ignored or, alternatively, all kinds of efforts are made to purify a badly made administrative decision. This has been my experience in recent times. I am certain that other practising attorneys have experienced it before and I hope that something will be done about it 3.45 p.m.

All decisions, except those which the legislation seeks to exclude from its purview, are decisions for which reasons must be given. Ministers are required to give reasons if they are acting under statute. Some of these people think they are not accountable to anybody, that they do not have to give reasons.

One of the first lessons one learnt on going to the Ministry of Finance when the question of tax waivers - sorry to digress for one minute but it is just the example I want to give - when you deny the waiver they Write and say the application is denied. I have always said, would it not make sense to explain to the person why it is denied so that they do not bother to appeal or whatever? But there is always the view in Government that reasons should not be given unless asked for largely because they believe the question of giving reasons is something for people in the

Legal Department, that the reasons they would write up would not be sufficient, that you need some lawyer to come now and put this thing in fancy language so that the citizen can be even more confused about the decision of the administrator.

I am saying all of that merely to say that while I admire the work of the Electoral and Boundaries Commission, and even if there are problems they may now be facing which I hope the Honourable Prime Minister will deal with, and I am certain that he would because it is supposed to be an independent Commission in the way in which it discharges its duties, at the same time I hope that the Commission will not seek to hide behind the provisions of the legislation under which it is established such as not to be accountable to the people it serves, not just the political parties but the citizens of this country who should see a transparent system in operation and should feel comfortable that decisions made by the Commission are in their best interest. This should permeate throughout the entire system.

We will be giving our support to the Resolution. The only enquiry I would make of the Prime Minister, since I know that these enumerations are subject, or I assume so, to the availability of resources is whether it is likely that provision will be made for an enumeration to be done shortly so that when the new Commission is put in place, that probably would be one of their first tasks.

The last point I want to make is that when one views the way in which the Boundaries Commission is established, one would assume that it is established to straddle parliamentary terms. That was always my perspective of it. Maybe if it wasn't that was the way in which I always understood it that it would go over slightly. Because of recent events which have shortened the last parliamentary term, it means that what we are likely to have is that barring a few months we will have the selection of a Boundaries Commission falling very close to or around the time of the next General Election assuming that one goes into the fifth year, and this is something that may be of concern in the way in which the Commission is appointed.

It only came to my attention when I realised how quickly the issue of the appointment of a new Boundaries Commission had arisen after the last General Election. I am not sure what the original thinking was about having the Commission almost straddling or coming to the expiration of its term in the middle of the normal five year cycle, but if that reason is relevant, I wonder whether it is not something that one should take into consideration in the legislation and review it along with the other things that need to be reviewed.

Thank you.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: Mr. Deputy Speaker, we in the National Democratic Party of course will have no difficulty in supporting this piece of legislation but there are many matters I would like to advert to relating to the functioning of the Electoral and Boundaries Commission.

Now, Sir, on the matter of boundary changes, I do not think that there is anybody who has ever had the opportunity to become a member of this House from the time it existed until now who has been a victim of boundary changes in the way in which I have been. As a matter of fact, since I entered this Honourable House in 1978, within three years I had to face an election with over 40% change in the constituency which I represented. By 1986, I had to fight an election with major changes again. By 1991, I had to fight an election with such major changes that it eventually resulted in my not being returned to Parliament.

Sir, it has really been one of the most awful experiences on my part. The truth of the matter is that the only thing that has not changed in relation to St. Michael South Central in fact is the name, St. Michael South Central, and a few polling districts. It has really been a terrible experience. In point of fact, on the other side of the coin, I have had the opportunity to represent a substantial slice of southern St. Michael. There was a time when the boundaries of St. Michael South Central went down to the River. That was taken away. When Ellis Village was part of St. Michael South Central, that was taken away. When the other issue of Carrington Village, the left side coming up Tweedside Road which was not part of St. Michael South Central, that was added on. When a good half of Britton's Hill was part of St. Michael South Central that was taken away. When Highgate was not part of St. Michael South Central, that was added and, Sir, it has gone on and on.

We now go in St. Michael South Central up into Christ Church. I go right up now just below Rendezvous by the gas station up there. Part of that section that was in the City at one stage has been added on and part of Christ Church West has been added on to St. Michael South Central. It has been an awful experience in boundary manipulation where one has never been able to settle down and have a continuing relationship. I forgot the Ivy. There was a time when about half the Ivy and the other side of Government Hill between Government Hill and the Pine Road was part of St. Michael South Central, so it has been an awful experience.

The net result was that the constituency that I lost in 1991 in no way represented the constituency that sent me

to this Honourable House in 1978. It started in 1981 and it continued. It is the kind of thing that we have to guard against when we get into a situation where subject representatives in this kind of really awful harassment. When I really think about it and I look back over the years, it was - I do not want to use the word victimised. I just want to say that I am an example, the only living example, in fact, the only example ever of anyone in the life of the Parliament of Barbados over hundreds of years that was ever treated in this manner in relation to the constituency which I represent in Parliament. 3.55 p.m.

In fact the only example ever of anyone in the life of the Parliament of Barbados over hundreds of years that was treated in this manner in relation to the constituency which I represent in Parliament.

Other Members have had changes but not to that extent. The only other person who I think has suffered significantly because of that was Dr. Caddie. In 1981 the fact that Dr. Caddie was not returned to Parliament was largely influenced by those changes relating to what was the old St. Michael North Central where a substantial proportion of his constituency was removed.

I think that it should be made clear to the Boundaries Commission that those kinds of abrupt changes in the status of Members of Parliament should not be indulged in, in the future. I am a fighter and I always took the view that you can change boundaries but you cannot change people's opinions. That worked for a while but it did not work in 1991 because there were other factors involved.

I think that what happened to me was wrong. In the covenant for this country that I am speaking of we at all times have to be able to stand up in this House and elsewhere and say no to what is wrong. I think that anyone looking back and seeing what has happened to me in relation to the constituency of St. Michael South Central over the past 17 years must come inevitably to the conclusion that what has happened was wrong and that it should not happen again to any Member of this Honourable House. I think the former Honourable Member for St. Philip North had a part of St. John added on to him.

Aside.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: Or a part went to St. John. However whatever was moved,... The net result was that it helped to remove him from St. Philip North as well, as a result of an intra party dispute, if my memory serves

me right. That was a party matter that dealt with the former Member for St. Philip North, at that time.

Asides.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: As a matter of fact I understood that when there were doubts in 1991 whether I might make it at all there was consideration being given to adding on Princess Royal Avenue as well. That was my information.

Aside.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: We are talking of a broad covenant. Everybody in Barbados is invited to contribute to the covenant. I say no more.

Aside.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: You do not understand it. I am talking about a broad covenant

The second issue I want to raise is this issue of enumeration. I agree that no changes should be made until an enumeration is done. The last time we had an enumeration in this country the result of that was as bad or worse than what existed before.

Aside.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: I am not sure which Government it was but I remember what happened. It was as bad or worse than what it was. I say this for this reason. I have come to the conclusion that when you are doing an enumeration that you have to make sure that you appoint enumerators from the particular polling district. You appoint an enumerator from the polling districts that they are enumerating. First point.

The second point is that they should not be paid on the basis of the number of people they enumerate per day. That creates problems and I think that it has created no end of problems where people have had to dismiss enumerators in the past or to question the validity of their work because they were being remunerated on the wrong basis. And after that, you were still faced with the kinds of problems where people who were dead - imagine you have an enumeration, you have a new list and a few months later you still have dead people on the list. You have people whose names should have been removed from the list for a variety of other reasons as provided for under the Representation of the People Act and yet their names continue to remain on the list.

Sir, we have a problem and the only way we can deal with that problem is to make sure that the enumerators that you appoint are people who know the people in the polling districts. I also believe that those enumerators should be accompanied by scrutineers if you wish to get a correct result. In other words, one can never guarantee the political impartiality of people. I feel that if you have a representative of the political parties accompanying the enumerator but not entering the house - only the enumerator enters the house - when that enumerator goes in there and comes up with information that person would know that they have to confront people who would know if someone in there has been enumerated but living in New York for the past 20, 30, or 40 years or someone who has died.

It is not going to work. It is not going to be helpful unless those two things are done. Firstly insist that the Electoral and Boundaries Commission find enumerators who know the people and who live in the polling area on the one hand and secondly you make provision for scrutineers to be available. Whether those scrutineers are available at the expense of the political parties, at the expense of Government or whatever, this is something that can be negotiated. But I think that it needs to be done otherwise you would never get an accurate list. Because none of us inside here really knows the size of the Barbados electorate. When you hear that 80% or 60% voted you do not really know.

There are some polling districts for example in St. Michael South Central that whenever a head count is done by people who know the people, and who live in the area, they cannot find 900 people or 1 000 people on a list for a polling district and never more than 600 people no matter what they do, and that is after a reenumeration has been done. If you wish to cure the problem then you are going to either be wasting money or you are going to seriously set about it in the way in which I am suggesting to this House. I sincerely hope that the Electoral and Boundaries Commission would deal with that particular matter. 4.05 p.m.

The next issue I want to raise, Sir. I want to raise the question of the publication of polls by newspapers during an election period. It is within the competence, the power and the authority of the Electoral and Boundaries Commission to regulate such activities. Many countries have found it necessary to put a time limit between the election day and the last day on which polls can be published. I think in France it is 7 days. I know the Canadians now are seriously looking at the impact of polls on the electoral process and I believe that we in this country have a responsibility to look very carefully and see whether or not...

Now I am not saying that polls should not be published. All I am saying is that after nomination day we have to determine a cut-off point, where the final polls can be published so that we are sure that people's opinions would not be substantially influenced by a poll that comes out on the morning of an election or the day before an election or something like that.

Sir, this is the problem that we have. The problem we have is that when parties are in Opposition they see all these things that are wrong. When they are in Government they forget it. Many of the complaints that I will be making are complaints that have been aired by parties in opposition before.

The Electoral and Boundaries Commission, Sir, also needs to look at the allocation of broadcasting time to make sure that it is done on a more equitable basis. They also need to look at the laws relating to political publications on radio and on television between elections.

I think, Sir, we have reached the point now where, when a Minister or a Member of the Opposition makes a political statement on radio or on television that it be highly appropriate for that television station or that radio station to call someone from the opposition and ask for an immediate response. These are the kinds of things we need.

