THE

House of Assembly Debates

(OFFICIAL REPORT)

FIRST SESSION 1994 – 99

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

Tuesday, August 13,1996

Pursuant to the adjournment, the House of Assembly met at 10.20 a.m. on Tuesday, August 13, 1996.

PRESENT

His Honour I. A. ROETT, B.A., Dip. Ed. (Speaker)
His Honour R. D. MARSHALL, (Deputy Speaker)
Mr. H. deB. FORDE, Q.C., M.A., LL.B.
Rt. 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, QC., LL.M. (Attorney General and Minister of Home Affairs)
Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON, LL.B. (Hons.) (Leader of the Opposition)
Mr. L.R. TULL, Q.C., M.A.
Hon. Dr. R. L. CHELTENHAM, Q.C., M.A., M.Sc. (Econ.)
Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER (Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Tourism and International Transport) (Leader of the House)
Mr. J. O. TUDOR, J.P.
Hon. G. W. PAYNE (Minister of Public Works, Transport and Housing)
Hon. R. C. EASTMOND, J.P., B.A. (Hons.), Dip. Ed., LL.B. (Hons.), L.E.C. (Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development)
Dr. R. C. HAYNES, M.B., Ch.B., F.R.C.P. (Edin.)
Mr. D. CARTER
Hon. R. N. GREEMDGE, B.A., LL.B., (Minister of Labour, Community Development and Sports)
Mr. G. A. CLARKE, B.Sc., Dip. Ed. (Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry of Public Works, Transport and Housing)
Mr. J. M. EDGHILL
Mr. F. J. STUART, B.A. LL.M.
Mr. W. C. C. CALLENDER, J.P., B.A., Dip. Ed., B.Sc. (Chairman of Committees)
Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN
Hon. Miss H. E. THOMPSON, LL.B., (Minister of Health and the Environment)
Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY, LL.B., (Minister of Education, Youth Affairs and Culture)

Prayers were led by Mr. Speaker.

Mr. SPEAKER: This House is now in session.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: I beg to move that the Minutes for the meeting of Friday, August 9, 1996 be deferred. Those minutes are not yet ready.

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

Mr. SPEAKER: If that be the will of the House so be it.

ORAL REPLIES TO QUESTIONS

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I beg to give notice that reply to Parliamentary Question No. 26, asked by the Honourable Member for St. Lucy is ready.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

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

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: I beg to second that.

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

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

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

ORDER NO. 3 – SECOND READING OF SPECIAL DEVELOPMENT AREAS BILL. 1996

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Mr. Speaker, to start this debate I would like to refer Honourable Members to two documents both of which are documents of the House of some long standing now. First of all, at page 12 of the Barbados Labour Party's 1986 Manifesto under the heading – Physical Development – there is a very special chapter, Sir, headed – Bridgetown and other areas. If I may quote, Sir, this chapter speaks of bringing to fruition the Carlisle Bay Development Project which will add a new dimension to the amenities of historic Bridgetown. It talks of redevelopment covering the areas between the Pierhead and Needhams Point, improved infrastructure for the creation of a pedestrian mall, linking a variety of commercial, social and cultural facilities. It speaks of a promenade along the beach frontage of the Grand Barbados, formerly the Holiday Inn. It makes reference to the fact that the entire project would combine extensive urban renewal with expanded tourist and business activity and increased economic benefits to the country in general.

In addition it speaks of urban development projects already started in the New Orleans and will aim at further improving recreational and other facilities in that area while the Bridgetown waterfront development including a proposed marina and the Bridgetown Fisheries Project will contribute significantly to activity in the City. It went on to make reference, Mr. Speaker, Sir, to other elements of the Barbados Labour Party's plan to include the Lower Green as a tranquil area, flanked by a national art gallery, referred to under the chapter on culture in this Manifesto.

It spoke of transforming the Jubilee Gardens Bus Stand into an urban garden. It spoke of markets at Fairchild Street and Cheapside to 'be redesigned and upgraded. It goes on to make reference to the Barbados Labour Party's plans for the Empire Theatre and two ultra modem bus terminals, one of which was nearing completion. That of course, Mr. Speaker is the Fairchild Street Bus Stand. It spoke of a new headquarters for the Barbados Development Bank. It spoke even of the renovation of these Houses of Parliament. It went on to make reference to the then proposed restoration of the Jewish Synagogue, the second oldest in the Western Hemisphere and an essential part of the history of Barbados.

It spoke of housing development at Kensington Lodge which would be joined by others at Pondside and Greenfield and that the party would complete a Church Village redevelopment programme. It spoke of adequate parking facilities including a multi-storied parking facility for Bridgetown and went on then to make reference to Graeme Hall Swamp, South Coast Sewerage System, Glebe Project in St. George, the East Coast Park which was referred to in the 1981 Manifesto and which was even then under implementation. It spoke too, Sir, of preliminary surveys being carried out to determine the extent to which Harrison's Cave would be extended.

External sources of finance and assistance would be tapped to further develop this breath-taking phenomenon. Attention would also be focussed on other areas around Barbados. Under-water parks would be developed around the coast where feasible.

The Manifesto of 1986 went on to speak at some length about the environment. What I am saying, Sir, in effect, is nothing new in concept.

Then I come to the Barbados Labour Party's 1994 Manifesto. Before I do that, Sir, we went to a lot of trouble in this 1986 Manifesto to put on the inside cover, in colour, this artist impression of what the reclaimed lands off Hincks Street could look like. But we know, Sir, that none of this took off after 1986. So in our Manifesto of 1994, Sir, I would refer Honourable Members to page 28 of that Manifesto which spoke at some length about urban development and redevelopment.

10.30 a.m.

It spoke again, Sir, of establishing a programme for the greening of Bridgetown in Jubilee Gardens, Cheapside, Fairchild Street and Church Village. It spoke about implementing the Bridgetown Waterfront Development Project, about encouraging the restoration of buildings of architectural interest as a means of both preserving the national heritage and providing jobs. It made reference to the construction on the site of those public markets which the Barbados Labour Party had already earmarked for demolition, large multi-purpose markets for arts and crafts as well as for food and general merchandise. It spoke also, Sir, of other markets across St. Michael and Christ Church and at specially selected points off the major highways including the Tom Adams Highway. It made reference to the proposal to renovate and promote Pelican Village as a crafts marker, of upgrading facilities at the Temple Yard, of renovating the old Customs House on the Wharf and any other suitable and available Government owned buildings in commercial Bridgetown for use by small entrepreneurs. It went on tc make other references to the way in which an urban development programme would be undertaken by this administration.

Now, Mr. Speaker, Sir, I deem it a privilege that today I would have the very pleasant task of introducing this very important piece of legislation for the Special Development Areas. Mr. Speaker, Sir, special develop-

ment areas are nothing new. Special development areas are well known and well established in other developing countries right here in the Caribbean, in Trinidad and Jamaica. In many developed countries even in places like New York, and I think that perhaps the special development area that Barbadians might be most familiar with in a place like New York, there was several years ago a proposal that the Bedford-Stuyvesant area should be rehabilitated and generally refurbished. A lot of black Americans and many Barbadians and others of Caribbean parentage owned properties and continue to own quite significant and in some cases historic properties in that area. So that the special development area, Sir, is long known as a device designed to rehabilitate areas which have become derelict and run down and which have to be revitalize in order that their potential might be realized and there are several of those in Barbados and there are several in Hridgetown and Speightstown and in other places beside.

Look at Baxter's Road, Mr. Speaker. When we were children, Baxter's Road was a vibrant and busy and bustling thoroughfare. It was a place where especially on Friday and Saturday you could hardly drive pass for the number of people who were doing business of all sorts in and around that area. Cast your mind back to what Roebuck Street used to look like where major wholesale and retail business houses and small industrial operations were carried on. Roebuck Street was a place where 40 or 50 years ago black ownership could be found. I suppose there is a generation today in Barbados which will not have heard even of Stuart & Sampson and others.

Think of Bay Street, Sir. Again, it used to be an interesting urban area, a long street with waterfront and beach front housing and an interesting mix of interests there. Housing of all sorts was there. The late Sir Winston Scott's residence and cottage hospital are still to be found on Bay Street. We chose in an earlier administration to build the Government Headquarters on Bay Street. It was a place where there used to be small hotels, where there used to be some gracious town houses. The old Child Care Board is one of them and where there were properties also of historic interest like the old Eye Care Department which is a very historic building on Bay Street. There are S churches on Bay Street. The St. Paul's which, when the Garrison was in its en there was a huge military and n's Garrison, was much nks from that facility. urchyard there and military and

used it even for political congregations. So that Bay Street is perhaps one of the most interesting streets in Barbados – historically, socially and economically because a number of businesses have been carried on for over two centuries. Particularly on Lower Bay Street there are still signs of old warehousing there and there is still the old Bridge and Harbour Police Station which is perhaps the most historic building of its kind in Barbados to be found on Bay Street.

Cast your mind, Sir; to the Greenfields and New Orleans in the City of Bridgetown areas where we have over time allowed services to run down. In my 20 years representing the City of Bridgetown, I have tried very hard to uplift the living conditions of people in the New Orleans and almost in every other area.

But let us movb away from the City for a moment, Sir, and look to Speightstown. Again, 40 or 50 years ago when we were children, Speightstown was a vibrant place. Again on a Saturday morning you could hardly pass the main street in Speightstown. It had too its historic churches and its historic buildings. Perhaps the best and the well known is Arlington House where in an earlier administration the Barbados Labour Party sited the very first health centre in Barbados headed by Sir Maurice Byer who is still very much with us. His public health nurse there was the late Aurora Walters. I remember that, Sir. If we look again at Speightstown, we will see, although most people cannot see it from the street, one of the most interesting forts in Barbados, Fort Rupert. Up on the hill where the Coleridge & Parry School. is, is the site of another historic fort. Where the Almond Beach is, used to be part of the site of a quite sizeable plantation. The St. Lawrence Gap that has been allowed to run down is now ramshackled and untidy but it is a place with tremendous character. That too has its historic church. The St. Lawrence Church, the Patron Saint of a fisherman I think, although I believe a cleric may correct me and suggest that it might be otherwise, but it is one of the most popular haunts for tourists to Barbados on the south coast.

10.40 a.m.

And then, Sir, there is the Scotland District. The Scotland District is and has been for many years a special conservation area in Barbados. Successive Governments have spent much time and effort, many studies, many surveys, a great deal of money in the preservation and the conservation of the Scotland District. The Scotland District is quite different from the rest of Barbados. The west and the south coasts of Barbados are really coral terraces that have risen over the eons, the soil is black, the sea is calm and the sand is white, pristine. But on the east coast of Barbados what we have there is oceanic upthrust. That goes back to a billions of years ago, when Barbados actually was but I will not digress on that today. That

Baxters Road. I can tell you, Sir, that Baxters of every single one drawings

is where our clay deposits are found and those of us who know the east coast and who know the Scotland District will recognise in a moment, the differences in the geological formations on that coast and on the south and west coasts.

But there is a certain fragility in respect of the Scotland District, subject over all the years to land slippages, but an area which we are told has tremendous potential which we have not begun to tap in Barbados. We have perhaps been preoccupied with the business of conservation, but before the end of this century it is important that we have to look to see with great care, with great delicacy, how we might exploit the Scotland District to the advantage of Barbadians.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, the Special Development Areas legislation is a very slender piece of legislation, a small Bill, no more than ten pages, but it is perhaps, like so many good things that come in small packages, one of the most important pieces of legislation that we would pass in this Chamber as we approach the end of this millennium, and it is fitting that indeed we would do it on the eve of a new millennium.

I want to, generally speaking, refer Honourable Members to Clause 3 of this Bill which speaks of special development areas, which also lists a number of orders that the Minister – in this case the Minister of Finance – may make, that the Minister may prescribe a development period in respect of any special development area, so he can put a time frame on a special development area; he can amend the First Schedule by increasing or decreasing the number of special development areas. This is important, Sir, because a number of people both in Barbados and outside of it, in the wider region and some even internationally, are waiting on the passage of this legislation to begin to move developments of one kind or another.

The First Schedule to this Bill, Sir, sets out the four development areas and those are the ones I was describing just now. Carlisle Bay Redevelopment Area, which is really a coastal Bridgetown moving from Needham's Point down to Brandon; Speightstown in the parish of St. Peter; St. Lawrence Gap in the parish of Christ Church; and the conservation area known as the Scotland District and as defined in the Soil Conservation District Act.

It is important that Honourable Members note this power that the Minister will have to amend the First Schedule by increasing or decreasing, as he sees fit, the number of special development areas. I would wish to say at this point, Sir, that as soon as this legislation passes the parliamentary process I fully intend to put before the Minister for his consideration to be designated a special development area, Baxters Road, and also Roebuck Street, and also that area around the Montifiore Gardens which already recommends itself as a special historic area. You have the Jewish Synagogue there, you have the Central Police Station, the Carnegie Library, the old Town Hall that in our time we know as the High Court, and I am pleased that the British-American Insurance Company has seen fit to use its own resources for the pleasure and the benefit of all Barbadians to beautify the Montifiore Gardens.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, you would know that Baxters Road has particular interest to me. The shop owners and operators of Baxters Road are waiting, perhaps more anxiously than anybody else in Barbados, for this special development legislation to pass. For the last six months they have been meeting – I have attended some of the meetings, so I know whereof I speak – on Baxters Road looking at ways and means of improvement. They have an advantage, Sir, because the legislation has been available for some time and their parliamentary representative went out of her way to make sure that they would get in on the ground floor in this regard, and they took her at her word. These small, black entrepreneurs – Mr. Mings, Colin of Colin's Place, Mr. Bryan, John O's wife, Mr. Joseph with the bakery at the corner – Mr. Speaker, those are the people who have been meeting on a regular monthly basis looking at ways and means of how they may take advantage of this, and this is what they are planning. They want to return those beautiful overhanging galleries to Baxters Road, they want to take down all of that ugly looking wirescape and put it underground, they want the Government to put it underground. They want Baxters Road defined as a place where coach tours of tourists would come for a night tour. You would come at 9 or 10 o'clock, disembark, work the street. There are proposals that the fish vendors would have a beautiful new operating area with tiled and well paved counters where they could do their fish fry and where people might sit more comfortably, as they now do at Oistin Town, and enjoy the pleasures of Baxters Road.

There are business people in Bridgetown who have already been approached and who are interested in helping those small, black entrepreneurs in Baxters Road. In fact, the consultants who are working on the Bridgetown Rehabilitation Plan were so impressed at the initiative taken by these people, that they have offered their services to the Baxters Road shop owners and operators free of charge.

10.50 a.m.

They have already [illegible] shop on Baxters [illegible]

Road is 850 metres long and it ends at Reed Street and now, of course, those small entrepreneurs on Tudor Street and Milk Market are looking to see when their turn will come, as indeed it will in due course.

The Honourable Member for St. Peter, the Rt. Honourable Prime Minister, will tell you when he speaks in this debate of the group of businessmen in Speightstown who have come together in a formal association and who are like the small businessmen in Baxters Road, preparing themselves to take off as soon as this legislation passes Parliament.

Clause 3 goes on to point out that the Minister also has the power to prescribe the boundaries of any special development area and he can amend the Second Schedule by adding various activities too. I would like to refer Honourable Members to the Second Schedule, very broad-based and very flexible. It is saying that special development areas can encompass hotels, including conference areas. I think immediately of that whole Needhams Point peninsula where it is proposed that we are going to expand the Hilton Hotel by 106 rooms and where a conference centre and ballroom facilities to accommodate 600 are going to be part of that renovation and expansion of the Hilton Hotel in a completely new and more advantageous arrangement between the Government of Barbados and the Hilton International. I am thinking that, when MOBIL relocates, a custom designed convention centre, serviced by a network of hotels in that area going as far up as Hastings, will be part and parcel of that special resort development area.

Residential complexes. I have made the point in this Chamber time and time again over 20 years that no city can survive as a city unless people live in it. Mr. Speaker, we saw this with Holetown and with Speightstown in our time. We saw those two towns in Barbados go almost down to nothing and that happens when people move out in large numbers from living in those towns. It was only after Sunset Crest was built and people came back to live in Holetown that Holetown revitalised itself and has become that wonderful, beautiful, little town that we know today. That, too, recommends itself as a special development area. Somebody may want to do, in fact, I know that new and more extensive development is planned for Holetown and the same thing with Speightstown.

Residential complexes are so important, and that is why the Barbados Labour Party, in an earlier administration, established Kensington Lodge Housing Estate, the best kept housing estate in Barbados. Taxi drivers take tourists to see it. That is also why an earlier Barbados Labour Party Administration started the Pondside Housing Project. It grieved me and people in the City of Bridgetown that when the Democratic Labour Party came to Government in 1986 the first thing they did was to truncate that development. They cut the number of units which were designed for phase 1. All of that land you see there along the land side of Bay Street from where the old Exchange used to be, all of that was acquired by the Barbados Labour Party, long before 1986, for housing.

That is why I cannot hear any talk about suitability for parking. People in Barbados are already learning as they do in other countries that you have to get out of your car, park and walk, sometimes pay to park. They will go to Miami and do it and New York and do it and Washington and London.

Phase 2 of the Pondside Housing is scheduled to start in this financial year. Barbadians can see the relocation and removal of some of perhaps the most derelict housing in Barbados, housing in which people still lived. Mr. Speaker, I could have shown you what we destroyed, houses with dirt floors still in the City of Bridgetown. That will now be a thing of the past. I can show you, Sir – and one artist has immortalised it on canvas – a place called a barracks. When you drove up Bay Street and you saw that upstairs house, that was a barracks. Do you know what a barracks is, Sir? A barracks is a place where there were like 12 or 14 rooms in there and every room represented a family. Every room door had a padlock on it, communal cooking, communal bathing in the Waterloo Alley bath, communal cooking in the tenement yard. That is now a thing of the past. Those people are suitably relocated elsewhere and I have recommended to Government that they should acquire the property which used to be known as Harry's Nitery to extend this second phase of the Pondside Housing, because there are proposals in the Ministry of Public Works for quite a significant straightening of that curve there on Bay Street. I have said to Public Works in order to give back to housing lands which you are going to take for road improvement, please acquire that little more land.