Aside.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: Sir, that is the kind of thing we want to develop in this country. As I understand it, at the moment the radio stations interpret the law in such a way that you cannot even put an advertisement out that has any political content in it before nomination day. You can just publish the date of a meeting, the speakers and things like that. You cannot put the topic or anything like that. This is foolishness and these kinds of things need to be addressed and they need to be addressed right now.

As a Parliament we have to deal with these matters. It is the public that suffers because of the inability of political parties to communicate. A political party should be able to go and buy radio time or buy television time at any time and get across a political opinion.

All these restrictions need to be dismantled and as a matter of fact it is something that a Committee of this Parliament should be looking at, at an early stage, because we cannot just rely on a Commission. We are politicians in here. We are representatives of the people. We wish to communicate to the people. We also represent political parties and we know what the problems are. And these are

issues that need to be dealt with but the problem is that you can never, ever get a Government that has won an election to make the necessary changes. They are the ones that have to make the changes, but the day after the election they come in belly-aching that they have been disadvantaged in this way and in that way.

I was so pleased last night when CBC carried a portion of a speech I made at our wonderful sixth anniversary ceremony. Sir, you know the hall very well. It was packed out

Mr. B. M. TAITT: On a point of order, Sir. Your Honour could really straighten out this matter once and for all. Does it hold more than 40 people, Sir?

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

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: The point I was making is this. I notice that CBC immediately afterwards had a comment from the Honourable Minister of Health. I think that was very healthy. Also a comment from the Honourable Member for Christ Church South although all he could say is that he could not remember anything, basically. The point I am making is, I think that it is a right kind of thing to do. You do not need to give an Opposition half hour to respond to a statement by a Minister for half an hour. Two minutes or three minutes and what they cannot say in two or three minutes is not worth saying in terms of an immediate response to a statement by a Minister but we make no provision for these things.

I hope, Sir, that we take this opportunity of communicating to the Commission that these areas need to be examined as well and they need to be brought up-to-date. It will require amendments to the Representation of the People Act because a lot of these constraints are in fact in the Representation of the People Act but nevertheless the recommendations from the Electoral and Boundaries Commission, I think, will carry a considerable amount of weight.

Now, Sir, if these few little things that I have suggested here, just three or four little things, if they are done it will make a big difference to the whole democratic process in this country. Make no mistake about it and it will be in the interest of a Government because, Sir, let me tell you this. If a Government cannot defend itself, with an army of public servants available to it, then it does not deserve to be the Government and it should not be afraid to have its policies under scrutiny. It should not even be afraid of unreasonable criticism. But the point is this, let the democratic process work. Let us open up the society a bit. Open up the political process. There is no need

to continue to keep it closed and these are the kinds of things, Sir, which I hope the covenant that I speak of will embrace and cover these wide areas and try to provide for a better Barbados and a healthier political process. Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Rt. Hon. L. E. S ANDIFORD: I will not be long, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I rise in support of the Resolution that is before us, that is to approve the Draft Electoral and Boundaries Commission (Review of Boundaries) Order, 1995. I wish to join with the Member for St. John, the Leader of the Opposition, in paying a tribute both to the members of the Electoral and Boundaries Commission and to the Chief Electoral Officer for the work done in relation to the 1994 General Elections. 4.15 p.m.

Sir, matters relating to the Electoral Office such as they are described, fall under the responsibility of the Prime Minister and I had responsibility for those matters. If we reflect on the 1994 General Elections, I believe that there is one aspect of that election when compared with previous elections in this country that would be very instructive, Sir.

Aside.

Rt. Hon. L. E. SANDIFORD: I believe, Sir, that this was an election in which there were fewer criticisms of the processes of that election than in any preceding election, whether from the governing party or from the opposition. I almost said parties, Sir, but I am not sure whether the NDP made criticisms. I am saying, Sir, that this was an election in which there were fewer criticisms of the electoral processes than in any other previous election. I think that says something, Sir, for the integrity of our system. I would like again to pay a tribute to all concerned in those elections including the consultant, a former Chief Electoral Officer, who was brought in. We win and we lose in elections. Sir, I myself have always won in elections. At the same time...

Aside.

Rt. Hon. L. E. SANDIFORD: Only two of us, Sir.

Aside.

Rt. Hon. L. E. SANDIFORD: Sir, even the distinguished and venerable Member for Christ Church South. There are some of us in here who have won when the swing was in favour of our party and also when it was against. But there is a difference, Sir, between myself and the Member for St. Michael West. I believe that his largest

electoral district is Westbury Cemetery! I do not have that problem to deal with! Sir, the point that I wish to make is this, that while we talk about our own system, let us recognize that we have one of the most efficiently administered systems in the world, and we should be proud of these things. Even when we criticize one another, and there is ample room for criticism - I think this was the line that the Member for St. Michael South Central was on, that there is always room for improvement - we can always find ways and means of improving our system. But we do not have to destroy each other in order to try to improve our system. Let us recognize it for what it is. In spite of all of the controversial stuff that was going on, we were able to conduct an election which did not require a thousand observers from other countries to come in to see whether we would operate in a manner that would be in accordance with integrity. That is something which as a small country we should be proud of, Sir.

There are obviously matters, Sir, that we will have to address. It is still too difficult to get the register purged the names of persons who have passed to the great beyond, and all of us know that they have passed, still keep re-occurring on the register. So we have to find some means of dealing with that particular problem. I, for one, believe that the time has come when this House should be keeping under permanent consideration the electoral machinery and the ways in which this can be sensitized and examined. I believe that there is a case, perhaps, for a Standing Committee on Electoral Matters, but a Standing Committee that will meet. For the start of every session, we set up committees and then sometimes they hardly meet. I do not believe, Sir, that there has been a meeting of the Standing Orders Committee of this House since the early 1970's.

Aside.

Rt. Hon. L. E. SANDIFORD: Precisely. That is the point I am making. I believe that the whole electoral machinery is important enough for our democracy that we should have it under constant review.

I do not wish to go anymore deeply into this matter, Sir, but I just wanted to pay a tribute to the machinery and to the people who operate the machinery. If there is one thing that can be said, whether they call me "stubborn" or whatever other phrase they wish to apply, I know that in the end...

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

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Yes, Sir. The word, Sir, is "adamant".

Rt. Hon. L. E. SANDIFORD: I will continue, Sir. Those things do not bother me so long as myself and the Member for St. George South can get together. We will see eye to eye on a lot of matters, not on the death penalty, but on other matters. 4.25 p.m.

Aside.

Rt. Hon. L. E. SANDIFORD: But the one thing that cannot be said is that we ever sought to rig any elections.

Aside.

Rt. Hon. L. E. SANDIFORD: We have always endeavoured to follow the rules and to ensure that the people of this country can always express their opinions within the framework of the laws of this country. I thank you, Sir.

Hon. Sir HAROLD St. JOHN: I am not going to detain the House for long, Sir. I fought a large number of elections in this country and I am well aware of the procedures. I am satisfied myself that Barbados has a system of electoral laws and electoral machinery of which we should be justly proud. There are some defects, however.

I firmly believe that the list contains the names of people whose existence it is difficult to prove. Everyone of us has the experience during election time of sending a circular to each and every person who is supposed to be on the list and receiving a large number of returns. When one considers that each and every political party does this and receives a similar number of returns and recently the Electoral Office itself has been circulating each and every elector on the list and presumably they received returns too, I sometimes wonder why it is with all of that information and with access to computers that our list is not nearer to 100% accuracy than it is. This is a very important point.

I rose principally today to speak on it because in my opinion there is a lot of comment made on the apathy of voters which in truth and in fact is not founded upon fact. When we looked at the returns in my constituency, according to the official statistics, they painted one picture. When we looked at the number of people who actually voted and related that to the number of returns that we received from the Post Office, we find a much higher percentage of people in truth and in fact had voted.

I wish that the Boundaries Commission would carry out some kind of analysis of this situation and use their

own experience with the returns of the circulars that they sent out to them and let us see what the percentage of voters would be if one discounted that from the list.

We have another point. We must take into consideration the last election was an unique election in the sense that we had an election and the Supervisor of Elections was not, unfortunately, able to participate in the election at all. I hope that that was only a temporary situation, because I believe that we have been fortunate in building up experience in the Electoral Department over the course of years, such experience, that in the Commonwealth, I believe personnel have been used in other countries because of the very high rating of our people. It is important that we build up a cadre of election officials that can replace some of the other officials whose time is limited in accordance with our laws of this Island.

We also have, Sir, to look at the electoral laws in relation to the scope that the officials have to delete from the record people who no longer reside in Barbados. It is a fact of life that there are people on the register whom all of us know have left Barbados for considerable periods of time, and one of the difficulties when you ask your own registration officer about removing their names, even after objection, you are met with the reply that we have to prove that they are not residing in Barbados for a five-year period and tell them where they live. We really must have a look at that.

Now, Sir, we also must have a look at a number of other matters in relation to the enumeration in periods outside of elections. None of us know when we are going to have to have a bye-election and the practice has grown up whereby there is no publication of the list as amended except on an annual basis. It is a practice that needs to be looked at. I remember when every month there used to be the publication, limited as it was, of the people who came on the register or people who were deleted from the register. Political parties in each constituency were able to go at the registering office and get a copy.

My understanding is that amendments have been made to the procedures now and there is no more publication of a monthly list. There is the publication of either a quarterly or yearly list and I am not sure whether it is a yearly or quarterly list. Something should be done about that, Sir, particularly in these days of computerisation because you can get a copy printed and you can photostat it and churn it out. Even if it is only sent to the political parties, I believe that that would be an advantage and that we should not find ourselves in the position in which we have a mad scramble when we anticipate an election for some kind of review of the enumeration to take place.

We are fortunate in Barbados that we have well developed political parties, at least two. We are able as political parties, and it is one of the things that you are taught very early when you come into politics and that is that you should watch constantly your electoral list. In truth and in fact part of the reasons why we do not have bogus voting, or a lot of it - I have always heard a lot of stories about bogus voting but I have never been able to see how it could be successfully done in a constituency in which there is a lot of vigilance on the part of the political parties - is because each of the political parties has people who are aware at the voting district level of most of the voters. In truth and in fact, certainly around election time there is a tremendous amount of work that is put in in trying to clean up the list. That happens and that is one of the reasons why we are quite successful in that area. 4.35 p.m.

In addition to that, we also have the fact that on election day the parties are represented by people at the point of voting who have some reasonable knowledge of the people who are likely to vote. It is still possible for people to be registered in two areas and it happened up to the last election, in a former constituency and in the constituency in which they have recently been transferred. It has happened. Some have slipped through. There are some cases of people who were on the register who have remained the same place and for some reason or the other their names were taken off. I believe that the percentage is probably less than 1% or 2% of the whole electorate but it does cause a great deal of frustration on election day and I would hope that some attention would be paid to it so that we can discover the reason for it.