Housing is very important, Sir. We see it happening at Speightstown as well. When I went to tour the St. Lawrence Gap I didn't only walk the Gap, two or three months ago or whenever it was, I went into Bath Village and the other small villages in and around the environs of the St. Lawrence Gap.

Aside.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Yes. Residential complexes are very much within the concept of the special development areas. Again in the Second Schedule, you will see commercial or industrial buildings, including office complexes and other facilities directed toward the improvement and expansion of services to the tourism sector. All of these are important.

The Honourable Member for St. John – I don't think that he would feel I was talking out his private business – referred to me just a few weeks ago a client of his who is interested in such a facility, some overseas and some local interests, and they came to see me. These are big business people now. We are not talking about small black entrepreneurs here. These are people who came to see me with a view to setting up a tourism related facility in Bridgetown and they were interested in setting it up on what are now lands owned by the Government, recommended by the Honourable Member for St. John. So he has an appreciation too as an attorney who is interested in the promotion of development in Barbados, interested in Bridgetown in a way that he wasn't able to achieve it with the St. John Development Plan. He has displayed a certain interest in the Bridgetown Redevelopment Plan.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, the Second Schedule also refers to water-based activities. You know, Mr. Speaker, Sir, Barbados has one of the most diverse, if not the most diverse tourism mixture in the Caribbean. We have scuba diving, we have submarine, we have deep-sea fishing, we have the jet ski operations, we have the pleasure cruisers, the Bajan Queen, the Jolly Roger and now the Harbour Master and many more besides. We have the underwater park at Folkestone. We have a new marine park now about to be established just off the Esplanade, off Bay Street. Now these are very key areas.
11.00 a.m.

Tourists worldwide, Sir, research has shown us, have at this time tremendous interest in heritage tourism and eco-tourism. It is not by any coincidence that the Ministry of Tourism in Barbados is giving high priority and special thrust to heritage and eco- tourism. Mr. Speaker, Sir, this legislation will do much to encourage and to put at the disposal of would-be developers in Barbados, prospective developers in Barbados, the ability to restore a lot of the heritage of Barbados.

We take it for granted, Sir, the heritage that we have. We know about the churches of Barbados, and a great job has been done, and we have to say thank you to the National Trust in some part for this. A great job has been done with the restoration of churches like Sharon Moravian and the St. John Parish Church, which is a great calling place for tourists and Barbadians as well, and several other churches in Barbados, some of which still need restoration. We have a wonderful portfolio in that regard.

What I would like to say as well, Sir, is that those churches that we are restoring – the St. James Parish Church is another good example I can think of and the St. Peter Parish Church – with the re-greening of the Lower Green, the St. Mary's Church is going to get a face lift that it was not quite expecting. The Church Council, I am advised, has already indicated that even in advance of our formal request they are very agreeable to the idea that we would take that church wall down and replace it with railings. I hope that we can reuse some of that wonderful cast iron railing work that was removed before the Marine Hotel was demolished, and we would landscape those graves. There are beautiful trees in the churchyard at St. Mary's but too many of our churchyards are derelict.

We fix up the inside of the church, of course, that is only natural because that is where we worship. There are all kinds of fund raising activities to put in a new organ, repair the roof of the church, put down new flooring in the church and so on, but too often we forget the surrounding churchyard.

Our heritage, Sir, includes a number of Forts in Barbados and we overlooked them over all the years. Tourists have a tremendous interest. Look at an island like St. Kitts. The one big tourist attraction in St. Kitts is Brimstone Hill. There is not really a great deal more to see in St. Kitts apart from the river where, it is alleged, that the Arawak Indians jumped to their death rather than be ruled by the British Colonisers. With that one Fort and Military installation, they have made an entire tourism industry in St. Kitts.

We are an island with many Forts. Fort Charles – everybody perhaps knows that the best, because the Hilton had seen fit to restore some of that Fort. They now have cocktail events out there, dinner parties, wedding receptions and that sort of thing, and tourists go to see it.

Do you know something about the Hilton, Mr. Speaker, Sir? Do you know that there are 37 cannons in the water when you look over the edge from that Fort? All we need is a good crane to get it up, and we have a cannon expert here in Barbados attached to the Barbados Defence Force. He has just gone off, I think I have said this in here before, Sir, but at the risk of repetition, it is important enough to say that he has recently gone off to the Military Archives in the United Kingdom to see what we can do, not only about getting that cannon up but also restoring it.

We have just discovered another cannon, only two of its kind in the world. Somebody with a metal detector found it I believe somewhere near the Ragged Point Lighthouse. Mr. Speaker, Sir, there is a whole network, an entire network of secret passages, some of them, and tunnels leading into and out of the St. Anne's Fort. It is believed that Gunsite Road, in Brittons Hill, is in some way perhaps connected, that it is not called Gunsite Road for nothing.

Very recently, as we were laying the fibre optic cable along the street just outside of Brown Sugar, when they excavated, it was found that you are dealing with

a beautiful brick-lined tunnel, and it is clear that soldiers and maybe naval people used to move from what we know as the Drill Hall, the Garrison site, down to the beach underground. There must be old drawings, old surveys and old plans which will allow us to develop that into a tourist attraction.

If, Mr. Speaker, Sir, in Paris, France, the Parisians are now using the sewers of Paris for day tours for tourists and night as well, because when you get down there it is night and it does not matter whether it is day or night outside...

Asides.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: I agree. I will say so, but if they can do that, can you imagine the potential for the whole tunnelling system around the St. Anne's Garrison and the Fort Charles? There are many other Forts that we need to develop. Whether we like it or not it is part of the history of Barbados, it is part of the heritage of Barbados. The National Trust has to be thanked. I think I made this point in a recent debate in here in respect of the National Trust. They have tried very hard, and I think very successfully and very well, to develop the string of Signal Stations in Barbados. That is part of our heritage. You go to Gun Hill and it is perhaps one of the most dramatic scenes in Barbados. You can virtually stand in that Signal Station and look at the whole of Barbados, North, South, East and West, Sir. That has been developed and it needs further development.

We do not need for tourists to come here to tell us how historic Barbados is and how beautiful Barbados is. We know that for ourselves, and it is a happy indication that Barbadians see fit to use places like Farley Hill. Brides go there for their receptions and for their bridal photographs. Families go there far picnics and all kinds of cultural and other activities take place at Farley Hill.

We have now discovered the East Coast Road with the Semi Finals of the Pic-o-de-Crop. That has tremendous potential, and that is part of the Scotland District area as well. So that is heritage and natural environment, and there is a lot to be said of our natural environment. Mr. Speaker, Sir, Harrison's Cave, developed by an earlier Barbados Labour Party administration, is the number one place of interest visited by visitors to Barbados. Tourists and Barbadians who come back from time to time visit Harrison's Cave, our number one. This later Barbados Labour Party administration will now further develop the Harrison's Cave.

There are many other caverns there to be explored and to be developed. We are advised that again there is not only a gully system but there may well be an underground system leading from Harrison's Cave down through Jack-in-the-Box Gully, virtually down to Speightstown. Down to Speightstown from Harrison's Cave there is a whole network of little caves there. That is the join between the oceanic upthrust and the coral stone terraces. The imperfect join, the occlusions, are really the caves of Barbados.
11.10 a.m.

All of that we have to exploit. The St. George Valley is where the join was. You will notice that where the caves are they are at the point of the joining. When you go down into Harrison's Cave you can actually see coral stone on one side and oceanic upthrust formation on the other side if you know what to look for.

Mr. Speaker, the natural environment of Barbados, I do not think can be bettered anywhere in the Caribbean. I am very scornful about bathing in other people's sea. I have to tell you that. There are very few places in the world where I would go and feel that the sea was suitable enough for me to swim in because I was spoiled as a Barbadian. Again, it is an important thing that Barbadians have a good and keen appreciation of our wonderful beaches. This is something that we share with tourists and it is important that always these beaches should be free in respect of access to all Barbadians and visitors alike. Successive administrations in Barbados have adhered to that principle and I trust will continue to do so for all time.

We only hold this in trust for the generations who come after us. There are a number of environmental problems which are now before the Ministry of Tourism and at the Ministry of the Environment. Some development of Graeme Hall Swamp – we have to be very careful about that. Graeme Hall Swamp is the only true wetland left in Barbados. It is important because it is a nursery for all sorts of marine life especially fish. What is not known, perhaps, Sir, is that although the Government owns a significant chunk of Graeme Hall Swamp, quite another significant chunk of it is owned by the private sector. There are proposals before us now for some development of Graeme Hall Swamp which will allow us to enjoy it more.

How many people go to Graeme Hall Swamp in the evenings when the white cattle egrets are all going home. Wherever they go we see them – up in the shooting swamp at North Point. You will see them all over Barbados but in the evening they all fly to be down at the Graeme Hall Swamp. That is their natural habitat and the natural habitat of a whole bunch of flora and fauna that is very important to the ecological balance of Barbados. All of that is contemplated and is encompassed in this legislation. It ranges far and wide.

It speaks too, Sir, of arts and cultural investments. I know that the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East when she gets up to speak in this debate will speak

of the plans that the National Cultural Foundation has for the Empire Theatre. I know that she will want to speak of plans which she knows of, that we have for the restoration of the old Town Hall in Bridgetown.

It is not a secret. The Barbados Chamber of Commerce and the Employers' Confederation have formerly written to say to us that – and when I say "us," Mr. Speaker, I am speaking now of a Special Project Unit in the Ministry of Tourism which is dealing with this Tourism Development Programme which is what I am describing, I am killing many birds with one stone as I speak.

This Special Development Areas legislation is vital to our getting the Urban Redevelopment Subprogramme or component within the Tourism Development Programme off the ground. It is proposed, Mr. Speaker, that the old Town Hall will be restored to its former splendour complete with its overhanging galleries. That is an important thing because by doing this the chamber of Commerce and the Employers' Confederation of Barbados are making a public statement about their commitment to this Government's proposal to rehabilitate our capital city and to bring back business to Bridgetown.

A lot of business has left Bridgetown and in some respects it is good that certain kinds of business should have left Bridgetown and gone into the suburbs and other places for all kinds of reasons to do with facilities and amenities being more available there but there are some businesses which need to be re-established in Bridgetown. Mr. Speaker, I am really very grateful to the Chamber of Commerce and the Employers' Confederation for the foresight they are displaying by making this kind of commitment to the rehabilitation of our capital city.

In respect of Speightstown, Sir, I suppose that people, as I said earlier, will know of Arlington House. The Barbados National Bank, which has long had a branch in Speightstown – I was down there with them a couple of months ago looking at their proposal. The Barbados National Bank branch in Speightstown is – I see the Honourable Member for St. Lucy smiling. All of this goes to the revitalisation of the north.

The Barbados National Bank branch in Speightstown has proposals for the restoration of Arlington House and for, in fact, resiting the Bank's branch within the curtilage of Arlington House without at all doing any violence to the historic and the heritage importance of that wonderful old building.

There are many other examples of artistic and cultural potential and investment which this legislation will allow artists-and people who see the potential that Barbados has f a entertainment becoming an important foreign exchange earner, among other things.

This Special Development Areas legislation last, but not least, Sir, speaks to agricultural-based activities. These are the activities which it is hoped will be developed in the Scotland District area always to complement and to be productive rather than destructive of that very special area in Barbados.

Mr. Speaker, the Third and last Schedule to this Act has four short points but four very important points. This Third Schedule speaks to the exempted taxes and duties This, in fact, then, Sir, is the incentive package that this Government is offering to developers, small, big, medium-sized, local, national, regional, international, whoever they may be, these spell out the exempted taxes and duties – import duty, stamp duty, consumption tax, value added tax on imports for building renovations and building refurbishment. This is of interest to the Baxters Road entrepreneurs because they want to completely refurbish the shop fronts of Baxters Road so that a certain look comes back to Baxters Road, so that we brighten up that area, so that it becomes more inviting and more welcoming not only to Barbadians but to visitors as well.

There was a time 20 years, 35 years ago when not only in the day time but night time you could not get into Baxters Road for the crowds. They want to see that return to Baxters Road. They feel they may have lost a little market share now to Oistins Town. That is another special development area that I am sure somebody is going to put a proposal before the Minister as soon as this legislation passes Parliament.

It speaks of charges on the repatriation of interest and capital for a period of ten years commencing on a date which will be prescribed by the Minister. In other words, this is what we know as the 10-year holiday. There will be land tax on the improved value of land, property transfer tax payable by vendors and purchasers on the initial purchase of property, whether by nationals or non-nationals.

Let me be careful to point out, Sir, that this is not legislation to encourage people who do not now have properties and carry on business in the already designated special development areas to run in and say they want to be the beneficiaries of this incentive package. It is not for somebody from say, Eagle Hall, or somebody from Checker Hall to relocate a business in Speightstown or in Bridgetown to run up then to the Minister to say we want to be able to take advantage of this incentive package. This is for the creation of new business, to generate new jobs and of course for those who have existing properties there.
11.20 a.m.

Now in a place like Bridgetown, Sir, the Government is quite a substantial property owner. The second largest property owner is the Barbados Shipping and Trading. I

have been reading and hearing in recent times and I have been hearing some of it coming from the Benches over there but as I said the Leader of the Opposition is leading by example in this connection, that this is legislation designed to help only big business. I do not think that Mr. Mings and Colin and Mr. Bryan and so on, John O's and so on, I do not think that they see themselves as big business.

I have said that as soon as this legislation passes the Parliament I am going to ask for Baxters Road to be designated a special development area. Those people are waiting for it. I am saying, Mr. Speaker, Sir, that those people who have property in the areas set out in the First Schedule to this can be the beneficiaries of this incentive package. Do not let us forget what I quoted at the beginning. Look at clause 3 of this. The Minister can prescribe a development period for any length of time he likes. He can say, well this is a development period that I will designate for 5 years in this instance or in another case maybe 10 years. In some cases it may be 20 years. If a consortium comes together to build the marina off the southern part of the Pierhead here in Bridgetown that could easily be a 10 or 15-year project. That is a vast project including small hotels, including ships' chandlery, including boutiques and restaurants and cafes. There is a proposal too, Sir, for the old screw dock. We drive past the Wharf everyday and we take it for granted. The old screw dock, the only one of its kind left in the world, there are proposals to restore that and to build around it a maritime museum. All of these things are important. I am glad that the Barbados Defence Force saw the wisdom at long last, because this is over 15 years I have been making the point that the Pierhead really was not the best location for them, and they are relocating to the Flour Mill site and are actually in the process of so doing.

Fort Willoughby, that is the site of another Fort and we need to do some restoration work there too and take advantage of it. Barbadians hardly know that one of the best beaches in Barbados today starts here at the Pierhead and goes right up to the Hilton. Browne's beach, you get windows opening looking at it now. I can remember when I was a child, Sir, the sea used to come right up and hit at the Esplanade. Now it is a wonderful beach. That of course has nothing to do with any administration in Barbados, that has to do with the natural cyclical movement of tides in Barbados but, Mr. Speaker, Sir...

Aside.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: No, the fishing harbour has done other things. You must know whereof you speak. If you go down to the Bridgetown Port now and go through the South gate, where taxis are parked now, if you the edge and look over you are going to see that a 'cent beach has formed there as well, Sir.

Miami beach was a God made thing which was the fall-out of a man-made disaster courtesy of the Democratic Labour Party in an earlier administration. You will remember that the Democratic Labour Party was trying to put a coast guard facility there. That site, Mr. Speaker, Sir, does not enjoy a good record. They do not have good fortune when it comes to these massive development projects. It is like the crematorium that Rameses Caddle was building up in Warrens, millions of dollars, digging going all down to Australia, Sir, and we never saw one stone above ground. The whole idea of a crematorium is that it would obviate the need for graves but the biggest grave and the deepest grave ever built in Barbados was built by the Democratic Labour Party at Warrens.

A Barbados Labour Party administration came afterwards and built a polyclinic on that grave now known as the Warrens Polyclinic. They are not good at that, Sir. All of the unfinished monuments of the 1990s...

Mr. SPEAKER: Please, please.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: We are talking about development, Sir, all of the unfinished monuments of the late 1980s and 1990s.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, out there in the world, the decade of the nineteen eighties is referred to now as the lost decade. There is some truth to that as far as Barbados is concerned. Well, I have to say that an arch was built in Bridgetown. I have to acknowledge that, Sir, but there is not a great deal more that we can look at.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, what I would like to get across to Honourable Members and to Barbadians generally is the potential for economic expansion in Barbados. I know that there are some Members on the other side who are terrified of the potential of this legislation. They are terrified because they know that this has the potential to create thousands of jobs, the construction that is going to flow from this. Mr. Speaker, Sir, the Government has prepared a priority list of projects some of which will fall under this special development which we think can either get underway, continue or come to completion within the next 6 to 18 months. I repeat that, Mr. Speaker, Sir, projects which we believe can either get under way, continue a actually come to fruition within the next 18 months and some of them are exclusively private sector, some of them are exclusively public sector and some of them are collaborative ventures between the public and the private sector.