In my own constituency on the last occasion it happened that we had people with the same name and the same address in which problems have arisen. The explanation given was that the computer programme rejected...

Aside.

Hon. Sir HAROLD St. JOHN: You had a father and son with the same name and instead of having both, one was rejected although being on the preliminary list. These are problems that are there but it is a very small and insignificant percentage.

As for the boundary changes, I heard the Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central complain about that. Well, I believe I was the first victim of a boundary change because I remember that in 1971 a constituency that I represented had a remarkable change within six weeks of the election and it moved from being 4 500 down to 3 200 as a result of certain changes, but these things happen. I do

not think that is ever likely to happen again because the political parties are very well represented and have for a long period of time on the Commission.

I too would like to pay tribute to the work that has been done by this Commission over the period of time. One does not have access to the Minutes but I have absolutely no doubt that there were some highly contentious argumentative and forceful opinions that were expressed from time to time. One only has to look at the members of the Commission to know that that is what is likely to occur. We have to continue to be vigilant in this area. I hope that we will in Barbados continue to enjoy the reputation that we have for the very democratic machinery and fair machinery that we have at elections.

The last election was quite remarkable in that I cannot recall any serious incident of violence or near violence taking place at anytime during the election. That is quite remarkable. Secondly, it was the only election for a long period of time that after it was finished there was not an election petition nor a libel suit.

I think that is an indication of the seriousness of how Barbadians take their politics. I would hope that political commentators who comment on the state of democracy in Barbados would pursue with a greater degree of depth and research the factual situation in relation to the state of the register and the people actually voting. I am firmly convinced in my mind that there has been far more participation by the people in Barbados than the statistics show at face value.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I join this debate primarily to ensure that my silence could not possibly mean that I do not join with all of the Honourable Members who have spoken to pay tribute to the work which has been done by the Electoral Office.

I particularly wish to allude to the question of the purging of the list. I share the view that the information which is put out about the number of people who actually go to the polls in percentage terms is misleading. In my own constituency because I have had the good fortune to be there for a very long time we have been able to perfect a system which allows us to cross check between the electoral list and the actual houses in the constituency. We know in St. Michael West that the percentages which are published about persons going to the polls are usually not correct even though they may be valid because they are based on the actual published electoral list.

The truth is that the Electoral Office does have some difficulty with the laws as they exist. The law, for example, regarding the length of time before which a person can

be removed from the list is tricky although I do not know that I wish to advocate that that law be changed because there are persons who leave. Barbados, go to a foreign country and come back and if they could be easily taken off the list it would present some problem for those who wish to participate. Even so, there are persons who have been living, say, in the United States for fairly long periods of time and it is very difficult if you are objecting to a particular individual to prove. How would any candidate be able to prove that Mr. X has been away for longer than 10 years? 4.45 p.m.

The electoral officials usually require the candidate to prove that. That needs some examination. I believe that in the United States there is a method by which they do not worry to waste any time on that at all. Once you are on the electoral list, once you are registered the onus is on you to go and register. But if you are not on the list, you are off and that is that. The point is though that there are Barbadians who live outside of Barbados who take a keen interest in what is going on and who come home to vote. The requirement that you should have 3 months residence before you can participate is also tricky because a person who comes from say Brereton, St. Philip, who was in the United Kingdom for 9 years does not cease to be a citizen of Barbados from Brereton, St. Philip because he was in the United Kingdom for 9 years. When he comes back home on a given day, if the election is the next 4 days he or she wishes to participate, I have no difficulty with that.

I feel that it will not be long before Barbados - and I do not mean this Parliament of this time although I believe that this Parliament might possibly examine it with a view to the new Parliament - has to examine the issue of Barbadian citizens living outside of Barbados participating in the electoral process. I am not here advocating any of the new fangled concepts that are familiarly related to the Guyanese. I am merely saying that Barbadians living overseas raise the legitimate question, why can an Englishman living in Barbados vote in England, why can an American living in Barbados vote in America, but a Barbadian who is living in London cannot vote and a Barbadian who is living in New York cannot vote? They have been raising these issues. While we have some valid question about whether we can find a formula the fact remains that those Barbadians participate in the economic and social development of Barbados and they have a vested interest in what is going on here. A formula will have to be found sooner rather than later for those persons to be able validly to participate in the development of their country. Somehow this is a matter which needs to be discussed and which needs to be put on the drawing board. Parliament of today may properly make decisions about a future Parliament. But I think it is one of the things which we will certainly not be able to go on ignoring for a very long time.

I have often found that the difficulty with persons who die has nothing to do with the electoral office but it has to do with an antiquated system which we have of notification. It takes too long for the Ministry of Health to notify the electoral office that a person has died. I think that the answer does not lie necessarily in the electoral laws but it lies in the necessity to speed up the machinery by which persons who died are notified to the electoral office. Because even though it may be the grandmother or relative of the Chief Electoral Officer, he or she is not permitted to remove that name until there is legal verification that the person has actually died. Therefore the issue is one where we need to look at that machinery where the Registrar needs to communicate.

In a day when we have computerization I believe that, at the moment when the death certificate is issued that at that point a certificate should be issued to the Chief Electoral Officer at the same time. It has happened with countries like ours that evolved over a period of time from the colonial system. We are very reluctant to put swift systems in place because we somehow feel that something might go wrong. But that is part of the problem. For example, as Honourable Members know my father died in December. It probably will be some 2 or 3 years before his death is notified to the Chief Electoral Office. You cannot walk in with a death certificate and confirm that he is dead because they must receive it from the Registrar. That is something that should happen automatically. It is supposed to happen every month, according to the law.

From what one observes if you are in this political business it does not happen the way it is designed to happen. That is a mechanical issue more than it is a legal issue. We had a very strange situation where one of my constituents who had passed the age of 100 was taken off the electoral list. It is the strangest phenomenon. When we finally discovered the problem, they came to the conclusion that she must be dead. She was literally taken off the electoral list. One of the major difficulties I had in the election was explaining to this dear lady why she was not permitted to vote. There was another one in Westbury New Road who was 96 years old and who was very upset because she had been taken off the list. They gave the explanation that they were certain that she was dead. She is 97 this year and still alive. We managed to get her back on but not in time.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I think that many of the points made by the Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central are valid. But there is something that we should guard against. The Honourable Member makes the point that we should make advertising more easily available, *et cetera*. One of the most abominable aspects of the United States system is that they have now reached the point where, in order to be considered as a candidate for

the Presidency of the United States, you must start off with a war chest of about \$20 million or so. I hope that in our quest to get some expansion of access to public information, through the media, that we do not go to the other extreme where elections in Barbados get to be decided on the basis of who has the most money.

Aside.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: We know that there will be the odd phenomenon from time to time and we are all familiar with these phenomena. But I am saying that generally speaking what one does not wish to see happen is that that political party that has access to the most money that could buy the most ads would then be the political party that is getting the most information out. The British system which itself has evolved towards the abomination I was just describing was very mindful of that possibility when these laws which govern our election process were put in place. One needs to be careful not to "over correct", as it were, some mischief that we perceive.

I think that the electoral system in Barbados serves us well. I think that any time you are able to have... In our case we were the Government We presided over the peaceful transfer of power to the Opposition. Then the Opposition presided over the peaceful transfer of power to us. And we presided again over the peaceful transfer of power to the Opposition. That is among the most precious resources that we have, as a community. That resource is sometimes taken for granted.

When people who are going to invest in our country look at the process by which we have exchanged Government, that is the basis on which most of them make decisions to put their hard earned money into a foreign place. It cannot be gainsaid and it must not be gainsaid, least of all by politicians, that this country has, among its best assets, its political stability. Every now and again we get a little concerned that it might be fractured. But by and large the fact that we are able to engage in a little verbal war from time to time does allow us to perpetuate the very fantastic but necessary legacy which has been passed on from generations before us and which, in my view, we have a duty to ensure that we pass on to the new generations. 4.55 p.m.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am not concerned that my own constituency falls within the ambit of those that are a little too small. I have no doubt that within the next three or four years we will see changes that will bring my numbers back into the framework that has been identified in the Constitutional arrangements. And for those reasons I

applaud the recommendation of the Electoral and Boundaries Commission that we ought not to interfere with the constituencies until such time as we have an enumeration.

I think that enumerations are going to become less necessary as time goes by because we have an identification system. Those persons who are coming on the electoral roll now are almost automatically registered. The problem is that we still have a number of people from St. Vincent and St. Lucia and such places who reside in the constituency. Many of them are not registered but they are not illegitimate residents either. Given that the Minister responsible for Immigration has indicated that he intends to continue the policies which both Governments have followed over the last 15 years or so, I believe that we should have a programme of education because persons who come from other countries in the Caribbean do not have the same penchant for registration which Barbadians have - I believe that we should have a period of education for those persons who are Commonwealth citizens because it is not well known by Commonwealth citizens from the Caribbean that they are entitled to be registered as voters once they have a legitimate stay in the country.

I believe that when that is done the numbers, certainly the numbers from my constituency, will normalise because there is a significant number of persons living in the Constituency of St. Michael West who do not now appear on the voters' list.

There is also a significant number of Commonwealth citizens from the east, far, far away from Barbados who live in my constituency who do not now appear on the voters' list. So I am not even sure an enumeration will be able to capture them because if you have ever canvassed a constituency that has a significant number of such persons you would be amazed at the numbers which can be housed in a relatively small area. I do not think that I need to say any more than that.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, my friend also alluded to the configuration of his constituency and he felt that St. Michael South Central has certain peculiarities as he described them. I can only say that although numerically St. Michael West is small, anyone who has had to function in St. Michael West can marvel at how it runs all the way from Roebuck Street to a place way down in Black Rock. As small as the constituency is, when the late Tom Adams was the Minister responsible for electoral matters he felt constrained to give me some exercise which he discussed with glee from this side of the House. He discussed with glee the fact that my constituency would then run from Roebuck Street. I have no doubt that in the next movement we are going to have to see a change because the population has moved in St. James South where there

are some movements which suggest to me that all the constituencies will probably have to move a little to the North and I probably will take over a small portion of either your constituency or the Honourable Member for St. Michael North West I have no doubt that I will move nearer to Deacons Road. But whichever direction they take me in I think Your Honour knows that I will be happy to serve those people as well.