There is the Barbados Synagogue Restoration Project which is partly private and partly public sector. The synagogue there, I do not think Barbadians have any appreciation of what a big calling card that is, far tourism. It is the second oldest synagogue in the Western

Hemisphere. In other words there is no Jewish synagogue in Canada, in the whole of the United States, in the whole of Central America, in the whole of Latin America that is older than our synagogue. The only synagogue that is older than ours is to be found in Curacao.

There was a time when there was a quite sizeable Jewish community here. Swan Street used to be known as Jew Street. Synagogue Lane is called Synagogue Lane because of the Synagogue and the Rabbi's House. The house at the corner there by the tamarind tree, that was the old Rabbi's house. He used to live upstairs and run a school downstairs. The whole restoration of the burial ground there is something that still has to be completed and we believe that this legislation, with its incentives, will allow for even more rapid completion of that project.

The redevelopment of the Cheapside market. Everybody in Barbados knows that that is going to start before the end of this year and that that is an entirely public sector – in other words, Government – project which is going to be completed within the next 18-month period. It is being financed by the Chinese.

Let me use the opportunity to say, Sir, that the Government has already identified what we think is really quite superior accommodation for the relocation of the crafts people at the Temple Yard. Already Barbadians have seen that we have moved most of the vendors off the fore court of the Cheapside Market getting ready for the refurbishment and the reconsauction.

11.30 a.m.

We are going to put in a mezzanine floor where a lot of craft people will be able to do their business. People pass the market but they do not understand about the Cheapside Market and they do not understand about the romance of the City of Bridgetown. Long before there was a food court anywhere in North America, where every mall has a food court, there was a food court in the Bridgetown Cheapside Market for the last 50 years. Go in and see it. There are palm trees growing up. There is an open area to the sky and it is surrounded by canteens and other eating establishments and we plan to retain that central food court concept at the Cheapside Market, putting down nice paving and putting down nice tables and chairs so people can sit out there in the open air in restaurant style and enjoy a meal, a snack or a drink or whatever. It is proposed that beautiful new facilities will be available. One part of the market will be designated for fruit and vegetables and another refrigerated and other facilities designated for meats, fish and poultry. As I said, we are going to put a craft component in that market and other things as well. So that it is hoped that the Cheapside Market will be done and as soon as that is finished, of course, we will then start work on the Fairchild Street Market. Two very important markets and two of the most beautiful covered markets in the Caribbean we will hope by the year 2000 will be situated at one end of Bridgetown and at the other end as well, where all kinds of vending business can be undertaken. This is again another opportunity for small black entrepreneurs in Barbados to get a chance to carve out their piece of the pie. Something is wrong that in 1996 in the City of Bridgetown, our capital city, that people can be in the sun and the rain on the pavement at the side of the road with all of the nasty water with the cucumbers and the tomatoes. That too will be a thing of the past It will be like any farmers market anywhere else in the wald where you can go in and where people are comfortable and where they are cool and under cover, where they have decent facilities and amenities available to them.

The restoration of the Town Hall and the landscaping of the Jubilee Gardens and its immediate environs, Mr. Speaker, I have spoken to that already. It is believed that too will be one of the major projects, in fact, that is the one we want to begin with that can take place during the next 6 to 18 months. I have already spoken about that

The redevelopment of Pelican Village – the Barbados Industrial Development Corporation has already in place a proposal for the complete rebuilding of the Pelican Village. That is going to become a craft village again like when it was new. That is going to restore the art gallery there which is very important. The Broodhagens, father and son, Virgil and Karl, exhibition – I was there on Sunday evening to their latest exhibition. It is wonderful work and I recommend it to all Barbadians. But it is proposed not only to rebuild the Pelican Complex but to expand it as well. It is the first port of call, so to speak, for cruise ship passengers and it is really very run down. Not much has been done in the past 25 years in terms of preventive maintenance to keep it in a certain way. It has really outgrown that concept and that too is something that is about to get underway.

The restoration of the Empire Theatre is very important indeed. I do not want to say too much about it because I know that the Minister of Culture wants to speak to this. The rehabilitation of the Princess Alice Bus Terminal and its immediate environs is very important. Those of you who know, the Post Office is another project put in place by an earlier Barbados Labour Party Administration. Those who know the minibus stand there and remembering that there used to be an even larger portion of land east of Pelican Village, all of that is going to be restructured by the Ministry of Public Works for an extended bus stand and a bus stand with more amenities. The infrastructural and other improvements to the Princess Alice Highway to Hinck Street to Broad Street and the Wharf Road - these are all public infrastructural works that have to be done.

It is very important, Mr. Speaker, that the point be made here that the entire re-organization of the traffic and road system in Bridgetown and in Speightstown as well and in St. Lawrence in due course and other places beside that process will begin. In fact, I picked up my newspaper and saw on the front page that the outer ring road is to start construction at a very soon date. Now people have heard me say that it is proposed to pedestradize Broad Street and there are some people who do not like the idea of it. But I think that is because they do not quite understand how we mean to do it. Broad Street's traffic now runs west to east up Broad Street. What we are proposing is that traffic runs north to south crossing Broad Street in three places and that in the intervening spaces we would then pave beautifully and put in full grown trees, nice: seating, nice signage, nice lighting and in fact the whole lighting process is going to start well before the end of this year. I would hope, Mr. Speaker, Sir, that I will be able to invite the Prime Minister to switch on some lights. I sincerely hope so before the end of this year and therefore the traffic would actually be crossing Broad Street but moving north to south rather than west to east as we know it.

Mr. Speaker, the Wharf. The Wharf in Barbados was built many, many years ago long before our time with green heart and purple heart pilings out of Guyana and the truth is that the Wharf is sinking very slowly. The reason why the Swing Bridge stopped swinging is because the north face of the Wharf sank to the point where it put the mechanism for making the bridge swing out of sync and of course it is now rusted beyond repair. It is part of the Government's plan that we will have a swing bridge again. But as good fortune will have it the Wharf has announced to us of its own volition now that we have to treat it as an emergency. A few weeks ago quite a sizeable portion of Cavans Lane caved in and I do not mean any pun there. We have seen in recent years from time to time as we drive along the Wharf Road we will see that repairs are going on there. What is going on is that the Wharf was dropping into holes literally and the outer careenage and the inner careenage are in dire need of drudging. So that these are public works which have to be undertaken. They are complementary to the whole development. Happily, Mr. Speaker, we have put almost all of the utility infrastructure into place. It will be remembered in an earlier Barbados Labour Party Administration that we sewered the whole of Bridgetown and over the past year we have seen the fiber-optic cable going in. Well, Bridgetown is ready for new clothes so to speak.

Mr. Speaker, Speightstown is one of the designated special areas and we have to start with some areas. You cannot designate all from the beginning and we started with these four. At Speightstown, I have spoken of the proposals that the Barbados National Bank has for the restoration of Arlington House and the resiting of its branch there. That is a public sector project which we hope to see come to completion within the next 6 to 18 months as well.

11.40 a.m.

The construction of a dual purpose jetty and related infrastructural improvements to Queen Street and to the Esplanade at Speightstown and the existing fishing facility, that too is a public and private sector project which is getting underway. The Government has already agreed to the building of a new jetty there at Speightstown. We are hoping that small pleasure craft, some of the smaller cruise ships and that water conducted tours, in other words, some of the cruise passengers from the bigger ships would move by sea from Bridgetown to Speightstown, getting off at that jetty, to go in and spend a morning or an afternoon or whatever in Speightstown and its environs.

All of that, Sir, is already approved development just waiting for the passage of this legislation to get underway, to get off the ground. In fact, in some instances we have not waited. The Port St. Charles Marina is an example of a project that it was felt could not wait, and there are many others beside which are underway because people felt they could not wait. It says a great deal for Barbados that Barbadians in particular, and some non-Barbadians, have such confidence in the economic recovery of this counhy that they feel they want to invest. There are people coming from other parts of the Caribbean, there are people coming from as far afield as Jamaica, people coming from Belize, breaking down the Minister of Finance's door, breaking down my door, "We want to invest in Barbados". One man came here to see me in this Parliament last year. He said: "I have not seen it, I have only heard about the Bridgetown waterfront, and we want to invest." There are Barbadian consortia who want to invest. Big people, middle sized people and I am happy to say small people as well. I go back to those Baxters Road operators and I go back to the Speightstown Businessmen's Association. They are listening to this debate and I have explained the Bill to them. They know what the potential is, they know what can become available to them and they are ready to take off as soon as we get this legislation past this Parliament.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, there are infrastructural works too at the St. Lawrence Gap, the upgrading of the facilities at Dover playing field in particular, and that is a public sector project which is one of the early steps we feel we can take and bring to completion within the next 6 to 18 months.

I have made reference already in this debate to the plans the Government has for the expansion and the refurbishment of the Hilton Hotel, the Carlisle Bay Redevelopment Project. The thing with Bridgetown, Sir, is that it is so large a concept, the whole Carlisle Bay and Bridgetown, the inner Careenage is a development area

in itself. The outer Careenage is another development area. All around the Pierhead and going up to Bay Street, you come back inward, as we have been saying, to Roebuck Street and to Pinfold Street and to Tudor Street. These are areas which used to be vital 50 years ago and we have to put them back on a good economic footing so that when we enter the 21st century Bridgetown can be a proud capital city once again.

Mr. Speaker, I made a little reference earlier to the Tourism Development Programme. The Tourism Development Programme is a sizeable programme that, with the assistance of the Inter-American Development Bank, the Government will undertake and it has three sub-programmes. Sub-programme A deals with cruise tourism, boating tourism, it deals with the small hotel sector and it deals with institutional strengthening in the Ministry of Tourism itself. Sub-programme C deals with heritage tourism, and I have made some reference to that, it deals with Graeme Hall Swamp as a particular project, and it deals with nature-based or eco-tourism generally speaking. But it is Sub-programme B, the Urban Renewal Programme – Bridgetown, Speightstown and St. Lawrence – that this Government has so much confidence in, that this Government is so committed to, that we have said to the Inter-American Development Bank we really cannot wait upon their bureaucratic process. There is an urgency about this. The Barbados Labour Party has been speaking to it as far back as its Manifesto of 1986, renewed in the Manifesto of 1994, and the Minister of Finance has agreed that funding for the execution of the Tourism Development Programme will come from a number of sources other than the Inter-American Development Bank. The Government of Barbados itself, as I have just described, has a lot of infrastructural work to do in the regard of these and other special development areas which will come into being, and the Caribbean Development Bank has shown a wonderful interest in many aspects of the Tourism Development Programme, the feasibility studies some of which are supposed to be funded by the Caribbean Development Bank, and as I have been saying, Sir, there are local, national, regional and international private sector operations and investors, developers, who by way of loan financing, by equity investment in this country, and joint ventures, some quite innovative proposals for joint and other collaborative ventures between the public and the private sector are being put to the Government and all sorts of expressions of interest in this regard have been made to us.

Mr. Speaker, the special development areas hold tremendous interest for Barbadians generally speaking. This legislation is coming to this House at a very important time. It is coming to this House at a time when the Government is best placed to be a regulator and an enabler providing money to pay for various studies and to arrange this package of incentives so that various private sector interests might invest in new areas. I am saying that the time is propitious, because at this time, and I am not quoting me now, Sir, I am not even quoting the Minister of Finance, I am quoting the Central Bank of Barbados. The Central Bank in its most recent report is telling us that during the first six months of this year the Barbados economy has continued to register growth. For the first half of 1996 the Central Bank has reported that real GDP growth was provisionally estimated at 5.9%, compared to 1% in the first half of 1995, a year ago. At the end of June this year, Sir, the Central Bank Report tells us that the net international reserves of the Central Bank were some $501.3 million, that is $160.7 million higher than they were at this same time last year.

Aside.

Hon. Miss B.A. MILLER: I beg your pardon, Sir, the Minister of Finance has corrected me – than at the end of December 1995, less than a year ago. According to the Bank, this was due largely to increased tourism expenditure and sugar inflows and a slowdown in retained imports. The Central Bank, Sir, has also reported that non-sugar agriculture output increased by 3%. I remember in 1986 non-sugar was booming in this country and then, like so many other things, it took a downward turn.

11.50 am.

So it is particularly pleasing for this Administration that non-sugar agriculture would show for the second straight year in a row increased output and that sugar production is up significantly. We were able to export $70 million worth of sugar. Last year it was $55 million. This is a significant improvement. That is why I am saying, Sir, that this is a propitious time for take off of the kind of development that I have been discussing here and the kind of development that we contemplated by this special development areas legislation. We are talking about sustained development, not stopping and starting ad hoc and unfinished projects.

We are talking about planned development that will come to good resolution and that will come to fruition, that will provide – I leave the Charity Tax Relief to the Minister of Finance to speak to – but this is development Sir, which is going to create jobs and employment which is going to call for new and improved skills in Barbados in the short term while it is actually under construction. These various development projects are going to create long-term, permanent, new jobs and employment for Barbadians.

Mr. Speaker, the Central Bank went on to say in its report, it is not me, it is not the Minister of Finance, this is the Central Bank of Barbados saying in its most recent report that the value added in the tourism sector was estimated to have grown by 5.8% in the first half of

1996 compared to a slight decline in that same 6-month period 1995 last year. Tourist amvals have risen by 7.2% between January and April, showing exceptional growth, I am pleased to say, in the United Kingdom market. Mr. Speaker, I believe I have made this point before, but it can bear repeating. The United Kingdom has now overtaken the United States as our major market and continues even so to be our fastest growing market. This is good news.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, I am suggesting that this legislation could not have come before this Parliament at a better time than now. Barbados, Sir, is really ready for take off in a big way. The major objectives behind the bringing of this legislation, as you would have gathered from all that I have said, are meant to encourage economic expansion, sustainable growth and to enhance employment opportunities. It is meant to support the regeneration and the development of designated areas and these are only some. This is only the beginning. Other areas will be designated special development areas.

If we go back to Schedule 2, as I rehearsed it earlier, we will see that it was really the broadest possible spectrum moving from tourism to agriculture, to water-based activities, to art and culture and heritage. What we want to do is to provide by this legislation special incentives and we want to be able to attract private sector investment. What we are saying, Mr. Speaker, is that these development areas will be private sector driven and, like all modern thriving governments in the world, this Government sees itself as a regulator and as an enabler. There are basic infrastructural works that we have to do and most of them are going to be getting underway in the next 6-18 months.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, I look around this House and apart from the Honourable Member for Christ Church West and, to a lesser extent, the Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central, I remember graphically 1977 and 1978 in Barbados when the economy heated up so that we had to import workers. We had to import workers into this Barbados. We imported workers to do construction work in Barbados. We couldn't train them fast enough in skill training programmes. We had to import workers for not only sugar agriculture but non-sugar agriculture as well.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, I have every reason to believe – the Minister of Finance will tell me if I am wrong – that this Barbados economy is going to heat up again in 1997 and 1998 and in 1999 and into the year 2000 in a way that we saw happen in those years. Those were the years when they said that we couldn't build 10 schools in one 5-year plan, when they said that we couldn't build 7 polyclinics in one 5-year plan, that we couldn't build the General Post Office and at the same time build a new bus terminal and a host of other things besides. But they have always been doubting Thomases on that side, Sir.

In the late 1950s and before the days when you could look for loan financing from the Inter-American Development Bank and other such banks and institutions, when we were only depending on sugar alone in the late 1950s, they said that in one 5-year plan we could not build an airport, that we couldn't build a seaport, that we couldn't build the Pine Housing Estate, that we couldn't build the Queen Elizabeth Hospital. Many of those things and many more besides were done. So this kind of developmental thrust is nothing new to a Barbados Labour Party Administration and I am pleased and proud that I can again be a part of such an administration to make my little contribution.

As the Honourable Member for St. Andrew said just a few weeks ago we were having a general conversation and he said "you know, my real ambition in life is just to make my little contribution to my little community." And that is how I feel too, because generally speaking – the Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central may scoff. There is nothing in Barbados that we can point to and say that this is his contribution, that he brought it about – I believe Sir, that most of us, if not all of us, are motivated to come into this Honourable Chamber so that we can somehow find a way in which we can make a contribution to our little community. I am happy, Sir, that I am able to make a contribution to my little community, not only in Bridgetown, which I have the honour to represent, but even the wider Barbados.
12.00 noon.

The Honourable Member for St. Lucy wants to make a contribution in his little community too. He wants an airport in St. Lucy, and he is right to have big plans and big dreams. If you do not have large dreams, Mr. Speaker, Sir, you are not going to have big plans to flow from them. It all starts from an idea.

Some people may scoff at the idea of an airport in St. Lucy at this time, but...

Asides.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: I see other Honourable Members on the other side are laughing, but the Honourable Member for St. Lucy is not amused. If that comes to fruition one day, a lot of people are going to have to eat their laughs and eat their words.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, what I am saying is that this legislation can be embraced by all Barbadians irrespective of age, gender, religion, creed, ethnic background, whatever. Any and every Barbadian can find a small niche in this to help take Barbados forward, and that is what it is about, Sir.

There was a time when Barbados was, on this side of the Atlantic, they said the rarest and richest jewel in the crown. Barbados was the centre of sophisticated, thriving, and prosperous communities. In those days, Mr. Speaker, Sir, and I am talking about 200/300 years ago, black Barbadians had a particular place but that too is behind us. We are about to embark upon a new millennium. Just try to think back a thousand years. Can you imagine what it would have been like in 1066? The Honourable Member for St. Philip South likes to talk about 1066. None of us...

Asides.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: That is perfectly true. It is his mind set. His mind set is in a millennium ago.

Nobody today can truly imagine, despite the help of volumes of books, despite the help of films and historic theses, Mr. Speaker, Sir, what life must have been like a thousand years ago.