By and large I think that we should agree that Barbados cannot handle an additional constituency. I think 28 is as many as we should have. There was a time when there was some discussion that we should have 29 or 30 but it seems to me that if you look at the population of Barbados, given the growth rate of the population, that it would be unreasonable to ask the taxpayers to carry an additional constituency or two. It seems to me that redistribution can occur relatively easily in this country without creating any havoc on any constituency notwithstanding the discussion we heard from the Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central.

I will go on record as saying that when we moved from 24 to 28 there was great consternation, if you will recall, on the part of the Democratic Labour Party and I am very certain that the Democratic Labour Party is convinced beyond all measure because the population of Barbados has moved no more than between 242 000 and 262 000 in the last 25 years. And it is unlikely over the next 25 years to see movement as much as that unless there was a sudden opening up of the borders and we had a great influx from other countries.

Given the pattern of population growth in Barbados, given the fact that we are going to have a multiplication of the elderly over the next 15 years in Barbados it is unlikely that we are going to see any massive movement in an increase in population. For those reasons I want to go on record as indicating that there is no need that I can see in the immediate future for any increase in the number of constituencies.

Fortunately the way the law is framed in Barbados it is unlikely that, as happens in the United States Congress, any constituencies will be eliminated. I hardly think that there will be any electoral boundaries commission that will have the courage to recommend to a Parliament that a constituency or two should be eliminated. Of course, Mr. Deputy Speaker, if they should ever send that recommendation during this Parliament I know which two I would easily recommend for immediate elimination but that need not be put in the records.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I believe that is the point at which I could take leave of you and join my colleagues in

thanking first of all the people of Barbados for allowing us to maintain this system because at the end of the day it is the people of Barbados who do that and secondly, those persons who work in the electoral system.

I will end by asking the Minister of Finance to examine very carefully, notwithstanding the difficulty of finding the finance, the stipend which the people who work during the electoral process are called upon to accept. I find it a little difficult for a 12-hour day, some of the fees which are paid for the people who work for the electoral office which brings me to the other point.

I hope that it will not be long before the Government will bring before the House a piece of legislation that will allow for an increase in the amount of money which candidates are allowed to spend in the election process. I think that in the words of Dr. Gordon Matthews the Evangelist that we should prevent Dr. Matthews the next time he runs from having to tell a lie. If he says that he does not tell lies I accept him on face value. As a candidate however he said that he is facing, as far as I recall, prosecution. That is according to what he wrote because he put in a return in excess of the amount that the numbers allow.

But really, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I think that on both sides of the House we can agree that the amount of \$1 per constituent puts a strain on a constituency like St. Michael West. Six thousand five hundred constituents allow me \$6 500. Six thousand five hundred is really tough to manoeuvre in an election in which the whole host of the Barbados Labour Party descended on Eagle Hall. In those circumstances... 5.05 p.m.

Aside.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: No, no. Mr. Deputy Speaker, I really think though that we should be a little more realistic about the amount that can be spent during the election campaign. We who have been in it for a long time have no problem with the numbers. We have been able to contain ourselves within the numbers because we know the techniques. If the party provides most of what we use, then we have no problem. But for a young candidate, it is daunting, especially for the females, to look at the prospect of breaking into this apparently male dominated area of life and being restricted. Because females, for example, who are going on the campaign trail require, I think, to spend a little more money than males who are going. That is my understanding. For example, the Honourable Member has asked me on what basis. The kind of campaign which the Honourable Member can run in a pair of jeans, old shoes and stuff like that, young women who are going on

the campaign trail cannot appear in quite the same wear. In those circumstances, if the law is strictly adhered to - I think that I have made my point and I can leave you in the knowledge that the Electoral and Boundaries Commission is doing a good job.

Just one last point I want to make. When the law was first passed on the way in which the Electoral and Boundaries Commission would be appointed, I think that there was something innovative about the methodology and there was some doubt as to whether it would work. I think that the then Attorney General, the Honourable Member for Christ Church West - he is not now in his seat - and if we are discussing the Electoral and Boundaries Commission it is not ungracious to pay him tribute for having the courage to make a certain kind of recommendation on the appointment of the Electoral and Boundaries Commission. It has worked well and, even though sometimes because of the fortunes there may be more of one political party than the other on the Electoral and Boundaries Commission, the fact is that it has worked well. The question to do with a third party however is something which the Parliament should give some consideration to. Apart from the fact that there is a natural inclination on the part of senior political parties not to open the way for new political parties, the fact still remains that where a new political party is emerging we have to examine the areas of democracy to see to what extent it should be accommodated. That is not to say that I have reached the stage where I believe that the other political party should be accommodated in the Electoral and Boundaries Commission. I am not at that stage yet, but it is a matter which you cannot ignore because of the methodology that was used for the appointment of membership. It is something that the new Attorney General might want to advert to. I am grateful to Your Honour.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Member for Christ Church East.

Mr. W. C. C. CALLENDER: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I rise as one of those Members of Parliament who represent a constituency that is above the range as noted in the report of the Boundaries Commission. I want to make it clear, Sir, that I love my constituency. I love all of the areas of my constituency spreading through Silver Sands and Parish Land and up to Saint Patricks. I identify with all of the people of this constituency. But I am concerned that constituencies such as mine in their quest for great representation should be so disadvantaged that, whereas others could have 6 000 people to look after, we have to look after nearly 9 000 persons. Sir, if we are talking about equity and justice, I believe that my people deserve to have the greatest access to their representatives and I am going to give them that access.

Sir, I therefore am concerned about these representatives who are working way below the level that would be expected of a representative in an area such as mine, also to mention the representative of St. James South. We both are going to be dedicated to our people and are going to work very hard. But what then do you say of representatives of areas such as St. Michael South. I do have a little empathy with the past Prime Minister and I believe that this is a good honorarium for him. But what do we say about the Honourable Member for St. Michael West who still seems to have a lot of energy and who is fit and ready to go? He only has to address 6 500 people. What do you say about him, Sir? A man with renewed energy. He does not have to worry about a Ministry. He is basking in the sunshine looking for second spring and all of that while representatives like myself have to do our work effectively. I am not finished, Sir. I also have to look at the representative for St. Michael North West. I also empathize with him, Sir. He has to look after 6 600 and I believe that he is perhaps looking to see better days in or out of Parliament. He might want to give way to a younger person.

The point that I am making, Sir, is that there needs to be equity. While we are going to put in our best effort, what about those who are working way under par and who are working 25 per cent less. Do you know what this means, Sir? Last week we were talking about an 8 per cent cut, but now we have men who have to put in 25 per cent less work. Do you imagine that, Sir? That is not equity. I am therefore putting a case not to take away their constituency. I am not making that point, Sir. I believe that in modern day politics the electorate is asking for close-up representation. They want to see you in the area. They want to see you involved in community work. They want to see you acting as a catalyst for change in the community and servicing the community. They expect to see you in Silver Sands because they say that they saw you in Saint Patricks. They want to see you all of the time. Looking at the fact, Sir, that we do not have the community type operation where we have the parochial kind of representation that we had back in the 1960's of Local Government - we do not have Local Government. A representative has to put in more work, more is required of him. I am therefore saying that a representative needs more resources and a case can therefore be made for people to be given social representation and therefore you need more people to serve the people. There is nothing wrong with that, Sir. There is no magic in that. You can have more representatives representing the people. There is no Local Government. There are more social problems, more matters to be addressed and I am saying it would be more cost effective to have a few more representatives to make sure that the people are looked after. Representatives can go out there to help with community projects, to give leadership in the community. This is what people are looking for in this day and age. This is what they are crying out for,

this is the modern concept of politics, so that I will leave the Honourable Member for St. Michael West with his 6 500, but in all fairness I believe we have to address those who have 8 500. The people deserve to have their representatives there with them helping them in their community projects, and I believe that issue has to be addressed in the modern day concept of politics in Barbados. 5.15 p.m.

Aside.

Mr. W. C. C. CALLENDER: I do not want to get rid of any of my people, Sir, I love my people. I am talking about representation for all the people in this country, they must have the kind of representation they deserve. Also, if you are looking at equity I am saying that all the representatives should put in the same amount of work. Otherwise, it makes a mockery of remuneration and all the other things that go with it, that certain people should be coding out and others have to be working 12 months in a year while others can work nine months and cool out for the other three. This is what it represents when you have 25% more of an area or 25% less, the converse of it. One man works 12 months, the other works nine months, and it is not fair.

Mr. Speaker, I wish to make the point that the modern day representative is required to give leadership and it is not just a matter of coming to Parliament on Tuesdays. People do not expect that. I am also saying that if we are talking about a community type approach, that the representative has to go out and make sure that the various areas have community leadership, so he has to be on the ground, not just in Parliament. When we speak of representatives who are not only representing an area but who are also members of Cabinet, who have national responsibility, that issue has to be addressed, because you are looking at flesh and blood. I do not want to contemplate what happens to Prime Ministers, all of our Prime Ministers have suffered because of hard work. We have Ministers who have suffered because of hard work. I am saying we need to look at this issue in a context where we have to have allocation of resources to provide people with what is necessary in terms of representation in this day and age. That is the point I am making, I am not pleading for any taking away from my constituency. This is not what I want. As a matter of fact, I spend nearly every day in my constituency and I still am not satisfied, I still need to have more time to do the things that are required at a community level.

We have problems of youth. The youth need leadership and the politicians just cannot get involved in Parliament, they have to get out there and talk to those

guys. It is very important that we do that. We have to get out there and see that they get involved in meaningful projects. They want to have somebody to talk to, they want to have leadership. We all can attest to the fact that in the past ten years this country has seen more social problems than before, so we cannot compare this age with 1986.

If we have to go to 31 representatives I have no problem with that, if it means that we are going to have adequate representation and people are going to do what representatives are supposed to do. As a matter of fact, the electorate determines that if you do not do what you are supposed to do they make the decision. In politics in this day and age you might be able to throw around a few dollars here and there, but the problem is to go out there and interface with the people, to guide them in directions and to be involved with problem solving at the community level, to network through the community councils, to network through the Community Development Department. We need to look at a new role for that, where the politicians will also be involved through a networking system through that organisation where they feed information from the ground level right through the bureaucratic organisation to address those problems at community level. Somebody has to be there as a catalyst to deal with problems of youth in Parish Land, Gall Hill, Deacons; all these people need to be given close attention. We have but one day in Parliament, Tuesday, and if you exclude Saturday you have Saturday and Sunday, you only have a few days, so I am saying that there is need for more intimate representation in the sense that the politician in the modern day context has to be accessible.

We also have to look at the terrain over which we have an allocation of constituencies. The Honourable Member for St. Joseph, I heard him say his constituency is spread over hills and gullies. That has to be addressed. How are you going to be serving an area in that kind of terrain as against an area, let us say, in St. Michael where you have a few gaps and you just have to walk around a few times in two hours?

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Mr. Deputy Speaker, on a point of order. I do not want to interrupt the Honourable Member, but it is disparaging for the Honourable Member to be casting aspersions on the representation of any other constituency. He can only speak to his own. I think that the Honourable Member does not intend to do so, but I draw it to his attention, Sir. He is making disparaging remarks about other constituencies.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: I also rise on a point of order. The burden of the Honourable Member's speech so far is that he wants to get rid of 2 000 people from his constituency because he has not got the time for them.

The Honourable Member has a duty to this Honourable House to let you know, Sir,...

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central. You had your chance, let him talk. Sit down please. No point of order. The Honourable Member for Christ Church East, please continue.

Mr. W. C. C. CALLENDER: I think Honourable Members will know that I have the energy and the aptitude for dealing with large numbers of people. I have done it before and I will continue to do it, Sir, so if I have to deal with 8 000 people I would have to ask that we have a reduction in constituencies. I do not believe I want to ask for that at this point in time, neither do I want to ask an Honourable Member, like the Honourable Member for St. Michael South, to work himself out at this time. I am saying for equity we have to have more resources available. That is all I am saying.

I am also going back to the point where when I speak about gaps I am talking about Pickwick Gap, Westbury Gap, all those gaps I am speaking about. Those make up the constituencies and you walk around and you get to those areas in half hour, as against St. Joseph where you have to go up hill, down hill, in gullies and all kinds of things, or St. Andrew where you have to cross all kinds of territory. 5.25 p.m.

So I am saying that the topography also has to be addressed if we are talking about giving the constituents effective modern representation in the absence of local government. People are crying out for leadership and role models. It is essential that the concept of representation is changed to reflect a more micro approach to deal with the constituencies, Sir. I am making a strong case for resources to be allocated to give effective, modern day representation in a country where we are faced with the problem of youth, where we are faced with a problem of more people, because of the austere measures, being dispossessed. There are a lot of social problems we have to deal with and I am saying that we need to have more people to address the current issues that we have before us.

If you are talking about constituencies - we have secretarial support - but if the Honourable Members even want to look at having a constituency, a secretary plus a parliamentary aide, I have no problem with that Sir, once the parliamentary aide is going to go out there and do the work that the communities are crying out for. If we can rationalise the reason for this, and I am putting it in

perspective. That is why I am saying there is a need and we only have to address that if we are all going to go out there and do the work. I believe the people in Barbados will understand that we are serious and that we are trying to address the modern day problems.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I want to make one final point. We always hear about this house to house canvassing and I want to make that as a plea point, Sir. The modern constituent expects to see you in a way that he feels that he can identify with you and there is always this case that he has not seen the representative since the last election. Everybody has heard that before. I honestly believe that the representative should go back during a period of time to the people. But, Sir, if you look at the number of people you have to visit and you look at the amount of time that you have to spend, you will realise that smaller constituencies lend themselves better to a representative being able to see all of his people during the period of time and of being accessible to his people. This point has to be understood.

If you look at 6 000 people, do you know how much time you will spend? Anybody can work it out and see how long it is going to take. I worked it out when I started my canvassing in Christ Church East. I would have needed at least a year to finish. I started in March and the election came in September so therefore I didn't get to every house, Sir. It was not humanly possible to get to every house if you look at the territory and you look at the number of houses you have to go to and the people you are going to talk to. If you are going to say good day and goodbye it is okay. But if you really want to talk to people you need to have time and, therefore, I am saying that there is a strong case to be put for small constituencies and for greater representation, parliamentary people to look after the people to provide the kind of leadership that Barbados requires at this point in time.

I am prepared to stick with my people. I love my people but I also love the other members on the other side and I don't want to steal, especially from the former Prime Minister. I want to see him serving the people properly. I don't believe that we should have to take out some of them who are underworking. I believe they should be allowed to work, but at the same time I don't think it is fair for myself and the Honourable Member for St. James South because we are young that we should have to work 25% harder than they have to work.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I thank you.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I had no intention of speaking this evening in this debate, but after listening to the Honourable Member for Christ

Church East. Sir, it does not necessarily mean that because you have a large number of constituents that you have to work any harder than any other representative. If one takes the constituency of St. Lucy, Sir, it is more work than the constituency of Christ Church East or St James South.

I will give you an example. There is an area called Chance Hall and on each side of Chance Hall there are about five to six houses and the distance between those houses, the time it would take me to canvass those houses, the Honourable Member for St. James South could probably canvass about 50 houses. So it doesn't necessarily mean because you have a situation where you have 8 000 constituents that you have to work any harder than anybody else.

I want to say, Sir, that it is true that parliamentarians do have to work hard and I have no problem with parliamentarians who feel that they have to put their cases, but I feel that if parliamentarians have a case to put they must explain themselves if they want us to support them. I keep hearing the Honourable Member for Christ Church East referring to resources, Sir. But at the end of the day, I am not sure what resources he is asking for. I do not know if he is asking for an increase in salary, if he is asking for additional personnel, so I think that if he wants me to assist him, he must explain to me, so that I can tell him whether I will support him on a particular issue. Thank you very much, Sir.

Hon. Miss H. E. THOMPSON: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I really want to make a few observations and some of them arise out of the comments made by the Honourable Member for St. Lucy during the course of his comments just now. I felt - I don't know about other Members - that I was subjected to some gymnastics of illogic that are beginning to be typical of the Honourable Member for St. Lucy. He told us today, Sir, and I say that because we well know the history of the comments of the Honourable Member for St Lucy who in the past has purported to move Bulkeley back to St. George though the rest of us knew that it had never moved therefrom.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: On a point of order, the Honourable Member is misleading the House. I have never said in any records of the House that I have moved Bulkeley back to St. George. So if the Honourable Member wants to repeat that, I will challenge her to produce the evidence. But that is a norm of hers, to mislead people.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable Member for St. James South, continue please.

Hon. Miss H. E. THOMPSON: His point of illogic on this occasion, Mr. Deputy Speaker, arises in that just now

he said that it would take him longer to canvass five houses in Chance Hall than for me to canvass 50 houses in St. James South. I don't know what is the logic of that, but I want to speak to the wider point and it is the difficulty of servicing such a large constituency.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I represent what is the largest constituency in Barbados. We have just under 9 000 people living in the constituency of St. James South. The demographic distribution of that constituency is interesting because it reflects much of how Barbados is developing. We have people who would be regarded as belonging to a lower socio-economic grouping, a large housing area. We have villages that are almost rural in nature - Halls Village and Durants Village. While at the same time we have more middle income housing such as that of the starter houses of Oxnards Crescent and we have the middle income housing of West Terrace. We have upper middle class housing in Clermont and Prior Park. Indeed there are areas in St. James South that though it is not widely known to many people in Barbados that have absolutely no black residents at all. So that the demographic distribution of that constituency is interesting. 5.35 p.m.

One of the difficulties one finds in canvassing areas like that is that the high percentages of middle class people make it very difficult for you to canvass the middle class areas for two reasons. One is that invariably they have security gates and guard dogs and you cannot get anywhere near the house. Also, invariably the door bells and door knockers are located on the front door some distance away from the security gate which you would be attempting to enter, so that in fact it takes quite a long time to attract attention. That is one of the reasons why it takes such a long time to canvass a constituency of that sort.

The other reason why it takes a long time is that there are large percentages of people in these constituencies who have had the benefit of university education and want to test the candidate to see if the candidate is as bright as they perceive themselves as being so that you find that you engage in long conversations with people who want to discuss issues at great length.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the wider point I wanted to make in this debate is that we need to really guarantee the integrity of the electoral list because when you are canvassing middle-class areas quite often you find that people do not know the names of their next door neighbours and it becomes extremely difficult to check the list to see when people move in or move out or, in fact, how long they may have lived in a particular area. It is therefore incumbent on the Electoral and Boundaries

Department itself to have the list absolutely clean even though the candidates themselves, may do a lot of work on cleaning the list up and guaranteeing its integrity.

Quite often when candidates challenge the list's integrity, the challenges are rejected on various grounds. Therefore, the work of the Commission is critical in terms of producing a clean list particularly with those people who are migrating within constituencies because you may find that people who have lived in Haynesville, for instance, may move into a middle-class area and often it is not possible to check and recheck all of the changes of residence even within the constituency.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the point I would just want to make very briefly is that guaranteeing the integrity of the list is critical to the electoral process and that the work of the Commission must try to guarantee this.

Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I rise to wind up the debate. Like other Honourable Members who have spoken, I too would like to commend the work of the members of the Electoral and Boundaries Commission for the manner in which the last election has been conducted. I would also want to endorse the point of view of those whose contribution to this debate has been to underscore the fact that matters other than the number of constituencies and the boundaries of constituencies are matters that must engage the attention of the Commission.

I believe that although we recognise our electoral system is one of which we can be proud, that there are still a large number of changes that must be made in relation to the practice of electoral matters in this country to make the system even better. This is a matter that I too feel that should engage the attention of this Parliament from time to time. The independence of the Commission is, in many respects, enshrined in the Constitution but the supremacy of Parliament is a matter that I believe we will always want to preserve.

I believe that the essential point I will have to make in winding up this debate is to give the commitment that as matters other than boundaries and the number of constituencies arise that from time to time they will form part of the discourse in this House. Some of the issues raised, the question of overseas voting, the question of the amount to be spent per candidate, the role and rights of third parties are matters that have been long outstanding and to which some sensible decisions would have to be taken in the future.

I thought in winding up the debate, Sir, that I would thank all Members who spoke. There is a common bond

that links all of us who are Members of Parliament and who are members of political parties that we want to see the system function well. I can only give the House the assurance as Minister responsible for electoral matters that I will do all in my power to make sure that this aspect of our political life is one that benefits from our new thrust towards having a fully participatory democracy in Barbados.

I beg to move that this Resolution do now pass.