This is an historic time in which we are living. We are about to embark on a new millennium. We would want, Mr. Speaker, Sir, that Barbados as it moves into the 21st century would be a Barbados where we would have left so much that is undesirable behind us. We would have left colonial status behind us. I would like to hope that by that time Barbados would be a Republic and we would have left that part of our history behind us as well. I honestly have to tell you, Mr. Speaker, Sir, that I really have a lot of difficulty with the idea that we would be going into the 21st century with a Queen of Barbados who is not a Barbadian. I really would have a lot of difficulty with that.

Asides.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: No, no, the NDP is late with that. When I was trying to inscribe that in a Barbados Labour Party Manifesto in 1981, the NDP was never born or heard of in those days.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, there is so much that we would have left behind us. Barracks, dirt floors, unpaved roads, these are the things that we can safely leave behind to die with the 20th century.

You are not, Mr. Speaker, going to find that we are going to wake up on the first morning, those of us who live to see it, God's willing we all will, in the year 2000 and suddenly Barbados is going to look different. The planning has to be now. In fact the planning should have been 10 years ago, and that is why I am proud to recall the 1986 Manifesto of the Barbados Labour Party. We are, in fact, past the planning stage. This is the beginning of implementation. These are the tools of implementation that I am describing here. In the year 2000 these will all be accomplished, and we can then lend our energies to other areas of accomplishment that we would like to see come to pass in Barbados.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, I do not know that there is a great deal more that I would wish to say at this time.

I commend this legislation and I am proud to ask that this Bill be now read a second time.

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

SUSPENSION OF SITTING

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Mr. Speaker, Sir, in view of the hour I beg to move that this Sitting be now suspended until 1.15 p.m. this afternoon.

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

The question that the Sitting be suspended until 1.15 p.m. was put and resolved in the affirmative without division and Mr. SPEAKER suspended the Sitting accordingly.

12.09 p.m.

RESUMPTION

Mr. SPEAKER: This Sitting is resumed. The Honourable Member for St. John.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I hope not to be as long as the Honourable Member for the City. Perhaps I should start this particular response by the Opposition by pointing out very quickly, and before my introduction, that all of the powers which the Special Development Areas legislation gives to the Minister of Finance in Barbados are powers which he already possesses under other pieces of legislation. I think, perhaps, not only is the Honourable Member for the City wrong to have advised the many people who have been waiting with bated breath for this legislation that they could not proceed without this legislation, but I think that from the outset we have to be ...

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: On a point of order, Sir. I really do not like to interrupt but we have to begin as we mean to continue. I made it clear in my presentation that there are some people, and I quoted the Fort St. Charles Marina in particular, who have gone ahead with development.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Mr. Speaker, dithering on the part of this Government in having this matter languishing on the Order Paper for an extended period, dithering in the Ministry of Finance by not granting all

of the concessions which the Honourable Member says are necessary for these projects to go ahead, and which the Minister of Finance already has power to grant under existing legislation, has led us to a situation where we are having a debate today and I am not even sure, when one thinks about it, what this debate is about. What is it about this initiative that places it so uniquely that new legislation is required and that all of the very verbose contributions of the Honourable Member for the City have delayed the members of this House and perhaps even the viewing public for such an extended period of time?

This Government, Mr. Speaker, came to office, and has reiterated the point constantly, that it was not going to be a big project Government. The Honourable Member for St. Peter made it very clear that he was not going to be the kind of Minister of Finance who was going to have a lot of big showy public projects which are monuments to the ego of Ministers, that what his Government would be doing in Barbados would be solving the little problems that affect the public, the little things that irk citizens as they go about their daily lives in Barbados and solve the little problems such as to make their lives more comfortable and bearable.

The Government started to boast about a programme where they would set up a development commission and they would start to install street lights all over Barbados as a priority, where drainage would be a priority, tenantry roads would be a priority, water mains, maintenance of buildings, debushing, repairs to public housing units, all of those little niggling concerns which the Honourable Members on that side said would be given priority in a new Barbados under the September 6, 1994 dispensation.

The other pledge they made was they would place priority on removing inequitable burdens on the people of Barbados, land taxes, high energy costs, high taxation generally, high water rates and high duties. That was one of the priorities which this Government said it would be looking at.

The Government also made a promise that it would be relieving the poor of the burden of the many pressures placed on them by the previous administration and that its focus would be to look after their small individual needs in communities in Barbados.

Its platform - we know how difficult it is whenever we say this - was a platform to create 30 000 jobs in Barbados, to empower Barbadians, to fast track the development of small business in this country and to translate the hopes and aspirations of the young into positive development in their lives. That was what their platform in Barbados was about.

Mr. Speaker, some people ask the question on a daily basis, how quickly has this Government been highjacked and derailed by certain interests in Barbados. Perhaps, the Honourable Member for the City more than anybody else represents those interests and that is why the Honourable Member for St. Peter deferred to his Deputy in relation to the introduction of this Bill. Perhaps, the discomfort of any Minister of Finance with legislation of this sort is something which may have made the Minister of Finance a bit reticent about introducing the legislation and which so quickly would have propelled his Deputy into the position of introducing this legislation today. Or, perhaps, this is just the Deputy's way of dictating the pace. That sounds more like it because she has already indicated not only will this Bill be passed but she has indicated what else will be listed in it based on her consultations and she has arrogated to herself the responsibility of administering the programme of the Barbados Labour Party in relation to these kinds of developments.

Well, if I were in her position I suppose I would adopt the same stance, Mr. Speaker, because she indicated to the public quite clearly that her leader gave her the City a few weeks ago, or a few years ago, he called her on the telephone and told her that the City was hers to do what she wished with it, and she is now indicating to him what she wishes done with it. I assume that compliant as he is in most of these things, he will accept the dictates of his loyal Deputy.

Mr. Speaker, every day we hear the empty rhetoric of this Government. We hear them saying that they have developed a Drainage Unit. They announce these public relations initiatives. A Drainage Unit - that is supposed to be a big initiative - which will put flooding behind us forever. When the Honourable Prime Minister announced it he said he was putting things like that behind us forever. Once we started this Drainage Unit going there would be no flooding in Barbados! They established a Rural Development Commission which was to solve all the problems of rural development and put those behind us forever and, Mr. Speaker, you and I heard, we were not at the same place at the same time but we would have heard only this weekend the Honourable Member for St. Peter announce an Urban Development Commission which would put all the niggling concerns of urban dwellers behind us forever. He said he would create a new management team at the Hospital which, when it was announced, was to put all the problems of the Hospital behind us forever. They were putting in place a new water management system for Barbados which would see the problems of scarce water during the dry months brought to an abrupt halt and water scarcity would be put behind us forever.

Mr. Speaker, I listened to all of those things because I always say that if it were true that there was just one man who could do those things I make the assumption that

Mr. Speaker, I listened to all of those things because I always say that if it were true that there was just one man who could do those things I make the assumption that the people who are now gathering in San Diego and will be gathering in other parts of the United States to hear the most powerful men in the world speaking over the next few days, would have summoned him to those places to tell them how to put all of those problems behind them forever. These public relations gimmicks, Mr. Speaker, Sir, mean very little to the Democratic Labour Party because our interest is not in fooling people and not in glamourising very small initiatives which at the end of the day produce very little in terms of transforming this economy and helping instil confidence and pride in the citizens who wait on the street corners every day or who eke out a living on the city streets in Barbados. Mr. Speaker, Sir, our job is to face reality, that is what the exercise between 1991 and 1994 was all about.

1.30 p.m.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, many may not have been listening to the Government carefully on these matters but that empty rhetoric has not been short in supply over the past two years. Mr. Speaker, added to that empty rhetoric was the very long peroration which we had in here today from the Honourable Member for the City in which, yes we are quite impressed with her knowledge of Barbados from prehistoric times right up to the present but, Mr. Speaker, Sir, in terms of transformation in this country there are some very serious questions that we are going to have to ask during the course of this debate.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, I always worry when I have to come to this House of Assembly every Tuesday to participate in an institution which has essentially become a special interest facilitator in this country. That is what this is about nowadays, Mr. Speaker, Sir, facilitating the desires of special interest groups in Barbados. If that is what our Parliament is now, the public has a right to determine whose interests are being served by those who bring initiatives to facilitate those special interests in this country. That is what this Parliament is about, that the people who have greatest influence in Barbados can have their supplications met by this Government very, very easily and this is not an institution that is any more out there defending the poor and rights of citizens. This is an institution which is becoming a brick wall to the aspirations of the people in this country and is imposing greater and greater oppression on our citizens. Mr. Speaker, Sir, that is why it is becoming less and less relevant to the lives of Barbadians and not withstanding the televising of these debates may become even more and more irrelevant to their lives.

So, Mr. Speaker, Sir, this Parliament is according the people of Barbados, the average citizen of this country, less power; not more power, as we move into the year 2000. We have heard all of this talk about the year 2000. You do not hear about dirt floors in Barbados anymore but we still hear about people sleeping on city streets and if that is not a dirt floor simply because it is paved or has some concrete on it I would like to know what it is, Mr. Speaker, Sir. We are fooling ourselves if we believe that the pockets of poverty have been eliminated in Barbados or will, at this rate, be entirely eliminated by the year 2000. This Parliament has placed as a priority, not those pockets of poverty; this Parliament has placed as a priority initiatives such as this and as an opposition we have constantly called for a more balanced approach to development in Barbados such that we can accommodate these kinds of initiatives but that these kinds of initiatives must also be seen as part of a total package to uplift the lives of all citizens and focus on those who are most disadvantaged in this country. That is what our position is in relation to matters such as this. What we are doing with these initiatives is reinforcing the exclusion of certain people from involvement and real power and that kind of thing in Barbados.

This special development area, by its very nature, speaks of exclusivity and what it also does, and as we get to the end of this debate we are going to demonstrate, it speaks very much to a concept of two Barbadoses, a concept in which a man who owns a property on Baxters Road should remain on Baxters Road meanwhile this legislation is not facilitating his movement from Baxters Road to Bay Street. The Minister was very clear in her introduction to say that this is not legislation to facilitate the relocation of existing businesses so this is not telling all the shopkeepers in Baxters Road that their operation should be Waterfront, Bay Street. No, no, it is telling them fix up your facade on Baxters Road, you stay in Baxters Road, we will send a little tram down Baxters Road.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order, order, please!

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Mr. Speaker, Sir, on a point of order. The Honourable Member is deliberately misleading this House. That is people's choice. Nobody told them what to do. I do not approach these people. They approached me. This is their choice.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Mr. Speaker, Sir, the role of a social engineer is to help people see the way forward. A man who is presently in Baxters Road can keep Baxters Road and also aspire to own and develop a property on Bay Street. If that is not what we are about in Barbados today, if all we are about is to tell people that their existing circumstances are sufficient, then we will never have an innovative and creative private sector in Barbados. Everybody will say, well what I have is good enough for me and Government is going to make what I have look pretty and send people to pass through it and look at it at night. What we are saying is that all of those lands on Bay Street, we have not heard a word from the Minister about whether some of those small businesses on Baxters

Road are going to get a look in on Bay Street. We are hearing, "oh yes we are going to make the markets very pretty and very nice for vegetables, and cold chicken here and when you go in you get your meat there and if you walk along you have a nice food court ambience" and so on. That means you have to bring people to them but the people who will be walking up and down on Bay Street in Barbados where the nucleus of tourists and other kinds of business people and economic activity is taking place.

We have not yet heard who is going to be getting the fish market. We have not heard who is going to be getting the Harbour Police Station and if I heard that some of those people in Baxters Road would get that I would feel that the Minister has really said something here, that I could give my full heart and soul in support of. We did not hear any of that, Mr. Speaker, Sir. We have not heard about the leases that are going to be entered into with people for extended periods for those beach front properties on Bay Street while at the same time this Government has the hypocrisy to talk about what is going on at the Port. Your job was to change all of that and if it is wrong it will also be our job to change it at some point in the future.

Now, Mr. Speaker, Sir, we also have in Barbados, and this Bill does not address that issue, a system of ownership and control and production which does not satisfy the needs of the broad masses of people and in which property relations and production in Barbados still benefit too few at the expense of too many. Where does this legislation seek to strike out in a new economic direction for this country in which more people are benefitting from the same economic resources which we are trying to cut up? Not a word about that. We heard all the fancy talk about dredging the Constitution River and the Swing Bridge and all of that How is that going to satisfy a young Barbadian coming back here with an MBA who could traipse up and down Broad Street in this country with all of his family title deeds and still not get a look in on Bay Street or in any of these so called special development areas for which all of this has been spoken? What is stopping him is the economic system which needs to be freed up and if the Honourable Member for the City does not understand what is stopping him I could bring a handful of those young people who can explain very clearly to her what is stopping them in Barbados.
1.40 p.m.

Aside.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order please. Honourable Members, please. The Honourable Member for the City, please. Continue please.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: This is such a non-contentious debate. That is all I am doing. It upsets some people whenever you just describe what is happening in Barbados and I am not blaming the Honourable Member for what exists right now. I am challenging her to change it. That is all I am doing. So do not fight me. If you agree with the change, then we can hold hands and change it.

Aside.

Mr. SPEAKER: Will the Honourable Member for the City please desist from shouting across the floor. Proceed.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: So this system, Mr. Speaker, is not designed to eliminate poverty and to empower people in Barbados. It is not designed to do either of those things. You have a labour environment in which the legislation which should change that environment has not seen the light of day yet in this Parliament even though it was supposed to be a priority. Unfair Dismissal legislation is secondary. All kinds of other legislation can come before that That is secondary and of little importance. Therefore, we place no value on the right to work in Barbados, that all of those who want to have jobs have them as well as what is more important, Mr. Speaker, is a work process which is democratic in which people who are toiling have an opportunity to have some say in the way the business is developing and progressing. So we do not have any effective working involvement and control and this Government does not have it on its agenda. Because one of the first orders of business it was supposed to do is this Unfair Dismissal Bill for which we were pilloried and criticized. It is not on the Order Paper now and we are almost at September 6, 1996.

Mr. SPEAKER: I am instructing that we stick as closely as we can today to the Bill before the House.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Right. This Bill is priority, Mr. Speaker, for this Government. I agree with you. This is what is the priority. That is why we have to stick to this, but I only wish that we were discussing some of those other things. But I will stick to your ruling. So I will stick to what we are discussing but the Government has forced me and you, Sir, and all of us to go down that scenario.

Mr. Speaker, this legislation is also legislation which tells Barbadians that the state in Barbados is in retreat. It is one of the long standing side shows in Barbados. It is not a divider really but people tell me now about the CPC Meeting. Every Government project that comes up somebody tells them - no, no, that one is for the private sector. Almost every project that comes up on the CPC agenda or EPC or whatever it is called they say that: "We are not proceeding with that. That is for the private sector to do. We are not dealing with that one. That is the private sector." This is an example of the state in retreat. Mr. Speaker, there is nobody on that side who can

contradict me on that because they would be contradicting themselves. Because they are the ones who constantly complain that every single one of the initiatives that they want to undertake is now being hijacked by the private sector with the complicity of certain elements in the Government., Mr. Speaker, I believe that it is very important that this legislation should have said something about change.

The Honourable Member made comment about black business on Baxter's Road and how this legislation will facilitate black business. The mere fact that the Honourable Member for the City had to say that, means that she well understands, Mr. Speaker, that in Barbados in 1996 that race still determines function in this society. In relation to matters of this sort, there still is a very gigantic task which must be undertaken in Barbados to have black businesses developing and growing and new black businesses emerging in this country as we move toward the 21st century. But all we got was the description of it. We never got past the platitudes and the rhetoric and I will use the Honourable Member's favourite words: "We never surmounted the shibboleths." That is all we got this morning with no depth of analysis about the relationship of this legislation to the path that must be paved for the development of new and emerging black business in Barbados and every facilitation that should be given to that black business is being withdrawn. Finance through the BDB – I am now hearing that if you are in Baxter's Road you can well stay there because the properties on Bay Street are not for the relocation of businesses. Those are only for new initiatives and we know who it is that can finance new initiatives in Barbados.

Mr. Speaker, we cannot turn a blind eye to the fact that Barbados does need foreign investment and the Democratic Labour Party has never been unmindful of that need. Technological transfer and people bringing foreign exchange into the country - anytime I see a very useful project which I think is going to advance the interest of Barbados, the Minister can expect a call from me because she is not working for me only. The Minister is working for all 260 000 citizens in Barbados. But I do not have any say at the end of the day, Mr. Speaker. If the Minister says that in a scale of 1 to 10 there are some persons who rank at number one in her design and she has others that rank at number 10 and she is going to advance those who rank at number 10, then it is for me to analyze whose interest the Minister is serving by promoting the initiatives of one group over another. That is all this exercise is about.

So, Mr. Speaker, in a grave sense, this Bill reinforces my view of some of the things. that are happening in Barbados today and reinforces the Democratic Labour Party's view. Because, without even saying much, this particular piece of legislation could find itself being openly and consistently discussed in Barbados on the call-in programmes and all other areas, on the streets of Barbados concerns which people have, Mr. Speaker, about whether their interests are being served by this administration. What is unfortunate about this administration is that though it never tells you whose interest it is serving, every act which it undertakes in Barbados is inimical to the interest of the average citizen of this country. Every act it undertakes places the interest of certain people ahead of others. This Government was able to tell us, for example, what concessions in relation to taxation via the VAT legislation it would give to the hotel sector before it could even tell us what concessions it would give to pensioners, indigents and persons who would need the benefit of some kind of protection from Government. This Government is telling us, by the legislation which we have in here today, not on Baxter's Road because all the talk we have heard from the Minister today, Mr. Speaker, and when I look at the First Schedule, Baxter's Road is nowhere in there.

I want to let the shop owners in Baxter's Road know that if they were a priority for the Minister of Tourism, if they were a priority to their constituency representative, they would be listed in Items 1 to 4.

1.50 p.m.

Mr. Speaker, what is listed there is as follows: Carlisle Bay Redevelopment Area, Speightstown in St. Peter, St. Lawrence Gap and the Scotland District. And yet we had a long song and dance about Baxters Road. By the stroke of a pen Baxters Road could have been inserted in here before we debated this Bill. It could be done today, but all we are hearing is the Minister is going to recommend to the Prime Minister that he adds Baxters Road, because the Honourable Member has determined that a lot of people are waiting in Baxters Road for this legislation to be passed. By the stroke of a pen every single concession which this Bill gives, the Minister of Finance could give tomorrow without this legislation, and yet people in Baxters Road are being fooled by somebody, I do not know who, that they have to wait on this legislation. If they continue to believe that, they will also be fooled drat Baxters Road is going to be included somewhere in here. Until I see evidence to the contrary, Mr. Speaker, Sir, I have no reason to believe that anybody could be serious about advancing the interest of the people of Baxters Road and the shopkeepers in passing legislation which requires two words "Baxters Road" to be inserted and that has not been done. It was never within the Government's reckoning. That came as a result of the Democratic Labour Party's criticism of this legislation as advancing certain interests in this country, and all of a sudden as a panacea to placate, as an afterthought, we had a big song and dance about how Baxters Road would eventually be added to this list. I am ready to add it now, Mr. Speaker, and if the Honourable Member wishes to amend the Bill in

Committee I would be very happy to put in Baxters Road and a number of other areas in Barbados which deserve the same kind of concessions which this legislation is offering.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: On a point of order, Sir. I don't want the Honourable Member for St. John to touch it, he is the kiss of death to development plans. Do not touch Baxters Road. Please.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: I believe that kisses are obviously on the Honourable Member's mind, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. SPEAKER: And do you think the Honourable Member is thinking of you?

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: They are not on mine, though. That is the problem, Mr. Speaker, kisses were not on my mind, but I suppose I will have to shift my position. I was thinking of the need for Baxters Road to be included if the Government is being sincere and honest in relation to this House of Assembly. There is no need for us to be diverted by other things. I am ready to help the Government of Barbados get back on track and start to help the people of Barbados who most need the help. So if legislation is brought here and it is not going to include those areas, then I will join with the Honourable Members on that side who want to see certain interests being represented by helping them to get those interests designated here. That is what this House is about.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, let us make it very clear. We are not opposed to development, we are not opposed to tax concessions. Goodness knows, as Minister of Finance I gave tax concessions to a wide variety of Barbadians, particularly in our difficult economic times, to farmers, the duty free sector in Barbados, Westmoreland Golf Course which I came and found and for which I gave additional concessions, not even as generous as these, and I will get to that, concessions for a golf course in Christ Church, but in relation to each of those initiatives the advantage which I had over the present Minister of Finance and the advantage which I have over the Honourable Member for the City is that the investors were not faceless people. They had an entire project proposal for which they could not hide behind legislation and quietly apply to a Minister and weeks after the approval is given it is gazetted, they had to come up front to the Ministry of Finance, they had to put a proposal on the cards and there was such bitter criticism of each of the initiatives by the Barbados Labour Party... Do you know why, Mr. Speaker, Sir? Because none of those arrangements was ever a secret. Everybody knew that there was going to be a golf course development in Christ Church and everybody had an input on it. Some criticised it, some praised it. The Honourable Member for the City criticised her own colleagues for being involved in such an initiative. It was a very bitter time for the Barbados Labour Party.

Westmoreland, Mr. Speaker. All of those were projects, you can safely go now...

Aside.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Nobody has ever given any concessions to K Mart If you go to Westmoreland now you will see the project, you will see the Barbadians we said would be employed. If you go to Heywoods today you will see exactly the number, if not more, of the people I said would be employed at Heywoods and you will find that Barbadians, including the workers, now have a stake in that enterprise. If you go to the Cement Plant, as a result not only of its sale but certain concessions which were given to it, you will see the turnaround in the financial fortunes. It is not speculative, we did not put in place legislation so that you have a cover, an umbrella We looked carefully at each of the initiatives to see if they were consistent with Government's objectives and we approved the concessions on that basis.

Mr. Speaker, there are a lot. of other anomalies in relation to concessions in Barbados. You had a debate on Friday on returning nationals, but there are other categories of Barbadians who deserve tax concessions for the activities which they undertake in this economy. Concessions on church organs, on flowers and on a whole range of other things. We are not against the concept of tax concessions and nobody should ever get that particular impression from us. In fact, the Democratic Labour Party pioneered successive pieces of legislation in Barbados which would help the tourism sector, the industrial sector, the international business companies, the offshore sector, all of those are sectors which have rested on concessions given by way of legislation in Barbados. Offshore banks, foreign sales corporations and a whole range of other pieces of legislation.

As an addendum to that, Mr. Speaker, no concessions were ever given to any K Mart. There is no Minister of Finance in Barbados who in 1994 could even conceive of giving concessions to something like K Mart, when a young black entrepreneur was building a $50 million building without a single concession in Haggatt Hall, St. Michael. There is no way that anybody could have considered giving concessions for the construction of any supermarket or any other development like that, Mr. Speaker.

Aside.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: In due course, time is longer than twine. You will get me back to that, but not now.

Mr. Speaker, we are also saying that we are not opposed to Government focussing on sectors of the economy and saying that in relation to those sectors

they should not be given some kind of fillip to boost production and investment. We are saying yes, we accept this has been a timeworn approach to economic development in Barbados and also if this legislation is seeking to guide and direct development in certain sectors in a swift and focussed regime of Government support, we would not be opposed to it. But what we are seeing is something entirely different.

I want to make the point, Mr. Speaker. This is not a coalition Government and therefore it is immaterial in this House whether the Opposition agrees with what the Government does. The Government always seems to be overly concerned about whether we agree with what they are doing, and there seems to be a number of other people outside of this Chamber who are equally as concerned. Our job is to get the best for Barbados and to put forward viewpoints which seek to ensure that the Government in undertaking its initiatives is focussed on those interests in the society which need. the greatest protection and promotion. That is what it is about.

2.00 p.m.

Mr. Speaker, in relation to this Bill, the overall concept of special development areas and tax concessions is not what we are opposing. We are saying more than that, this Bill is about Barbados Labour Party politics. That is what it is essentially about. If you look at the location of the special development areas you will come to a very quick understanding about what this legislation is about. This is no altruistic piece of legislation. This is not even "a pie in the sky" as the promises by people like the Honourable Member for St. George South of putting a city in St. George. That was an altruistic promise made, I assume, to advance the interest of the people of St. George South or North as a whole.

This piece of legislation is about Barbados Labour Party politics and nothing more than that, choosing areas very carefully for the kinds of rewards which the Government expects it would receive from undiluted patronage. And in a sense, patronage like that which I have never witnessed before because the kind of concessions which are given by this legislation makes the concessions which we gave Westmoreland pale into insignificance. So Mr. Speaker, Sir, when you hear all of the talk, this is more about Barbados Labour Party politics than anything else.

Secondly, Mr. Speaker, this legislation is about the expansion of the existing private sector in Barbados. It is not legislation which is to redefine the private sector to bring new interest into the private sector, meaning new kinds of businesses, people who have been dislocated in Barbados for one reason or the other, young businessmen who want new opportunities. That is not what this Bill speaks to.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, what this legislation should be focusing on is redefining the private sector in Barbados such as to have new players and new entrants in the ownership and control of wealth in this country. This is to expand the existing private sector. There is not a single initiative which the Honourable Member for the City can talk about today which will tell you of any brand new private sector enterprise which is going to result from this legislation and will not redound to the benefit of the existing moguls or the existing Big Seven or the existing financial institutions in this country. Not one single initiative.

I will also show you how it is also not true to say, as some of the Government's propaganda columnists are saying, that this is an opportunity for credit unions to invest. I will show you, Mr. Speaker, why this legislation almost by its design excludes the involvement of credit unions.

Thirdly, this legislation is to give relief to big business in areas where poor Barbadians are being hounded by Government. This is giving tax relief in areas where the average citizen in this country is being pilloried and hounded by Government on a daily basis.

Fourthly, Mr. Speaker, Sir, this legislation is about too many sacrificing too much for too few. That is how we can characterise this legislation. It is about the retreat of the State in Barbados and about the State folding its arms and leaving this society to the complete whim and fancy of private investment in these areas.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, it is about rewards for the party in Barbados. That is what the legislation is also about. Mr Speaker, Sir, it is about giving concessions to people who have already been identified to purchase choice Government property. I am saying that the Government has already identified the persons who it wants to purchase certain properties in Barbados and that this legislation is now coming as a cover for that kind of arrangement which has been put in place. So if you walk down Bay Street now there are certain people who can tell you that is mine already. Now all they are getting is icing on the cake, tax concessions and other benefits through this legislation.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, the Honourable Member for St. Michael East will deal with that. This legislation is also subversive of our environment and our land use pattern. It fails to take account of the very special needs of agriculture in Barbados. This legislation does not, with all the fancy talk about Scotland District, focus on the agricultural sector in the way that the agricultural sector in Barbados needs to be focussed on and assisted and given a major push. This legislation does very little about that. One phrase – agricultural based activities. It doesn't say anything to a person picking it up about the initiatives which Government wants to undertake in that sector.

Finally, this legislation is about making the international institutions happy. They are likely to put in place what they call a level playing field where the discretions of the Minister are reduced and where tax concessions are obtained; where business can be quickly facilitated so that a person coming to the Minister applies, somebody plants a stamp on the application, they go down to the Town Planner, get approval and they can start their business with tax concessions. Whereas Mr. Speaker, Sir, a person who is establishing a floriculture project in the valley of St. George or some other kind of agricultural based activity has to wait for months while the officials and the technocrats in the Ministry go through their applications to determine if they are suitable for these kinds of concessions or not. It doesn't provide any concessions whatsoever except for that very narrow band of persons who are characterised by falling within the Schedule 1 of this legislation.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, what is the positive aspect of this legislation, because we have to be evenhanded: What is positive about this legislation is that at last, 2 years after this Administration has been in office we are beginning to see some kind of effort towards the creation of jobs in Barbados. This is the first comprehensive initiative that one can point to, and even if you have reservations about it, if it wore to be given a much wider scope and if it were to provide even greater opportunities for more Barbadians you will be able to say with joy in your heart that it is going to have the potential of creating a large number of jobs in Barbados.

Based on what the Honourable Member for the City said, we can expect at least 60 000 jobs to be created as a result of this project because I am certain she would not wish to be as conservative as her leader and she never is. She wants to even get rid of the Queen and do a number of other things so I would think that she would wish to surpass him in his projections of 30 000 jobs and even double them and you could confidently expect that based on what she has said at least 60 000 jobs should be created in Barbados in the next couple of years.

So Mr. Speaker, Sir, what are the shortcomings of the legislation because that is what I am dealing with today? As I have said, the selection of those development areas is of great concern to the Opposition because there is a large number of other areas in this country for which the opportunity for development exists, in which development has neither been earmarked nor undertaken which would benefit substantially from this kind of legislative framework, fiscal incentives and other kinds of benefits.

2.10 p.m.

There is no legislation in this country which rewards generosity. There are some people in St. Thomas, Mr. Speaker, Sir, represented by the Honourable Member .or St. Thomas, in case he forgot, I am just trying to make the connection between St. Thomas and him, who took their own resources, according to the newspapers, and had to help fix a road in their constituency because Government had consistently ignored them.

Asides.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: The Honourable said that is nothing new and I would not be surprised if it was not anything new.

There is no legislation in this country which rewards that kind of generosity. There is no legislation and there are no fiscal incentives or other incentives yet in this country which say that when residents take those kinds of initiatives in their own hands that there is some benefit back to them. Why can't they get a capital write-off over 15 or 10 years or even 5 years when they take up their hard earned cash and seek to improve conditions around them? I think the Honourable Member for St. Thomas should concern himself with those matters. Trivia should not always be elevated, Mr. Speaker, Sir, in politics. How are we going to reward that kind of thing in the Barbadian society? How we are going to reward it where people work together for the common good of their community?

Mr. Speaker, Sir, there are other non-designated areas in this country in which citizens are working together and they get absolutely no benefits whatsoever through the fiscal system, through the development of infrastructure or anything like that. I can speak of many areas in rural Barbados where young people, for example, take the public baths and convert them. They are involved in beautifying areas in their community. They get a $50 plaque from some private sector body. People come and take a picture of them, and then 6 months later the hose starts to get a hole in it, the handle to the rake drops off, the shovel that they were using is mashed up and they can no longer maintain the facilities. There is no effort to reward that generosity in Barbados.

Those are not going to be designated as Special Development Areas, but I am saying that, in my view, some of those kinds of things often need to be placed at the top of the agenda in this country. If not you will find that citizens of goodwill in Barbados will feel that their only concern should be the house spot on which they live and they have no further responsibilities outside of that because the rest of Barbados does not concern them. We have already had too much of that. Thirty houses in a tenantry and every drop of land around them belongs to somebody else, except the house spot on which they live. Those are the kinds of Special Development Areas and economic initiatives which need to be undertaken in Barbados to advance the interest of the people of

this country. Those, taken together with legislation like this, would make me happy, but this legislation does not speak to any of that kind of thing. This legislation speaks to a preferred class of persons who will come to Barbados and will have received the fruits of efforts which they have not made.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, Barbadians living here will receive no fruits of efforts they have not made, with no guarantees on either side, because this legislation does not promote equity financing. This legislation does not say, 'Well look, where Government offers incentives to people to develop properties on Bay Street and in the virgin areas which Government previously owned, that the investment of citizens in those initiatives is going to get a tax write-off." It is not the equity investment that gets the tax write-off in this legislation, you know, it is loans. You have an equity investment, your dividends are going to be taxed by whatever is the appropriate rate.

What this legislation said is not that a person who invests will get benefits in the long term from the returns of that investment. What it says is, 'Where an investor makes a loan to an approved developer of any sum of money raised for the purpose of financing any improvement work during the development period, the amount of interest received by the investor in respect of that loan shall be exempt from income tax."

The effect of that section would even be that if I had a million dollars to invest in a project, I would lend my million dollars to myself as developer and benefit from the exemption of income tax instead of building the equity base of the business, or instead of encouraging the investor to go and seek equity financing from a broad-based group of citizens.

Now the Honourable Prime Minister was very generous in lending me a copy of the Jamaican legislation on this. I thought it was very useful. What they do is that they give you tax concessions or bond issues where those bond issues are raised for those kinds of development. This particular section needs urgent attention. I am sending out a warning to the Minister of Finance that this is not going to enhance the share owning groups in Barbados. It is not going to expand the number of people who own shares in companies; it is not going to expand the number of people who pool together to undertake investment in Barbados. This is going to encourage people who have already iden ed the money, including their own money, to lend themselves in other configurations as development companies to receive tax benefits. It is a form of subsidised lending.

It is also a method by which those persons who wish to hide all kinds of expenditures and costs and get the best possible return from all of their investments, not just those which are taking place in the Special Development Areas, could use the tax system to retrieve those kinds of benefits.

If the Government was really interested about changing economic relationships in Barbados, it would bring to this House legislation that would encourage companies which have received concessions of that sort to seek investors from the domestic market to become public companies listed on the Stock Exchange and to go to some of the non traditional sources for financing of attractive projects.

This is the same cold pudding warmed over. A man comes to Barbados with $2 million he is bringing from outside, he puts it in a bank here in Barbados, takes it up one day after he gets approval from the Government, he sets up another development company, lends himself the money and gets a tax write-off. I am not going to make credit unions or people who really want to invest and get a toehold in some of the prime commercial districts in the country get that toehold. In fact, the Government has not even said that that is its desire. What the Government has said is that if you are in Baxters Road, stay there.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, when you look at this legislation very clearly, on the first page under Section 2 (1). "Improvement work means the construction or improvement of a building or structure in a Special Development Area but does not include the relocation of an existing business to a Special Development Area."

So if the Honourable Member for Christ Church West Central wanted to move his pharmacy from whatever part of Christ Church it is in now, which is not a Special Development Area, and move it to St. Lawrence or Bay Street, nothing is in it for you. You could spend a life time investing. This Government is telling you "skipper you have to bring a new business into that area and that new business must conform to the Schedule of this legislation."

If you tell me that rewards people who have made a business contribution to Barbados, then I will need to have my head examined.

It does not relate to educational institutions, Mr. Speaker, Sir, arts and cultural investment would not. There would be no benefits whatsoever to those kinds of institutions.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, there are many short comings in this legislation. This legislation gives the Minister exceedingly wide powers. He can approve, prescribe, amend, increase, decrease, delete and impose conditions, and refuse applications, with little or no reference to Parliament. It is not subject to negative resolution. Under other legislation you can only waive some of those taxes by order. Mr.

Speaker, under this legislation, the only thing that the Minister needs to publish under clause 4(3) 'The approval of a person as an approved developer shall be published in the Official Gazette." We will never know what concessions were given. We will never know because the Minister is entitled to impose conditions within the purview of the legislation but when he is giving those concessions he does not have to give exactly the concessions which are set out in the Schedule. He can give some and not all. He has flexibility in relation to the matter.
2.20 pm.

He can prescribe a development period. He can amend the First Schedule and put in new development areas. He can amend the Second Schedule by adding thereto or deleting from, Mr. Speaker. All of this is by order but when it comes to the actual approval of the developer and matters of that sort, those are to be published in the Official Gazette.