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

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

ORDER NO. 3 - THE HEALTH SERVICES (AMENDMENT) BELL, 1995

Hon. Miss H. E. THOMPSON: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that the Health Services (Amendment) Bill be now read a second time.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, the sewerage of Barbados has been recognised as important to our national development by respective Governments. The Bridgetown Sewerage Project having been completed it was recognised that the south and west coasts had to be sewerage as a matter of urgency. The plan is that the south coast should be sewerage first and that the sewerage of the west coast will be contingent on the completion of the South Coast Sewerage Project.

We have already had long discussions in this Chamber, Sir, on this project which is a U.S. \$74 million project. The amendment Bill which is now before this Chamber is an enactment aimed at guaranteeing the expeditious completion of the Sewerage Project by ensuring that the 400 or so properties that need to be linked up to the South Coast Sewerage Project are done as quickly as possible.

In order to effect this, the Ministry of Health is proposing certain amendments to various sections of the existing legislation at Chapter 44 of the Laws of Barbados. At section 6A in particular which I think is the critical part, the Minister can authorise any person at reasonable times, for the purposes of laying pipes and connections for attachment to the sewer and for performing any function incidental to the construction, maintenance or repair thereof. The householder or occupier of the premises must be given 14 days' notice of the intention to effect such entry for the carrying out of the necessary works and

that compensation must be paid to the owner of the premises where loss or damage is occasioned when the works are being carried out. It will be mandatory for the person carrying out this work to return the premises into the state that they were prior to when the work was being carried out. 5.45 p.m.

It will be mandatory for the persons carrying out this work to return the premises into the state that they were prior to when the work was being carried out. In many cases the areas being acquired are really very small, close to curbs just primarily for the connection of the collection pipes.

The Chamber will recall that there was some delay with the Bridgetown Sewerage Project in getting people connected. But we hope by this mechanism to effect the connection of the premises far more quickly by making it compulsory and doing it as part of the initial works rather than coming back after the completion of the project and then giving people the option of hooking up at will.

That, basically, is the purpose of the amendment to the legislation. The Act also provides that people be compensated in situations where they are not satisfied with problems which have arisen over loss or damage that may have been occasioned. It is now critical that we get the project completed as quickly as possible because repeated testing has shown that the near shore marine life has been adversely affected by the discharge of effluent into the marine waters off the south coast and also because the reefs off the south coast, as indeed those off the west coast have sustained serious damage and irreparable damage, also, by the discharge of effluent into the waters.

In those circumstances the Ministry of Health comes to Parliament to seek the enactment of this Amendment.

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

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member for St. Michael East.

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: Mr. Speaker, we have no difficulty with the Amendment to the Bill in the sense that the Democratic Labour Party had, in fact, made a decision that we would satisfy the requirements of the Inter-American Development Bank by giving the security, to the institution, that we would have this protection to make sure that there is no confusion with the question of going on property to lay pipes, so that there would be no

delay, that there would be no problem or conflict with any of the residents who will be affected.

A decision was even taken to make sure that at the same time that we were laying the pipes that we would complete the connections and then seek to charge the residents at a later date while we were compensating them and making sure that the repairs to their properties were properly done, that sidewalks, guardwalls, whatever were knocked down were properly repaired.

We have no real difficulty with the Bill because it seeks to give that protection. But I think it is important for us to indicate that the project had become extremely relevant to the development of tourism on the south coast in particular and certainly to the marine environment on the south coast because of the prevailing conditions where solid waste is at present emanating into some portions of the sea and at some time the pollution levels are exceeded.

The project has been delayed unfortunately and there was a high degree of criticism on that side of the House when they were in the Opposition. In fact, Sir, last year I recall during the Estimates Debate when we raised the question of the sewerage project on the south coast being a priority the question was raised by Members on that side, not all of the Members, that the sewerage project was not a priority and what was a priority was the provision of finance to the Barbados Water Authority to provide for leak detection and correcting and laying new mains for the Water Authority because of the problems with the drought that we were experiencing at the time.

The Barbados Water Authority was, at that time, holding some \$32 million in Government security whether through Treasury Bills or transfer of Bonds. Some were in fixed deposits. That money was earmarked as the Barbados Government's contribution towards the total amount for the sewerage project. The Cabinet had approved at its meeting on August 13, 1992 that the Inter-American Development Bank should be informed that the Government would proceed with construction of the south coast sewerage system as designed at an estimated cost of US\$73 000 100 and the Cabinet's decision was conveyed to the Bank. There were two loans. One for US\$28 million and the other for US\$23 million have been approved for the project from the ordinary capital resources of the Bank and the Intermediate Financing Facility, IFF account. The loan agreement between the Government and the Bank was signed by the Democratic Labour Party.

Under the terms of the loan agreement the Government was required at the time to submit to the Bank evidence of legal possession of easements and other pertinent rights to the land required for construction

of the project before bids are invited. This must be done within 6 months of signing the loan. Consequently early action is necessary to acquire the land for location of four lift pumping stations to secure easement on private property for the installation of sewerage pipelines and to reserve the land at Graeme Hall which is required for location of the Sewerage Treatment Plant.

The area of the south coast to be seweraged extended from the cruise ship facility at Carlisle Bay centre on Bay Street, St. Michael and east of Oistin in Christ Church. The system will consist of property connections, minor trunk sewerage station with treatment plant, an effluent treatment plant and marine outfall. All of this was negotiated, signed and agreed for by the former Democratic Labour Party Administration.

I think it is necessary for us to accept that the comments made recently by the Honourable Prime Minister to suggest that his Administration was now seeking to place these things as a matter of record, as early as the Estimates Debate last year, I indicated that the Government had already approved the south coast sewerage project, had signed Agreements and the delay that has occurred had resulted from the fact that the consultants who were assigned contracts since the new Administration has come in, have now indicated that they are not in a position to proceed because of the time constraints.

Aside.

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: Mr. Speaker, I am glad that the Government has seen the wisdom. I understand that they are going to be proceeding with the Barbados Water Authority's capital injection programme where they are seeking to put some off budget financing into the leak detection programme and laying new pipes and so forth. It is not a new programme. It is a programme that was targetted during the Financial Year by the former Administration and it is a programme that the new Administration has to carry out. But it is not a programme that has been introduced for the first time.

I should like to make the point that because of the drought last year I came under pressure from the Honourable Member for St. Thomas and immediately instructed that new water tanks be bought to alleviate the difficulties we had last year in the event that there is a drought that we would in fact have water tanks Available this year, if the same thing reoccurs.

The relevance of the sewerage project to the development of the south coast and in particular the hotel sector is extremely important because many of those hotels

are in a state of decay. Several of the properties are experiencing problems with the discharge of solid waste from their septic tanks and so forth. There is also a major problem that we hope will not reoccur like what has happened in the Bridgetown sewer where a lot of the waste has gotten very hard and there is not enough water to pump it down the system and there has been some choking and some blocking. We are hoping that this kind of situation, that maintenance problem is the kind of difficulty that will be ironed out. Because for tourism to survive on the south coast and to take away all of the smell... Sometimes when you drive along the south coast you can pick up fumes at various points along the south coast that are clearly emanating from wells that are not sending the waste into the sea. The hotel chain on the south coast are in desperate need of the system because many of their clients are complaining that there are smells emanating from their properties feeding back into some of the rooms and this is causing a problem. Because many of them are struggling to survive. Many of them are debt ridden. Many of them have borrowed money from the Barbados Development Bank. Many of them are in the process of taking fees from the wholesalers that are far below their published rates. Their revenue is down. There are fledgeling enterprises in the tourism industry and unless Barbados takes a very serious view of correcting the problem that we have on the south coast with the debt ridden properties, the properties that are suffering as a result of the non-connection of the sewerage project, we are destined to have a major tourism problem in the years ahead of us.

I missed a point earlier, Mr. Speaker, when I indicated about the companies that were short-listed and had been awarded the tenders to progress the work. I want to find out what is the cause of further delay.

Mr, SPEAKER: You seem not to be able to understand your own notes.

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: I spoke briefly about the delay of making the point that there is an urgent need to have the project progress and I was wondering if the Honourable Minister could kindly indicate what is the cause of further delay in the progressing of the project since, it is my understanding that the companies that were short-listed say they now have no time for Barbados and the whole process has to go back out to tender.

With those few remarks I just want to make the point that we are not against the Bill. The Bill is one that was approved by the former Democratic Labour Party's Administration. It is one that we endorsed. It was a requirement that was needed to satisfy the concerns that were held by the Bank. I sincerely hope that the Honourable Minister would seek to clarify and

enlighten the House as to the areas of concern that we have on this side at present.

With those few remarks I should like to indicate that I will be supporting the Bill.

Thank you, Sir.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: Mr. Speaker, Sir, earlier today I indicated that it was my firm belief that the appropriate area for Government's intervention by way of capital projects probably over the next 5 years will almost certainly be in the area of the environment. The environment in Barbados has, in many ways, been neglected in relation to the pace of development of the society. What we are seeing here is the rapid development not only on the west coast, south coast, Bridgetown and elsewhere but the need for urgent intervention not only to protect the environment in a physical sense but also to preserve the economic viability of Barbados. 6.00 p.m.

Sir, in a sense when we are talking about a south coast sewerage project we are not only talking environment but we are talking about an arrangement which would permit the future viability of the South Coast as a foreign exchange generator for Barbados because as you know, as the coral reefs are destroyed then the beaches are destroyed and the whole economic base of the south coast can be destroyed. But what has struck me is this that whereas the whole coastal area from South through Bridgetown down the West Coast clearly needs to be sewered, no one has thought of building one monumental sewerage plant to service the whole area. Because it would be madness for anyone to think of doing that. Therefore, Sir, I think that it was good policy, good practice, I see pursued by both Governments, not only to do the Bridgetown Sewerage Plant, do the South Coast and in due course do the West Coast. No problem with that, Sir. That is perfectly all right except that we have to be very careful that when we are contracting this level of foreign debt for projects that do not in the medium-term earn the cash for the debt repayment - and we have to watch that kind of foreign indebtedness no matter how long the repayment that you have - we keep an eye on existing repayments schedules of Barbados and so on.

Sir, I raised the point of having 3 sewerage plants and indicated that it was wise, as it is unwise, Sir, to have one massive dump to protect the environment in the Parish of St. Andrew.

Mr. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member ...

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: Foundation has been laid, Sir.

Mr. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central, would you concentrate on the Bill before us?

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: Yes, Sir. The second reading of the Bill deals with the question of the environment. It is an amendment to the Health Services Act. It is an environmental matter...

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central I am quite aware of the amendment.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: Sir, that is why I was so careful to establish a solid foundation for my arguments. I have only got to the foundation so far. I have not started to build on it yet.

Anyhow, Sir, the important point is that we want not only to protect the South Coast but we also, at all times, want to make sure that our water resources are adequately protected. Therefore, Sir, as we have scattered the density of sewerage which will be handled in this manner over three points, I think it would be wise to make sure that the water below the coral would not be subjected to a massive accumulation of material dumped in any one spot in the island as for example in St. Andrew as proposed.

Now, Sir, this brings me ...

Aside.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: No, Sir. I have never said anything of the kind because, Sir, I would want to protect your area. I will continue, Sir.

Now, Sir, one of the big problems we have in the Bridgetown Sewerage Plant is that it was never made clear to the public of Barbados what impact that would have on water rates. At the time when the Sewerage Plant was put down no one was clear as to what impact that particular development would have had on the water rates in Barbados. No one was clear as to what charges would be made in relation to connection to the sewerage plant and no one was clear as to the legal situation whereby persons who are not owners of properties, but people who are occupying properties, what authority they would have to authorise their connection. As a matter of fact, Sir, there are many people who went around and just counted houses and did not even recognise the large number of houses that did not have water borne systems at all. Those complications arose after the sewerage plant was completed, if you may recall.

I have mentioned four complications that arose and I would like to assure you that none of these complications would be arising in respect of this present development.

In section 3, clause 3, 6A(2)(a). I am making a very general point here, Sir. I note here we are talking of giving to the owner or occupier of the premises 14 days to provide in writing for the proposed entry and that entry, as I understand it, will be for the purpose of making alterations to the premises. Now I do not know what is the legal position here. If I own a property and someone is occupying the property either by way of rent or I am allowing him to live in it, can this give anybody the legal authority just to come to the occupier of the premises and say that we are coming in 14 days and doing X, Y, and Z. I am not quite so sure of the law in relation to that matter and perhaps my legal adviser who is the Attorney General of Barbados... 6.10 p.m.

Aside.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: He is the legal adviser to me, you and all Members of this Honourable House and I expect to get independent advice. It has nothing to do with what Cabinet has decided on. I would wish to get some advice on that matter whether in fact under the Laws of Barbados that can be done. As far as I am aware, a diligent search at least should be made to find the owner of the property. If I understand it properly, Sir, under our Constitution, from the meaning of a conveyance or a title or the meaning of that particular set of circumstances, I do not think that that can be automatically overridden by any such Bill.

Sir, I have indicated before that I do not like to speak on legal matters in this House but they do catch my attention rather readily and sometimes I pick up things that the other lawyers do not pick up. I am not quite so sure whether or not this is law. Is it? Can this Bill authorize somebody who is an occupier in a house to let someone come onto the premises? This is what this Bill says. But is it a lawful thing for the Bill to be doing that? I understand the purpose of it that it will facilitate a process and I know exactly what this is trying to overcome. This is trying to overcome the problems that arose in relation to the connections to the Bridgetown Sewerage Plant when it was found that so many people who live in those houses did not own the houses and therefore could not give permission. What I am asking is this. Can we simply by passing this override other lawful considerations in Barbados? I do not know, Sir. But I believe as a Member of the Opposition that I think that it is a responsibility for me to raise the question whether we are introducing a law which is in fact violating other laws and other fundamental rights of

property ownership of people as guaranteed by our Constitution.

Aside.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: Sir, the other final point that I wanted to make about this matter is this. I live on the South Coast and the community on the South Coast have generally accepted the concept of a sewerage project in that area. I believe that there was a problem with the community in Bridgetown when the Bridgetown Sewerage Plant was planned and a whole lot of difficulties flowed from that in terms of the movement of people out of Bridgetown and what not. When we are dealing with these sensitive matters, Sir, I think that it is very wrong indeed either to place a sewerage plant or a dump or anything like that on a community unless they are consulted and are persuaded that it is reasonable to have it. Where there is an overall objection by the people in that community, I think that a Government has to think again.

As a matter of fact, Sir, there were several types of sewerage disposal methods actually discussed and the people of Christ Church in a sense through their representatives and others have had an opportunity to indicate which one will be least acceptable to them. But they are Christ Church people and they are treated very differently from the people of St. Andrew.

Aside.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: You just cannot ignore people like that, Sir. What I am saying is, Sir, that they should have been consulted just as it was right for the people of Christ Church to be consulted. I live on the South Coast and I am happy with the scheme. I am assured that there is not going to be any smell or anything like that. I am assured.

Aside.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: I am being told now, Sir, that I live downwind and I might have a problem. But never mind, Sir, even if I have a problem as an individual, generally speaking the people of Christ Church do not have an objection and it was right and proper that they should have been consulted. I sincerely hope, Sir, that in the future when we are dealing with these environmental problems that at all times we consult with the people in the area and also that the Government be sensitive enough to understand that there is no Cabinet decision whether it is this one or any other one that is cast in stone that cannot be revisited in response to the cries of the people of Barbados and the demands of the National Democratic Party.

Thank you very much, Sir.

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

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Mr. Speaker, Sir, as indicated by Honourable Members on this side, we are supporting this Bill because in essence this is a result of decisions taken when we were the Government and under the circumstances it would be strange that now that we are in the Opposition we could not support it.

I think the Honourable Member raised a question and perhaps we should answer it. The fact is that arising out of the decision to award the contract for the sewerage plant for the sewerage system on the South Coast one of the questions which was raised had to do with the rights to enter private property for the purposes of the connection. Whereas the easements and the rights of way *et cetera* were secured, the question of entering private property to carry out works where, for example, the owners of that private property objected left some doubt and originally it was agreed that the Water Authority Act, Cap. 274(a) and the sewerage regulation should be amended. I think that it is clear on sober reflection it was determined that since under the Health Services Act, the Minister of Health has the authority to construct sewers and repair sewers that Section 6 should be extended to add to Section 6(a) which will give the Minister of Health the authority to take the necessary steps which are outlined in this legislation. So we are going to support this, Sir. I do not think that we have any difficulty with it.

I just wanted to make the point that we are particularly proud of this sewerage project on the South Coast which is going to cost a lot of money.

Aside.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: When we in the Democratic Labour Party do projects, somehow the newspapers manage to get them confused and I want it to be certain that it is established that we on this side are proud of this project. We are proud of the method that was used in its negotiation. We are proud of the conclusions which were reached which will result in our making the connections as we go along. The Government will now make the connections as they go along rather than as occurred with the Bridgetown Sewerage Project where the project was completed and then we had to get the householders to agree to the connections. Even as I speak, I think that it is fair to say that there are still connections that are outstanding in the Bridgetown Sewerage Project which create some difficulties for the IADB in the context of this project. Monies were included in the \$74 point whatever

million it is to ensure that the connections can be made. Unlike the case of the Bridgetown Sewerage Project where a householder is unable by virtue of being indigent or otherwise to make the connection provision has been made in this project also for such connections to be made. Those persons with houses on the South Coast who would not have the necessary capital to make the connection when necessary...

Aside.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: I said those who would not have the necessary capital, then those provisions have been made for such connections. 6.20 p.m.

I believe, Sir, that when this project gets going - because although the consultants have been appointed and the acquisitions have been made, I believe we made the acquisitions last year, the project is still not on its way. There are some further delays which have been brought about because of certain technical difficulties which I am sure the Minister will explain. I think the Honourable Member asked the question and the Minister would want to explain why it will be necessary to go back out to tender for some of the consultants who will perform the work, but this matter has been debated in the House fairly often and I do not intend to delay the House. I just wanted to establish beyond any shadow of question that this is a project that has been negotiated and prepared by the Government of the day. Even although we were under stringent economic difficulties, we recognised that the environmental aspects of Barbados' development, especially as it relates to tourism development, were crucial and the \$73 million which will be expended here has built into it, as I have said to this House in the last Session, an aspect of the west coast sewerage project, so that when this project is near completion the beginning of the west coast project will start with these funds.

The funding for the pre-feasibility and feasibility studies of the west coast sewerage project, to answer a question raised by the Honourable Member, has been included in this \$73 million of which we speak. Once the project gets going in its fullness, then we can be assured that both the south coast and the west coast will be sewered, because the Inter-American Development Bank gave the assurance that unless there were some specific reasons why not, funding for west coast sewerage was assured. It is only a matter of having the feasibility and working out the details.

Mr. Speaker, this has probably been one of the most meticulously discussed and agreed projects of its kind. It is a massive project, U.S. \$73 million is a lot of money

and the Government of the day was very careful to ensure that we learned from the mistakes which had been made with the Bridgetown Sewerage Project which, when we negotiated that in 1972 or thereabouts, we were not certain about sewerage projects because we did not know, we had not had one before. In 1972 we were given the assurance that that sewerage system would have worked so well that the cleaned effluent coming out would have been capable of sustaining fish life.

Aside.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: No, I am right about 1972. At that time the late Edwy Talma was the acting Chairman of the Cabinet, the Honourable Member for St. Michael South will remember, when we saw a film where we saw the fish swimming in the waters of the effluent of a similar sewerage system that had been built somewhere in the United States. It took from 1972 to 1975 to negotiate with the Inter-American Development Bank. It always takes about four years, Sir, from the day of decision to have a project till the time of implementation, and in fact we did not get underway until 1975. We had a tremendous amount of problems with the movement of people from the area that had been selected, which was not the first area selected. It is always a problem when you have to select a site for refuse disposal, Sir, there is always some problem or another and I remember that we had some problems with the site where the present Bridgetown sewerage works are located. You will recall, Sir, that some people had to be removed and there were all kinds of problems.

But the south coast offers a possibility because of the meticulousness with which we have approached it, and with which I have reason to believe that the Government will continue to approach it. I have no reason to doubt that the same meticulousness will attend the Government's implementation of projects. Reid Crowther are the supervising consultants, so there is no reason to doubt that they will continue at the same level which led us to choose them as the supervising consultants. We believe that this particular project will redound to the benefit of the entire country. I hope that whatever are the problems which have led to the present delay - they say another five months, but in my view it is probably another year's delay because of the necessity to go back out to tender - that it will not be long before we can get down to the nitty gritty of this project. Such delay as I understand it, I think the Member for Christ Church South is asking the question *sotto voce*, the consultants who had been short listed all indicated an inability to be available because they have no time, but I am sure that the Minister will be willing to explain it to us in much better detail as to why we have had the further delay. I look forward to hearing from the honourable lady as she gives us in her wind up answers to those particular questions.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Sir, I just want to respond to the leader of the NDP. He raised a question about Clause 3. The scheme of that clause is very simple. Perhaps we had better go back to Section 6 of the existing legislation.