I think that takes away from Parliament the right to have a greater say and control over the decision of Ministers. That is just my view and I believe that whatever conditions the Minister imposes on a particular development that those conditions should be notified to Parliament before the concessions are offered to that particular group or individual. I am saying the powers of the Minister are too wide and I urge the Government to reflect on that because although I believe that the adndnistration of the Act should be swift, I also believe that every care should be taken to ensure accountability for successive Ministers of Finance.

I am also saying that these concessions are exceedingly generous, even by my own standards, Mr. Speaker. Members on that side criticised the Democratic Labour Party bitterly for the concessions which were given to gclf course operators and others in Barbados. But, Mr. Speaker, if you look at the reply to Parliamentary Question No. 45 asked by the Honourable Member for St. Peter when he was then shadow Minister of Finance, you will see the List of concessions which the Democratic Labour Party granted to those golf course operators.

Mr. Speaker, there was no waiver of land tax. There was no wholesale waiver of property transfer tax. In fact, we just reduced the rate of property transfer tax to 5 per cent instead of 8 per cent. In this legislation if you look at the Schedule, you can see that land tax which pensioners are being pilloried into paying in this country is going to be waived in relation to the improved value of the land so you have a long list of Barbadians complaining on a daily basis about the Land Tax Department hounding them down and threatening to sell their properties which they own all their lives or as par of their inheritance and this Government, for the first time that I have seen, to my recollection, is bringing legislation to exempt land tax on the improved value of the land under the Third Schedule.

Mr. Speaker, that power seems to be giving some people discomfort. That power is derived from section 7 which says that "An approved developer shall, during the development period be exempt from the payment of the taxes and duties specified in the Third Schedule" and land tax is one of those taxes. That is what the legislation says. So the rest of Barbados has to wait for land taxes to be abolished, which was a promise of that administration almost 10 years ago, but people setting up businesses in special development areas can be the first ever beneficiaries in this country of exemption from payment of land tax. It tells you whose interest this Government serves: It is very clear, Mr. Speaker, and there is no other way we can put it.

Mr. Speaker, Value Added Tax. This country does not even yet know how the pensioners will be protected from the effects of Value Added Tax. We do not yet know how the indigent, people receiving welfare – a consultancy is now considering how it will impact on them but before we know how we are going to help them, this Parliament is approving the exemption and waiver of Value Added Tax on imports for building renovations and building refurbishment in respect of special development areas. Mr. Speaker, that tells you whose interest this Government serves.

How could I defend a policy where I have to go and interact with pensioners, people who are living in NAB houses, who are receiving welfare assistance and I cannot yet tell them how they are going to be eased from the burden of the VAT and yet even before we have the VAT in place people who are building in Carlisle Bay, Speightstown, St. Lawrence Gap and undertaking some activities in these areas as well as the Scotland District already know that they are exempt from Value Added Tax. If you all are comfortable with that arrangement, you can say it, count me out. I am not happy with it.

I despise, Mr. Speaker, the attempt by whichever group in this country which has an upper hand on always being able before legislation even comes down to identify what benefits they must get, and yet this Parliament, somebody had the temerity in the Budget debate to get up and laud the fact that the Government had put aside $150 000 to consider the impact of the VAT on pensioners.

Mr. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member is aware of the rules.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Which rules, Sir?

Mr. SPEAKER: The rule that states clearly that you are not to refer to a matter that has been discussed and passed in this same session.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: But I did not quote the person, Sir. I am not quoting them.

Mr. SPEAKER: Proceed, please.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: I would be equally critical if a member of my side did it, so if it would ease anybody's conscience, I do not mean you, if anybody on this side was more concerned about the fact that the Government made $150 000 available to a consultant to study the effect of the VAT on poor people while at the same time weeks later before we have even passed the VAT Bill we are exempting categories of people in Barbados from VAT, not giving them a lower rate, it tells you where the Government's priorities are. And the public of Barbados has to judge them on January 1, 1997 on the basis of this because even if they say that the Democratic Labour Party had a hand in designing the VAT, what they cannot say is that the Democratic Labour Party had a hand in exempting special categories of people from the imposition of VAT on the people of the country.

Mr. SPEAKER: Please. The Honourable Member. I again draw your attention' to the rule on anticipation; so could we proceed with the Bill before the House, please.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Well, I want to quote this Bill, Sir, which refers to the Value Added Tax. I am not sure if members were aware and as much as it may stretch our credulity to the breaking point, the point I am making is that this Bill exempts certain categories of people from the Value Added Tax so I believe I am trying to be as relevant to this legislation as I can because I do not know what the VAT Bill will have in it and I am not going to anticipate what it will have in it.

What I know is that it is not going to exempt pensioners. I know it is not going to exempt the mother of 4 who has to shop in a supermarket come the first Friday in January 1996. I know it is not going to exempt the unemployed. I know that this Bill exempts certain categories of people in Barbados.

Mr. SPEAKER: Please. The Honourable Member, you are aware...

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: I can move on you know, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. SPEAKER: Just move on, please. It is the rule relating to anticipation.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: A valid point, Mr. Speaker. I will move on though and state in this point that I am uncomfortable with legislation which is coming to this House to exempt people from taxes which do not yet exist and unless the Minister of Finance can give me a guarantee that the rest of Barbados is going to be similarly treated, I would be right to raise in this debate that a certain category of persons is going to be exempted from Value Added Tax because there is no Value Added Tax in Barbados at this time, so I understand your ruling fully, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. SPEAKER: It is not my ruling. It is here. We are guided by the Standing Orders, please.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: I understand that rule. What I am trying to do, Sir, is to extricate you from the four corners of the rules such that you and I can represent the interest of the people of Barbados effectively in this Chamber.

Mr. SPEAKER: That is very nice of you.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: So Barbadians are being pilloried to pay property transfer tax and where I gave a waiver and have given waivers before in situations where matrimonial property is being divided, the Minister of Finance criticized me.

2.30 p.m.

Mr. Speaker, there are many situations in which Barbadians, as a result of matrimonial property settlement, endure hardship and it is desirable that that hardship be obviated by waiver of property transfer tax. This legislation however is not lowering the property transfer tax on non resident purchasers as happened in the past. The most we ever did was lower it. This is exempting non resident purchasers, Mr. Speaker, Sir, from transfer tax.

Item No. 4 – property transfer tax payable by vendors and purchasers on the initial purchase of property whether by nationals or non nationals. So somebody who is purchasing a property in Bay Street, Carlisle Development, Speightstown, St. Lawrence or the Scotland District, if they are non Barbadians will receive a waiver of transfer tax where they are a vendor and/or purchaser. After all of that noise in the budget about property transfer tax waivers, Mr. Speaker, Sir, you now have an avalanche of them. Not for Barbadians only, that avalanche now is for all persons in these special categories and these special areas which the Minister will approve they are going to benefit from those waivers. Whereas other than persons who are selling under the Tenantries Freehold Purchase Act, all other Barbadians as vendors will have to pay property transfer tax even after this Bill is passed in Barbados.

So, Mr. Speaker, Sir, this is what the legislation is proposing and as uncomfortable as it makes the vested interest in the Barbados Labour Party and those who represent them I have no choice but to expose this legislation for what it is and hope that the Government will reconsider it but if they don't as they are never wont to do that the public of Barbados would better understand that this is a continuing process by this Government to advance certain interests in this country.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, only three more points I have to make. The activities which are identified in this legislation are not aimed at striking out at the traditional notions in economic development in Barbados because there are no support mechanisms in this legislation for new business. The average small businessman to whom the Honourable Member for the City referred, is going to have to go to a commercial bank for his loan because the BDB is closed but this legislation offers no real incentive to the commercial bank per se to give a loan to that business person. In fact it specifically excludes the operation of the tax on interest from a commercial bank which is a lender. So you put the fellow to the mercy of the commercial banks in Barbados, we have all agreed about the practices of commercial banks in Barbados and then you bring legislation which offers no comfort, no safety net, no light for him to extricate himself or to see his idea brought to fruition in this country.

This Bill tells you that Barbados does not belong to him, that there is no effort being made in this legislation to advance his interest and all we are saying, as a political party, is that we will support this legislation as long as it also seeks to liberate some of those people who in Barbados find that their daily existence as small businessmen and as persons who have ideas that they want to see brought to fruition are also helped at the same time so there is nothing for them in this legislation. This legislation does not speak of or to their plight at all.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, this Bill is vague and inarticulate when it comes to helping anybody on the streets of Barbados who has an idea for sale or for investments, for self sufficiency to help them in any way. Mr. Speaker, Sir, it does not help them to relocate because choice properties are not for them. Mr. Speaker, Sir, worse than that this legislation, at the accelerated pace at which the Honourable Member for the City wishes to see it implemented, is going to have very serious implications for water resources in Barbados and I detected from what the Minister was saying that even though conservation is important that we have to look now a little beyond conservation because even though. she said the Scotland District was delicate she saw a whole range of activity emerging in the Scotland District. Well I hope that that same attitude which borders on cavalier but does not actually attain it, will, Mr. Speaker, not be the case in respect of the other three areas identified by this legislation.

We need to ensure that we conserve and develop fresh water in Barbados wherever possible and the statistics which the Honourable Member for St. Peter drew to the attention of the House a long time ago and which the Honourable Member for St. Michael East has drawn to our attention are alarming and now the United Nations whose advice the Honourable Member for the City in the past always admired is telling us that we are under great threat so I hope she will internalise that message and that the speed with which she wants these developments undertaken will take that into account.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, my second last point. This Bill is not going to expand the parameters of the private sector in Barbados. It will be of little help to businesses which have to rely on the commercial banks. Nothing for them will change. They have no similar concessions for equity participation in the enterprises which are going to be approved by the Minister and this Bill therefore does not promote ownership over debt. This makes it more attractive for businesses and investments in those special development areas to have debt on their books than to convert that debt into equity or for the businesses to be properly capitalised and to encourage participation of citizens generally in the economic development of Barbados and that is something that needs, in my view, attention.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, Sir, this Bill does not speak about a fair system for the allocation of properties on Bay Street and I heard the Honourable Member for the City talking about all these Government owned properties in the area of Bay Street. We need to have an undertaking from Government that it has not yet allocated those properties even though I suspect Government cannot give that full undertaking. .Secondly, Mr. Speaker, Sir, what we need more than that is for what the Honourable Member for St. Lucy called for in here the other day that Government is not going to blindly apply the approach that those buildings should be available to the highest bidder.

If opportunities are to be created for some other people to own and develop property in those prime commercial areas then the highest bidder concept cannot bind the Government and I want the Government's undertaking that it is not going to stick to this idle boast, because when they talk about the highest bidder they think that everybody is thrilled with that approach. The higher bidder apprcach does not sway me in a country which has income

redistribution tasks to undertake. It does not sway me in a country where, as the Honourable Member for the City said but not directly but by implication, race determines function. It does not sway me where I make the assumption that on this side we are social engineers. The highest bidder approach has absolutely no impact on me. If it is Government property once the taxpayers are satisfied that the decisions about the allocation of that property are fair and that new people are having opportunities, I believe they will support it even if those persons are not the highest bidder. I therefore want the Government to remove from its jargon or its rhetoric or from its commitments given in here. That commitment was given in here by the Government. I want to tell the Honourable Member for St. George North who has good grounding in St. John to do not let the highest bidder approach confuse you. That approach is to consolidate the interest of certain people in Barbados. They will always be able to bid higher, they will always be able to bid in and outside of the contract terms and they will always be entitled to bring an avalanche of pressure to bear on the decisions of the Government. We have had a few sale of lands in here. The most recent was one in St. Thomas in which the Government said the highest bidder approach was its approach. I am not misleading this Chamber. Well, when it comes to the House rest assured that the House will debate it and that I will make it clear. Because it is coming to the House does not mean that I am not going to talk about it now.
2.40 p.m.

Mr. SPEAKER: Well, you cannot talk about it now.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: I cannot talk about the specifics of it but I can talk about the approach to the divestment of properties on Bay Street because that is what this legislation is about.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, it is about concessions being given to people who develop property in Carlisle Bay and the Government of Barbados by the Minister's own admission owns sizeable tracks of land and property in Carlisle Bay which is going to be the subject of these kinds of renovations and works. Therefore, Mr. Speaker, I am saying that the highest bidder approach in relation to these matters is not an approach which the Democratic Labour Party will ever find itself bound by. We have gone to Court on this already. We have had debate in here already and I want the public to understand what our position is on the matter, and that we are not swayed by those cute arguments which Members on that side advanced in relation to the Democratic Labour Party. So the question is who will get the properties and that is a valid argument.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, if we get to the end of this particular debate, I want to close merely by asking one question. When you look at the total amount of criticisms which the Opposition has raised and will be able to raise in the course of this debate about this legislation, whose interest is the Government serving? Even though that question may cause grave discomfort to some people, that is a question which this Opposition is entitled to *ask* and will continue to ask. It is not only a question that we *ask*. It is a question that is asked on the streets of Barbados on a daily basis and all the Government has to do is to give us the assurances, implement the policies, bring the legislation which is going to liberate those people who are presently under the oppression of not being able to get a look in the door in terms of economic activities in this country and we will give our support to any of those initiatives. As long as we are getting legislation, however, which are for special categories of people in special areas with special new concessions which have never been given before while there are others who are being hounded and pilloried in this country to give up all that they have and all that they have is being taken from them, Mr. Speaker, we will not be able to support this particular piece of legislation. I thank you.

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

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise in this debate to give my support to the Government for the introduction of this Special Development Zone legislation. It is unfortunate, Mr. Speaker, that we have just had to listen to the Honourable Member for St. John who spoke as though he had never been a Minister of Finance in this country, who spoke as though all problems with the economic relationships between blacks and whites and small and big people in this country had been solved when he was Minister of Finance, who spoke as if he was not part of a Cabinet that was responsible for entrenching into the interest of strong corporate white private sector Barbados the development at the Bridgetown Port, who spoke as if he was not part of a Government that led to the sale of Heywoods Hotel to the major private sector interest in Barbados, who spoke as if he was not part of a Government that did not see it fit to sell shares at BARTEL and BET to small interest groups or credit union interest groups in this country but saw it fit, Mr. Speaker, to sell them to Cable & Wireless outside of Barbados.

Sir, I want to cast my speech therefore in this context because I really believe that the level of intellectual duplicity in terms of how we take positions in Government and how we take positions in Opposition has to stop in this country to avoid the level of cynicism that attaches to politicians. Anyone who would not have had the fortune of listening to the Leader of the Opposition and knowing that he was a Minister of Finance for the better part of the last parliamentary term will not have known that he had the opportunity to change all of those relationships. But like the St. John Development Plan, Sir, it was an opportunity

that he chose not to exercise. It was an opportunity that he chose to avoid in the interest of the same people that he now writes as an attorney-at-law on behalf of the Deputy Prime Minister, the same people who are not small black Barbadians but who are white investors and who do not represent the interest of the same small black Barbadian class of which he just spoke.

I want therefore to reinforce this point to this Honourable Chamber because it does not stop there. The intellectual duplicity of the last Government continued when one reads the Development Plan for 1993 to the year 2000. A Democratic Labour Party Government spoke at page 165 of the Development Plan 1993 to 2000 that Governmerit will seek to encourage development of key urban areas, for example, Bridgetown, St. Lawrence Gap and Speightstown. Sir, on the next page this is the same Member who just spoke who said that he had a difficulty with the areas designated under the First Schedule of this Act, because these were areas in which the Barbados Labour Party had a strong political interest. Sir, do you know what? They were the same areas that they felt as a Government in their development plan should have been developed. But it did not stop there, Mr. Speaker. On the next page in relation to investment, it does not talk about investment by way of equity participation or investment by way of small black business people. It talks of a mix of both Barbadian and overseas investment, the very overseas investment which the Honourable Leader of the Opposition had already started to promote even before the entry of this special development area legislation into Parliament by reason of his communication to the Deputy Prime Minister and he has not denied it. So let us be clear when he talks about facilitating investment and encouraging participation in this economy that there has not been on the part of...
2.50 p.m.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: On a point of order. While it is true that I made arrangements for a Barbadian resident investor to meet with the Minister of Tourism, I certainly did not do it against a background of any legislation which is being passed today. I did it regardless of that legislation because I got the impression they were interested in investing in Barbados and therefore that point which has just been made is absolutely irrelevant. I send many people to Ministers in Barbados. Only Ministers can make those decisions. If I have a friend who wants to get into a school from overseas I would have to call the Minister of Education. I have no choice.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Sir, when he calls the Minister of Education he will know that the Minister of Education would facilitate him with getting the person into a school too. The point I was making Mr. Speaker, and I want to revert to it, is that to come in here suddenly and assume that this Bill seeks to create exclusivity as he puts it and that this Bill seeks to create and make Parliament into a special interest facilitator – those are his words – does not contemplate the fact that all of us recognise that there will in fact be a mix of investors who will participate as a result of not only these incentives, but incentives which have existed before, that brings me to the next point, Mr. Speaker.

One of the significant things about the special development areas legislation is that it brings about a level of transparency in the granting of concessions and incentives. The Honourable Leader of the Opposition was correct when he said that the Minister of Finance had these powers before, but what he did not say is that there was nothing that required the Minister of Finance in respect of all waivers and concessions to state policy for them which all the public was clear about and also to state the publication of all persons granted those concessions.

There are under some pieces of legislation requirements in order to grant concessions but not under all. The point is that nobody can be in any doubt in Barbados or outside of Barbados as to what concessions will be granted under this legislation. They are clearly stated in the Third Schedule and what is even more, there is accountability because the approved developer must be published in the Official Gazette and to say that the Minister of Finance can grant the concessions subject to conditions does not also state the fact that those concessions cannot be greater than those contained in the legislation. He can perhaps attach a condition to it, but he cannot grant any more concessions than already exist in the legislation.

I want to drive home that point, Mr. Speaker, because the whole idea of special development areas legislation is to create an environment of transparency, an environment where people will know before hand what incentives and concessions they would be able to achieve, rather that the former situation, Sir, where Ministers of Finance did it without the public necessarily knowing and there are even those who would want to suggest that they did it in some instances that were inimical to the interests of the country and for the benefit of persons on such an exceptional basis that it would have caused controversy were these conditions and applications and approvals in fact made public.

I wasn't the one, Sir, who referred to the fact that a previous Minister of Finance in fact did not need to create a charter for his friend when approving the exemption of duties on vehicles being imported, when that person fell within no class that was acceptable, and it therefore created a precedent. I was not, Sir, one to speak of the fact that the concessions given at the Royal Westmoreland are much wider than this and other instances.

It suits the Leader of the Opposition to read the fact that they didn't waive property transfer tax but only reduced it, but he doesn't tell you that they waived the duty on vehicles coming in for that project. Nowhere in this legislation are there concessions being given to waive duties on vehicles and anybody who lives in St. James will tell you the amount of vehicles driving about with Royal Westmoreland on them. That, too, has the same impact on the Barbadians who he said should be given the same treatment. He didn't give them the same treatmeat when he gave the concessions to Royal Westmoreland and to other parties.

So let us get back on a straight and narrow path in discussion as to this debate. I want to talk about the merits of this legislation. I want to speak about the fact that broadening the base of ownership in respect of these properties and investments is a major priority of this Government. I want to-speak about the fact that when finding mechanisms to fund the public sector and how projects are brought about, that Government will be meticulous in its intentions as to how it goes into joint venture projects but, more importantly, recognising its responsibility eventually to small groupings in this society that form the non-traditional private sector divest parts of ownership which Government has.

I want to repeat that point because those are the same people who we are being told are not getting any opportunities under this legislation. Those are the same people who we are told cannot borrow money to be able to start these businesses. Mr. Speaker, when we look at the categories of areas to which this investment will relate in terms of activity there are a whole host of areas in which small businessmen already exist and can continue to enter because of the lack of large capital requirements. The cultural and arts based investments for crafts is a typical area in which there can be considerable investment throughout Bridgetown, throughout Speightstown, throughout St. Lawrence Gap, throughout the Scotland District in particular where we have many potters in Chalky Mount who can continue to expand and who also can see new persons brought in there. People in basketry and weaving in the Scotland District can also seek to get involved there.

We also have, Sir, the inclusion of residential premises for persons who may be interested in ensuring that there is a development of a holistic environment because we understand that if you build cities in which people don't live the cities will die. One of the fundamental points therefore that deserves support is the development of the Pondside Housing project which was so truncated by the last Democratic Labour Party Administration. It also allows for other housing development in the Scotland District, in Speightstown, and in other areas of Bridgetown and in any other area so designated. So that to come here and give the impression that this is a Bill to facilitate special interests is akin almost to seeking to mislead the public without having the public's interest at heart.

Sir, when we look at the facts as well and the allegation that this Bill is to create loyalty and reward among Barbados Labour Party supporters. Sir, the Honourable Leader of the Opposition knows from where he speaks because he was a party and was certainly in the front of a party that sought to create advantages for persons involved in the supply of commodities to the school meals and I suggest to this Honourable House that that had to do with party loyalty and faithfulness. He was in a party that just days before the general election....
3.00 p.m.

Mr. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member, please. Let us proceed with the Bill before the House. We are not going to go down that line, please.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Sir, I am proceeding with the Bill before the House and I am speaking to the fact that this Bill is not about rewarding party loyalty in the same way that it was rewarded when a former Minister was awarded the contract at the airport for shops.

Mr. SPEAKER: I am suggesting to you, the Honourable Member, that you are going down the wrong line. Just make your point, please. Let us proceed, please.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: I appreciate your point, Mr. Speaker.

I want to say, Sir, that all sorts of extraneous matter such as that was introduced by the Honourable Leader of the Opposition, Sir. It is not fair to say so, because any Barbadian has the opportunity to benefit under this legislation. This legislation does not talk about the Barbados Labour Party supporters, this legislation speaks about any Barbadian who wishes to make an investment in an approved area. I want to reinforce the point, Mr. Speaker, Sir, that there has to be fairness throughout. No one can say that Government has entered into any arrangement at any point with anybody for any of the Bay Street properties. No one can say so. Therefore, Sir, the allegations made by the Honourable Leader of the Opposition are spurious and without base.

Now, in respect of some of the projects, the point was made that this is a way of sidelining Government and minimising the role of Government. Mr. Speaker, Sir, the Deputy Prime Minister today in her address gave a list of a number of projects in which Government's involvement was clear, and I want to repeat some of them, because clearly some persons in this Honourable Chamber did not hear sufficiently well.

Sir, Government is entirely involved in the redevelopment of the Cheapside Market, the redevelopment of Pelican Village, the redevelopment of the Princess Alice Bus Terminal and its immediate environs, the Wharf, the boardwalk which is to be attached to the Wharf, the restoration of the Marshall Hall Building, the construction of the BNB Complex, Arlington House in Speightstown, the upgrading of facilities at Dover which is next door to St. Lawrence Gap, and Government is involved on a private sector/public sector basis in respect of the Empire Theatre, which I will speak more about in a few minutes, Sir, in respect of the Town Hall and the Jubilee Gardens, the Synagogue restoration project, the improvement of Tudor Street and Baxters Road, Queen Street, the Esplanade and existing fishing facility at Speightstown and in respect of the Hilton Hotel. Now Sir, those are over 20 projects. Therefore to suggest that this legislation seeks to sideline the interest of Government is once again baseless and without merit.

Now, in respect of aspects of the legislation which I would wish to bring to the attention of this Honourable Chamber, Sir, there is no doubt that in respect of the development of these key areas which Government believes have enormous potential, and in respect one of them which we believe that there is enormous risk, the Scotland District, there is a need to encourage persons to be able to invest their funds and to come along with Government to be able to invest. We feel, Sir, that there has to be a holistic attitude towards the development of these areas, and hence the long list of areas of activity which range from agricultural to cultural, art based activity, water based activities, environmental, heritage tourism and indeed residential, industrial and commercial, because we feel that you cannot look at the development of these areas without looking at their total capacity to develop.

When we spoke, Sir, of the housing project at Pondside, you cannot look at that in isolation as well. The Honourable Prime Minister, only as recently as Sunday, spoke about the establishment of an Urban Development Commission which seeks also to address the problems in urban areas, of which Bridgetown is a part, that relates to the pockets of poverty, which all of us know still exist, and which all of us are committed to getting rid of, Sir.

We believe that there has to be an institutional framework which is designed to remove those areas of poverty by bringing services to the people, by bringing decent housing to the people, by ensuring that services relate not only to drainage, roads, electricity and water, but indeed to community and sports facilities, Sir.

In addition to that, we believe that you cannot simply go and construct new things only, as we are doing with the Pondside, and call that "George", but you have also to look at existing houses within those communities that are derelict and be able to rehabilitate those houses, because at the end of the day you are seeking to rehabilitate the community. To that end, Sir, this Government has already expressed an interest in establishing a project to rehabilitate derelict houses through a number of mechanisms, first of which will be the establishment of mortgage funds for owners who would wish to rehabilitate their property.

Anybody who has been in and around St. Michael, Sir, would know that there are over 1 800 derelict houses in St. Michael alone. This is a parish in which 'the majority of the population live. It is a parish in which housing is an extremely very precious commodity, largely because there is very little land space that is available, and therefore we need to be able to rehabilitate these derelict houses.

Many of them, Sir, speak of an architecture which we are all proud of and we would wish, therefore, that their restoration also be consistent with that level of architectural integrity that is consistent with Barbados' cultural heritage. In fact, Sir, you would be aware that under the Town Planning legislation the Chief Town Planner already has the power to be able to list conditions which will apply to persons when he gives them approval for investments in this country.

To that extent, Sir, one can already see the picture of a Roebuck Street that is rehabilitated, that brings back the charm of the overhanging verandahs, the old wooden balconies, and brings to those people living in those areas and the surrounding areas, such as Greenfield, which will also be dealt with under the Urban Renewal Project, a capacity to feel proud of their environment. We believe that they have as much right as those living on Bay Street and the ones living next to them in the Bay Land. So there is no attempt by this Government, Mr. Speaker, to exclude any category of person from benefitting because of the wide nature of the activities which are being targeted, Sir.

In respect of the Empire Theatre, I would venture to say that almost every political party, since 1976 for sure, has placed the redevelopment and the rehabilitation of the Empire Theatre in its Manifesto, but has never been able to achieve it. We hope, Mr. Speaker, during the course of this parliamentary term to be able to start the process and, hopefully, even to complete the process in respect of the restoration and rehabilitation of the Empire Theatre. That, Sir, will be one of the few properties, or the only property that would be vested directly to the National Cultural Foundation, which will set up, Sir, we hope, a company that will attract not only Government participation, but the participation of small groups of Barbadians from all over. Particularly targeted are those in the cultural industries,

those who are artists, and those who are already investors in the cultural industries to participate in the ownership and the management of the Empire Theatre, Sir.

There is no doubt that there is need in Barbados for a facility of that size, since at one end of the spectrum we have the Queen's Park Theatre which holds no more than about 260 people, and at the other end we have been forced into the utilisation of the Wildey Gymnasium, which was not originally built for cultural activities, and can hold just over 5 500, if there is a cultural show there, or Sherbourne which has been used, of late, by Calypso Tents and holds just over 2 000 there.

So there is no.doubt that there is need for a facility that is of the size of 1 500, but more importantly, a facility that is going to cater to allow the full development of performing arts, not just the capacity to go and set up a tent and play. There is nowhere for a dance in this country, Sir. There is nowhere for a theatre to be able to service all the instances of that size, Sir, and we therefore feel very strongly about the rehabilitation and the restoration of the Empire Theatre. I hope, Sir, once the feasibility study has been completed and once we have the designs completed, to be able to have a number of public meetings all across this country, particularly with the artists who over the years have had to suffer from the lack of proper facilities, to give them an opportunity to invest in this,

Now, Sir, the Honourable Leader of the Opposition spoke about the clause in the legislation which deals with the incentives for persons making loans to the effect that it should not have been for loans alone but, indeed, it should have been for persons participating in equity.

Sir, when the Honourable Deputy Prime Minister got up to speak in this &bate, the first point she made was that the concept of special development zone legislation is nothing new, that in fact Jamaica and Trinidad in the region had already passed such legislation in their Parliament. What is significant, Sir, is that when one looks at the Jamaican legislation one will see the same clause there.

3.10 p.m.

Sir, it benefits the credit union movement, which is not a commercial bank. It benefits Barbadians who invest in bonds which this Government will float to finance the investment of this programme in respect of the public involvement of those properties which I just listed, some near 20 properties. Therefore, Barbadians from all places whether in or of this country, or living outside of this country who participated in the issuance of those bonds would be able to benefit in respect of no tax on the interest which those bonds will have attached to them. Therefore, it creates a financing mechanism which also creates opportunities for investment in respect of a broad class of people and not just a few people of a certain colour, as the Honourable Member of the Opposition wanted to tell us just now in his address to us.

Sir, we feel very strongly that if you are going to have special development zone legislation that there must be the capacity to create new jobs and to create new investment in this country. Therefore, to simply criticize this legislation for the fact that it restricts businesses from relocating to one area or to another area belies the fact that he does not understand that unless you make that restriction, you are not going to have the creation of new enterprises which will create the new jobs and new forms of investment which the Government is seeking to do.

When you look at the macroeconomic policy which was laid by this Government in May of this year when we had the Budget, you will clearly see under the page that talks about strategies for job creation, employment creation, the clause which talks about the use of incentives in special development areas to create new jobs and new areas of investment and that is basic. That is why I know that the Honourable Leader of the Opposition really accepts it because he was even able to concede for a few seconds that this, in fact, was a piece of legislation that had at its core the creation of jobs.

That really sums up the reason why the Honourable Leader of the Opposition had to speak in the way in which he spoke because he could not attack the Bill for the merits or for the fact that it was intended to create, and will in fact create jobs, but therefore sought to create bogeymen, dark shadows and white shadows in people's minds to be able to divert people's attention, forgetting that people in this country do not have short memories and remember his role in the hardship that was wrought upon the people of the country, his role in not bringing about adjustment in the economic relationships between the various parties of this country, and his role in making "too many sacrificed too much for too few". Those were his words, Sir. Too many sacrificed too much for too few, as was done when the public servants of this country were the only ones asked to bear the brunt of an adjustment in a stabilisation programme implemented by this Government.

Let us be clear, Sir, as to what we are speaking about when we deal with the Honourable Leader of the Opposition's speech.. It is my judgment that he likes the legislation.

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

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

It is my judgment that he likes the legislation. It is my judgment, Sir, that when they spoke in their Development Plan of creating investment in Bridgetown, Speightstown and St. Lawrence Gap that they, perhaps, had a desire to have the effect that this legislation would have but did not, perhaps, know how to go about it as they did not know how to go about so many other things which they were confronted with when they became the Government.

There is one other point, Sir, I want to deal with very quickly and that is the whole question of access to capital. Sir, you cannot deal with that question by reference to this debate alone. In the Right Honourable Prime Minister's Budget speech he spoke clearly about the establishment of a development finance institution as a successor to the Barbados Development Bank to create access to funds for Barbadians who have ideas and who would wish those ideas financed, and who would not be able otherwise to get them financed from the commercial banks in this country because there is no doubt that there is an attitude of restrictive lending practices on the part of commercial banks in this country. Nobody disputes that but the point is that this Government is prepared to put institutions in place which will allow these persons to access capital.

He also spoke then, Sir, of the development of venture capital funds from which persons whose ideas, perhaps, were a little more speculative might be able to benefit through venture capital funds, who may not otherwise be able to get access to credit through the development finance institutions so that there have been other policies put in place by this Government.

We have not spoken, Sir, about the $1 million he gave the Small Business Association to be able to set up funds eventually for onlending to small businesses. Those are the funds that people will access so as to be able to participate in new investment in the special development zone legislation and because the areas of activity are not all capital intensive in terms of large amounts of capital, they will be able to participate and it goes much further than that Government had ever gone if we want to describe, – and I end on this, – how this Parliament can be described as compared to the last Parliament.

When the Leader of the Opposition spoke about this Parliament as being a special interest facilitator, he, perhaps, was too overwhelmed by the memory that the Parliament in which he sat in as a member of Government was a Parliament that was an instrument of oppression and therefore was unable to see the glory and capacity for this to bring about development to thousands of black Barbadians born and yet unborn.

Thank you, Sir.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: Mr. Speaker, it was my intention to respond to the feelings of the people of Barbados who have expressed the view that too much of their TV viewing time is being preempted by Parliament and in that way to assist by restricting my speech to as short a time as possible. I shall endeavour to do so, but so much has transpired that I believe I may take up a little more time than I originally intended.

First of all, let me congratulate the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East, the Honourable Minister of Education, for trying so valiantly to rehabilitate the shattered case of the Member of the City. It was a great effort, but, indeed, largely because the case of the Honourable Member for the City, like all of her cases, is never anchored in fact or Fax. But, really, they are often tales, woven together and woven together with such sincerity when she speaks, that I believe that from time to time she convinces herself that what she is actually saying is reality. So it was that we heard this alarming commitment to the private sector rescuing Barbados, and the private sector doing this and that for this country.

What I believe, Mr. Speaker, is happening here, and I believe that it is a legitimate criticism of the present administration, is that we spend so much time in this House dealing with legislation to facilitate private sector activity that one begins to wonder whether or not the character of the House of Assembly is not much more like that of the Chamber of Commere. It is my understanding that activity at the Chamber of Commerce has declined significantly in recent times because there is no point duplicating what goes on here in the House of Assembly. This is not the first time that I have made this point. I made this point during my presentation in response to the last Budget earlier this year. I think where the confusion lies, and lies in people's mind, is here.

This country depends on export-led development. I think in the mind of the Honourable Member for the City she translates that into private sector-led development. I think it is very important to understand that there is a fundamental difference here because we had the purest form of private sector-led development in Barbados during slavery. Slavery was essentially private sector-led development. Everything that happened in Barbados between slavery and roughly the mid-1950s was totally private sector-led development.

We all know what were the conditions of the broad masses of people for the people of slavery and post slavery up to the mid 1950s.

It was only when the public sector of Barbados became involved in the development of this country of ours, it is only when the broad masses of the people

of Barbados were brought into the development process as a result of public sector activity that we saw a transformation in the lives of the people of this country. Therefore it is essential for us to clearly understand that whilst it is mandatory that we undertake export led development, we be very cautious how we pass that on and pass on the total resources of this country into the hands of private individuals.
3.20 p.m.

I think this is very fundamental because, as I have said again and again, I have great concerns that we are creating a situation in Barbados where one group can enjoy all the sweets at the expense of others who have all the bitterness to deal with. We have a society and we have made major strides in developing the society particularly in the last 2 years where more and more people enjoy tax free status in this country whilst the burden of taxes on the remainder are increased from day-to-day and that is the reality which we face.

Everyone knows that I am and have always been an advocate for reduced levels of taxation in this country involving the entire society so as to bring all Barbadians into a situation where they can participate in the development of this country. I have supported and I believe in supporting tax concessions that impinge directly on employment generation, savings generation among the masses of people in this society such as, for example, the various generations of legislation dealing with the tourism sector, dealing with the manufacturing sector, dealing with the offshore sector, dealing with agriculture and dealing with those major areas of development. So I have no problem in dealing either with the use of fiscal incentives on a mass level to make sure that the overwhelming majority of Barbadians are brought on stream in the development process nor have I got any problem in the use of selective instruments provided it can be clear that Barbadians will have an opportunity to participate in that process significantly.