Mr. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member, I believe what you are about to do should be left to Committee. You are going to explain certain specifics of the clauses and so on? Is this what you are attempting to do?

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Explain the policy behind the Sections.

Mr. SPEAKER: I think that should be done in Committee, as long as you are going into the clauses of the Bill.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: All right, Sir, I will deal with it in Committee.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: I need to have his advice in order that I may vote, Sir. I cannot vote on something that is illegal

Mr. SPEAKER: You will still get your advice in Committee.

Hon. Miss H. E. THOMPSON: Mr. Speaker, I just wish to respond to some of the questions and issues raised by Honourable Members on the other side. I tried to take careful note as they went along. The first question I have here is the reason for the delay. 6.30 p.m.

The first question I have here is the reason for the delay. The consultants being used now are the same consultants who were being used in April 1994; but there have been some delays by the IDB of four months in approving contractors.

The other issue with regard to delay, arose out of the delay of contractors. Some 5 contractors declined the work with the connections. Because of other professional commitments, they were unable to carry out the work at the time that we would have wanted. Three of those five have now again indicated both the interest and ability to carry out the work at the time that we want. So I think that answers the specific question.

A question was also raised about whether occupiers can authorise entry, but the point of the legislation is

to ensure quick entry onto the premises and that fair compensation must be given. This would be given to the owner but note that the occupier can give permission for entry on to the premises. As I understand it, that is what the legislation purports to do, and I believe that in Committee we will take a more close look at the actual section of the amendment.

The Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central raised the question of preconsultation of people. The Barbados Labour Party believes very strongly that one must consult with people and they are so doing that in relation to the gambling commission. However, the matter of the landfill at Greenland... They are separate issues.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member please stick to the South Coast Project.

Hon. Miss H. E. THOMPSON: We will have the opportunity if he so wishes at another time to look at the issue of solid waste. Today, we will stick to liquid waste. I think that those were the questions raised. I don't know if there is anything I can say.

Aside.

Hon. Miss H. E. THOMPSON: I think that is an attempt by the Honourable Member to bring a red herring into the discussion and that is part of the methodology of the Honourable Member to create issues where none exist. That is now an attempt to tell the people of Barbados that water rates are going to skyrocket because of the existence of this project. I will not be drawn into that. I think it is specious.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: I rise on a point of elucidation. Water rates are usually linked to these sewerage developments. It increases the water rates. Are you aware whether or not there will be an increase or not? Was it discussed? Did you enter into any conversation with anyone about it? Are you willing to let the House know honestly and truthfully exactly what is going on?

Mr. SPEAKER: Order, please.

Hon. Miss H. E. THOMPSON: Mr. Speaker, I will follow your direction and wind up.

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

On the motion of Honourable Miss H. E. THOMPSON seconded by Honourable 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.

COMMITTEE

Mr. CHAIRMAN: This Honourable House is in committee.

Clauses 1 and 2 were called and passed.

Clause 3 was called.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Mr. Chairman, the policy of this clause, Sir, has to be distilled from the general provision in the existing legislation at section 6. Section 6 gives the Minister of Health power to construct, repair and maintain sewers and make provision by means of sewerage disposal works or otherwise for effectively dealing with the contents of such sewers and states in subsection (2) that the sewer may be constructed in or under a street or cellar or vault below any street.

Now in section 7, the Minister also has the power to open and break up surfaces, soils, pavements, bridges, streets, remove earth and break up sewers, drains or tunnels and do all other acts which he considers necessary.

"Before the Minister opens or breaks up any sired, bridge, sewer, drain or tunnel under the control of the Minister responsible for Highways, he shall give to that Minister notice in writing, signed by him or by any public officer authorised by him in that behalf, of his intention so to do not less than 3 clear days before beginning such work."

So what the existing scheme is providing is that if the Minister of Health wants to tear up a road to put in a sewer or whatever she has to give the Minister of MTW three days notice.

Now, we are transferring that notion to the situation with private land and providing in clause 3 that the Minister or his agent, any person authorised by him can enter upon premises to lay pipes and attach sewers and so on. All that subsection (2) deals with is the provision of reasonable notice to a house owner or the person in possession of the property. 6.40 p.m.

All it says is that if you want to attach pipes or sewers to a house, in essence that is what it means, you give notice to the owner or occupier in writing, not 3 days but 14 days in advance. You want to come and attach the sewerage system to your existing system you have to give the person two weeks clear notice in writing.

Now obviously the word "occupier" was included because when you check the Land Tax Department you might find that I am the registered owner of the property. You will give me notice but I might be in New York. You want to get in in two weeks but I am not there so you serve notice on the person who is in occupation at the time, your tenant or whoever. That is all it says and that is all it means that notice must be given to somebody because it would surely be a gross trespass if you just went to the person's house and just started hooking up. I think it would be a trespass. I think it would be conduct which would be frowned upon by society at large that a Government agency could use its power to just go and say we are going to hook up irrespective of the rights of the people who occupy it. That would not only be arbitrary but it would be very oppressive conduct on the part of a Government. What we are doing here is to prevent that situation from arising by giving notice well in advance, 2 weeks, to say we want to come and hook up. That is all.

Aside.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Well, you really do not have a choice. Not that the occupier has the same status of the owner. The owner has a better right to title clearly but this is to get around the problem of trespass. Now, trespass does not deal with ownership necessarily. Trespass really is a tort against possessory interest, not necessarily rights of ownership. So if I was a tenant, not the owner, or even a person just lodging there for six weeks, somebody had gone away and left me to look after their house for six weeks, a caretaker, I am not entitled to possession but I am the person in occupation. If there was an act on the part of the Government against the property without my consent it would be a trespass. So it is to obviate those problems of lack of consent and lack of notice to get over the problem of arbitrary conduct on the part of the Government that we provide for notice to be given to the real owner, if he exists, or to the person who is - I use a different word if you like - in occupation and appears to be in ostensible control of the property. That is all it means.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: Mr. Chairman, I think I can accept the legal advice in the matter.

Hon. Sir HAROLD St. JOHN: Just one point, Sir, that I would like to draw to the attention of the Attorney General. I do not intend to hold up the Bill in any way. When I look at section 6B (1) which comes under the section we are now dealing with, it says that:

"The Minister shall pay reasonable compensation to the owner of premises for any loss or damage occasioned in the performance of his functions under this section."

And (3) says:

"Compensation payable under this section shall, where the parties fail to agree, be determined by a judge."

I ask the Attorney General to look at that section in the light of recent decisions that have taken place with respect to sections in the law in Barbados which says that you are entitled to compensation but do not prescribe the criteria to be taken into account by the judge because quite obviously you are opening the door for tremendous arguments. One just takes the view that a dollar is good compensation. Another takes the view that it should be a much larger sum. As I understand it in these matters it is better if one can say the principles to be taken into account in awarding compensation. That is the point I have to make.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The question is that Clause 3 now do stand part. Honourable Members in favour please say "Aye"...

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: Mr. Chairman, a very valid point has been raised by the Honourable Member and I think the Honourable Attorney General should respond.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Sir, this matter has now been drawn to my attention as a result of apparently certain decisions in the High Court I suppose dealing with BSIL and the receivers?

Aside.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Sir, I think the observation of the Honourable Member for Christ Church South is very valid. As it stands, you would expect that a judge would determine reasonable compensation and that the respective parties would put up their valuations and documents showing what were the values of this and that that were damaged and so on. To put it beyond doubt since, of course, it has been urged that what is envisaged ...

Aside.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: I am not doing any amendment, Sir. I am saying to the House that I am prepared to look at it with the draughtsman and also try and find the decisions that the Honourable Member referred to to see what the difficulty is. I understand the point but if we look through the new clause 6B this is what it says and I think we have to think it through:

(1) "The Minister shall pay reasonable compensation to the owner of premises for

any loss or damage occasioned in the performance of his functions under this section.

- (2) Where any question arises touching the title of any person to the premises that may be entered for the purposes of section 6A, or any estate or interest therein, the person in possession of the premises shall, for the purposes of this section, be deemed to be the owner of the same until the contrary is proved."

Then it goes on:-

- "(3) Compensation payable under this section shall, where the parties fail to agree, be determined by a Judge."

I presume that must relate to 6B(1). Here they are dealing with damage or loss to property and really I think that is fairly easily quantifiable. It is like special damages. You go in and you take down a guard wall and you rip down something else and you get valuations showing the cost by a quantity surveyor. I do not know if we need...

Aside.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: He is saying that we should provide principles to guide the judge in the assessment of the compensation but I do not think this is compensation like acquisition for lands. I think this is referring to specific loss or damage to property. We will look at it more thoroughly. 6.50 p.m.

He has asked me to look at it and I will agree to look at it. Special damage. You can compute what it is. We do it all the time, Sir, when a vehicle runs off the road and

goes and knocks down somebody's guardwall or house. It is an easy method of doing it in the law. I do not think there is any difficulty.

Aside.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: I just give the House the assurance. In fact I have a meeting tomorrow morning at 9.30 a. m. with the Law Revision Officer and the Chief Parliamentary Counsel and I will raise it then.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: What are you proposing?

The question that Clause 3 do now stand part was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

Clauses 4 and 5 inclusive were called and passed.

On the motion of Hon. Miss H. E. THOMPSON, seconded by Hon. R. C. EASTMOND, 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. Miss H. E. THOMPSON, seconded by Hon. R. C. EASTMOND the Bill was read a third time and passed.

ADJOURNMENT

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Mr. Speaker, Sir, that brings us to the end of Government Business and I now move that this sitting do now adjourn until Tuesday the 14th March, 1995 at 11.00 o'clock in the morning. On that date we shall lay the Estimates for 1995-96 and we will stan the debate on the 20th March, 1995.

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

The question was put and resolved in the affirmative without division and Mr. SPEAKER adjourned the sitting accordingly. 6.55 p.m.

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Michael South Central) KELLMAN, Mr. D. St. E.
(St. Lucy) MOTTLEY, Hon. Miss M. A. (St. Michael
North East) St. JOHN, Hon. Sir Harold (Christ
Church South) SANDIFORD, Rt. Hon. L. E. (St.
Michael South) SIMMONS, Hon. D. A. C. (St.
Thomas) TAITT, Mr. B. M. (St. Michael West)
THOMPSON, Mr. D. J. H. (St. John) THOMPSON,
Miss H. E. (St. James South) TUDOR, Mr. J. O. (St.
(Michael East)**