I believe that this country will only go forward if we can build stronger families with jobs available to the members of those families, where families can save and develop themselves and where they can offer a better future for their children and improve their standard of living. I believe that it is very important that whilst there is this to and fro about who gave more to whom that we all sit back and ask ourselves whether or not we are not going too far in certain areas in terms of handing over major sections of this country to alien interests and to a few selected interests in Barbados. It is an important question that we must ask because, unlike a hotel or something like this, when you get into certain types of development where people can build properties and sell them for US$400 000 as the minimum price you know that that particular property has left Barbadian ownership for ever and forever more. We have to be very careful how we get involved in that kind of exercise.

So, I think that it is very important for us all to sit back and be very selective about the concessions that we give and also to make sure that we fashion instruments at the same time to ensure that there is no alienation of ownership from Barbadians.

Now, Sir, I have heard all this talk about the private sector involvement in tourism in Barbados. Let me tell the Minister of Tourism a few things. The private sector in Barbados never made any effort of any kind until after 1986, after sugar started to decline, to pay attention to the tourism development in Barbados. I am talking about the domestic private sector and even those who owned hotels prior to 1961 or 1956 or thereabouts sold their properties during that period rather than participate in the tourism development of Barbados as a matter of policy and it is a fact. Many of them have told me, during that period, that they would not invest in Barbados tourism because they did not do well in that kind of activity over the years.

Sir, Barbados' tourism was developed firstly by the Government of Barbados. Secondly, by a large number of very small middle class persons who invested here on the South Coast from the St. Lawrence Gap right through the South Coast. They are the people who made the contribution to Barbados tourism over the years. I am saying that the investment in tourism over the years until after 1986 had nothing to do with the upper echelons of the private sector of Barbados and this is a reality it must face.

There were a few foreigners who also contributed to the development of tourism in Barbados on the West Coast during that period so this business of the Barbados private sector participating in the development of tourism is a recent exercise and they are participating largely on the basis of supplies to these hoteliers through the distributive sector over the years. They made the profits whilst the people who put the money in the hotels over the years have had the problems with debt and other matters. So if you want to believe that the way forward is to put your faith exclusively in people who for 25 years refused to participate in the development of tourism in Barbados my main concern this afternoon is going to be with protecting the interest of people like the small taxi drivers who invested, formed cooperatives and all this kind of exercise over the years in building tourism in this country

Today there is a grave risk when I hear statements like the mom and pop operations in tourism are no longer relevant, when I hear the taxi drivers...

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. No reference to mom and pop operations was made in here. To the contrary, the Government is pushing a GEMS of Barbados small hotel sector project. Be specific. Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Member is going to tell me what I heard. I did not say that the Honourable Member for the City said it. I said that I heard a statement from a public agency that the mom and pop operations in the tourism sector are a thing of the past. I want Barbadians to understand...

3.30 p.m.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: On a point of order, Sir. That is a misquotation. What was said was that the mom and pop hotels by themselves as individuals cannot hope to survive and that they have to come together, to be marketed together, to be promoted, to have a joint management structure. That is what was said. Do not quote one part of it and not the other part. What do you want to do, terrorize people?

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: Mr. Speaker, I think that I have repeated what I heard and I will be dealing with the GEMS project as it relates to the St. Lawrence Gap because some of the properties which will be taken over or which the GEMS people are trying to take over are in the St. Lawrence Gap. So let me deal one by one. I do not have too much time.

Mr. Speaker, I have always said that it is essential that steps be taken to ensure that there is development of the Scotland District Area. I have no difficulty with the Scotland District Area being designated as a Special Development Area. I have no problem with that. What I want to ensure is that whatever development takes place in that area is environmentally friendly and in this House during the Estimates I made the same point when I pointed out that I do not think that it is in the interest of the proper development in that area to have a dump in the middle of a national park in this country. That point I made here only a few months ago.

I also made the point that the Government needs to look at the infrastructure in the area, make sure that there are better roads in the Scotland District Area and also to try and open up that entire area from Pico Teneriffe going right through to Sam Lord's Castle so that part of the country will be open for agro-industrial tourism and other aspects of development in Barbados.

The second point I want to make is this. I believe that accompanying this legislation that there should be instruments and some evidence of some opportunities created by the Government so that small Barbadians will be able to benefit from this particular exercise.

The third point I want to make relates to the Christ Church area. Now I lived in the St. Lawrence Gap between 1967 and early 1968 about a year and a half and I have seen the transformation in the St. Lawrence Gap over the years. I live in the Christ Church area and I know the development that is taking place there. The development that is taking place in Christ Church has been largely the result of the investment made by many small hoteliers in the Christ Church area over many years. I am calling on the Government to make sure that there is an arrangement under the GEMS programme if it goes forward where those people will never be able to lose their properties. The properties might be in debt but they have created continued employment in that area over many years and they also have contributed substantially to the development of the Christ Church area. Those small hoteliers have been a major factor in the development of tourism and in the development of the parish of Christ Church where I have lived since 1967.

I also want to make sure that the Government understands the role which debt played in creating the problems of those hotels. There are some of those hotels who today would have paid more in interest to the Barbados Development Bank than they actually borrowed in terms of a capital sum. What does that say? I think that there is a case for putting that debt on a 30 or 40 year basis and giving those hotels an opportunity to recover and contribute to the development of Barbados. I believe that they deserve a deal that is no less beneficial to them than the deal offered to plantation owners in Barbados and I make this plea on the Floor of the House. When I look at the small hotel operations, I believe that there is an opportunity for certain costs relating to small hotel operations to be addressed by Government. Under this particular provision, there will be no property taxation on the improved value of the property. When I was Minister of Finance, I reduced the taxes on hotels in general by 50 per cent. I believe that a further reduction could be appropriate for 10 or 15 years for the small hotels. I believe that some arrangement can be made about the water rates, the energy costs and the cost of telephones which are totally destructive to the operations of those hotels. Those things need to be addressed as part of a package not only for those hotels which will be in the GEMS project but also for the other hotels in the Christ Church area, so that as small people who have invested their lives and invested everything they had in the hotels in Christ Church in the St. Lawrence area and around there that they would also be able to benefit from any of the goodies that are stirring.

The next point that I want to make in relation to the Christ Church area is this. We can forget it if we think that small people are going to be able to buy properties in this area. Properties or land in this area I would imagine will be going for at least $30 or $40 a square foot. So that I do not see any possibility of any small people buying properties

in St. Lawrence Gap and benefiting from any of the range of concessions being granted here. The people who are going to benefit from this will be the people who have money. Now there are some small owners of properties in the St. Lawrence Gap area as well and I would have liked to see a proposal whereby those properties can also benefit from the infrastructural development in the St. Lawrence area whether by way of rehabilitation grants or whether by way of a marketing situation where those people in the St. Lawrence area who might wish to take in winter guests from time to time or something like that will be able to benefit from the overall activity in the area.

Sir, it is my feeling that I think it is a mistake just to target the St. Lawrence area. I believe that the whole area from Bay Street going right through to Oistins – (I am taking care of the Honourable Member for Christ Church West as well.) – should all benefit. I will tell you why. If you look at the movement of the tourism traffic and if you look at what has been developing in terns of commercial properties,of their renewal and expansion, you will see that the entire area is functioning as one. The tourist who comes to St. Lawrence Gap eventually finds himself in the Hastings area and finds himself in Bridgetown. I think that the entire area should be designated as a special development area and if any concessions are being granted all should benefit. Otherwise, we are going to have a situation. The Government has not offered us or extended the courtesy of attaching a map. Usually when you have special development areas when the Bill comes out there is a map which is attached to it. I cannot say exactly what is going to constitute the St. Lawrence Gap area in terms of law because no map has been made available to this Honourable House as far as I am aware. You may find a situation where a restaurant in St. Lawrence Gap would now be in a privileged position and one a few yards away might well be at a disadvantage because of the narrow geographical arrangement.
3.40 p.m.

The second point I want to make...

Aside.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: I think that it should be done at one and the same time because if you look at what is happening there are three other important infrastructural developments that I think the Government needs to get on with in terms of the Christ Church area. The sewerage plant. That is started and I think that it needs to be accelerated. I think it is important that we have sidewalks. When I pass the Christ Church area and I see people and tourists skipping from vehicles all over the place and when you recognise that in that whole area the place could have a beautiful mall effect going right through from Bridgetown to Oistins, I think that a fantastic opportunity is being missed – and with minimal public sector investment, the beautification and widening of the streets and the creation of sidewalks along that area from Bridgetown right through Bay Street to Oistins. I think that could be a fantastic infrastructural development and when you think of the costs in relation to the gains that would accrue, if that is done, then I believe that would be of tremendous advantage for the whole of Barbados.

As matters now stand, my own feeling is that unless these infrastructural works are put in, unless there is a firm decision by the Government of Barbados to ensure that small people have the opportunity to invest in these areas and, where they already own property, that they have access to easy financing in order to improve their property so they *can* benefit from these concessions, then I think the result may well be what has happened on the west coast of Barbados.

I do not wish to see a situation where the south coast of Barbados is taken over by foreigners. If the west coast has gone, then what is going to happen? Are we going to be driven into the hills? This is a very serious consideration when you are dealing with property in our country. We do not have leasehold arrangements. We have freehold arrangements and once that property goes into the ownership of a foreign person under our laws and under our constitution it *can* be there forever more. When you look at the prices being quoted internationally for these properties, they are gone forever and therefore it is very important that any concessions we make we ensure that Barbadians have an opportunity to participate fully in these exercises and that the ownership is substantially localised,

Mr. Speaker, I am not taking a xenophobic position on this matter. I am dealing with the matter because I believe that we must never feel or be in a position where we are bequeathing a Barbados to our children in the future where they cannot have access to the prime lands in Barbados. I believe, Sir, that this piece of legislation carries that inherent risk. There is an inherent risk that those properties in these special development areas might well pass out of the hands of Barbadians to other people and we need to do something about that and the only thing I feel we can do in the kind of free economy that we have is to make sure that we stabilise existing investments in the area even by way of a GEMS project which is completely reconstituted by way of taking additional measures to reduce the cost of operation of existing small hotels and make sure that our people in Barbados have the opportunity to continue to own properties in this country.

My position is that I do not care whether or not persons who own those properties are BLP, DLP or NDP. That is no concern of mine. My concern is that they are Barbadians who own them and therefore so long as they remain in Barbadian ownership then the future

generations of children – because your children are my children and my children are your children, that is the way I see it – down the road, will have the opportunity to benefit from those properties staying in the hands of Barbadians. This is a serious matter and I think it is a matter that we have to address and have to address in a very serious manner.

In terms of job generation, I don't think that this kind of activity is going to generate any significant amount of permanent jobs. Already as you all know, the present levels of activity in these areas support X number of jobs. What will happen if there is construction activity – there will be a temporary increase in activity and thereafter the job situation will come back to the same level. So I am not particularly optimistic that as a result of this kind of operation many jobs will be created.

One other point that I want to raise is that I am pleased to see as part of this particular exercise that there will be some kind of allowances for commercial buildings. This is something that has been missing in Barbados for some time and I would hope that this should not be restricted to the special development areas but some recognition should be given to the fact that buildings do in fact deteriorate and sometimes deteriorate much faster than the level at which they appreciate and therefore some kind of allowance is desirable.

Mr. Speaker, by and large, I believe that with the special development areas being designated, there is nothing fundamentally wrong because, in point of fact, as the Honourable Leader of the Opposition pointed out, Government already has all the instruments to do all the things that they wish to do under various pieces of legislation. I think what it probably does is to bring together and brings some kind of focus and probably converts into some kind of project possibilities the various concessions. But we must not go out there and give the people the impression that because we come in here and talk about this and because we pass this legislation that overnight these areas are going to be transformed because I do not believe, for example, that there is any shortage of capital as far as I know in terms of development of the St. Lawrence area. As far as I can see there has been a lot of private sector capital invested in that area between Oistins and Bridgetown. There is a whole lot of renovations taking place, buildings have been shipped, new commercial buildings have been put up. I see that new hotels have added new parts and have expanded their room capacity and so on. So there is no clear evidence to me that there is any shortage of private capital available in those areas and I do not think that this is going to draw overnight any large sums of private capital into that particular area. I think it gives an opportunity to create an environment where small people – and this is what is missing fundamentally here about this legislation – there is not an accompanying package to ensure that small people like the Honourable Member for Christ Church West would be able to benefit maximally from this particular measure.

3.50 p.m.

Mr. Speaker, I have been advocating in this Honourable House, that there should be a free zone for trade in the Speightstown area way back in the 1960s, and I believe that opportunity still exists. One would see that the whole concept of zoning parts of the Barbados for special development is not something that started now. It is something that has been going on for some time.

As far as the East Coast is concerned, I also want to draw to the attention of this Honourable House that for almost a century it has been small people who have been providing tourists facilities, not only for Barbadians and Caribbean people but for people from all over the world. It is very important that small people in those areas, the bay house concept, the small hotels on the East Coast, be given an opportunity and that efforts should be made for finance to be made available to them in order that they can benefit from this particular piece of legislation.

That is why is it so important that we have maps. I assume that the coastal area, the Bathsheba coastal area and the area going into Martin's Bay and so on, may well be involved in this whole exercise but I cannot speak specifically because I do not have any maps before me.

Mr. Speaker, as I see it, there are great opportunities available for investment in this country. Foreigners have recognised that these opportunities exist. Let us not become a country where foreigners can come here, buy out our property, make fortunes, continue to own it and then we are maids and gardeners and whatever else in our own land for evermore.

These are my concerns, these are my fears, these are not even criticisms of the Government, because it is the responsibility, not only of the Government, it is the responsibility of the official Opposition, it is the responsibility of the National Democratic Party as well. It is a national responsibility to ensure that this does not happen, because in the pursuit of short term growth, in the pursuit of our short-term balance of payments position, in pursuit of our short-term foreign reserves position, we can often take decisions which in the long run might be deleterious to the country for many, many a year.

Therefore, Mr. Speaker, as I see it, I want to know what steps this Government will be taking to make sure that the beneficiaries of these tax concessions would be substantially localised here in Barbados. What steps

should be taken to ensure that there would be appropriate financing available to them? What steps should be taken to ensure that the unstable position of existing investments owned by local people in these particular areas is reduced and that they, themselves, would not be subject to some kind of takeover operation?

Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased that I have had the opportunity to address this matter. I sincerely hope that the issues which I have raised are not just set aside because they come from an Opposition party. I wish the Government of Barbados well in terms of its ability to attract finance for the development of these areas of Barbados. I wish them well in terms of the capacity of those developments to generate permanent jobs if that does transpire, but I caution them, I urge them, I beg them to address their minds to the wider significance of what is happening and what will continue to happen unless this Parliament takes appropriate steps to address these matters.

I thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. H. deB. FORDE: Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central has been much more restrained than he normally is when he is approaching creative legislation of this nature brought to this House by the Government. Usually uppermost in his mind, as he is entitled to have, are the political considerations, but he has today abated those considerably. In some areas of his contribution he has taken a broader approach to the matter and to the extent that broad approach accords with the well known national objectives and the policy of the Barbados Labour Party, we welcome them as enforcing the philosophy which this party has espoused from its inception and the philosophy which we have restated on Page 5 of our Manifesto. I will particularise this a little later, Sir.

There are one or two statements which the Honourable Member made, however, which obviously I have to give some challenge or some explanation to before I get into my main speech. The Honourable Member seems to be saying that tourism in Barbados has not had the support of the private sector until latterly, after 1986. I disagree most wholeheartedly with the Honourable Member.

As a matter of fact, tourism development in Barbados from its inception several years ago, well over a hundred years ago, has always been private sector led. Indeed, the intervention of Government in tourism development came in a significant way in the 1950s when the Barbados Labour Party first placed on the statute book legislation to deal with Hotel Aids. Secondly, it came also with our establishment of a group of persons. I am not sure whether they were a tourism advisory board, which later ripened into the Tourist Board. The Barbados Labour Party Government put in incentives for private sector hotel development on the West coast and also on the South coast, and also participated actively later under the Democratic Labour Party in the construction of the Hilton Hotel.

Asides.

Mr. H. deB. FORDE: Later, Sir, we came in with Heywoods. That is really a fairer picture of what has happened here. We have to salute the Mrs. Talmas and the Mrs. Mairlands, and a whole host of small hoteliers...

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: On a point of order. The term private sector very often is not all inclusive in Barbados. What I was talking about is the upper echelons of the private sector, and I did correct that in my speech.

Mr. H. deB. FORDE: The Honourable Member has explained and I take his explanation.
4.00 p.m.

There Mrs. Talma, Mrs. Maitland, Mrs. Gittens, Miss Enid Maxwell, and the whole host of people – and the Brooks' with Accra – saw where Barbados would go and participated in its development.

Likewise, Sir, I am not absolutely at one with the Honourable Member on this point because in so far as ancillary services are concerned, particularly shopping services, there was the foresight of the Goddards, particularly the late Mr. Fred Goddard, an Honourable Member of this House, with the Flight Kitchen and the development that he took, and the thrust they have taken. Secondly, the imaginative development of people like the late Major Cave, Mr. Geoffrey Cave's father, and so on, of the ancillary services which are extremely vital and important to the total hotel plant and tourist plant

Sir, I am not going to let his view on matters so dominate my short contribution here. I want to say, Sir, that this Bill is positioned and is brought here with the intent of fulfilling some of the national objectives which this Government set out in its Manifesto. I want to refer to the document which the Honourable Leader made a document of the House very early in the history of this Parliament as he was so enamoured with what was written in it and the depth of the thought that went into it. We have made it part of the objective of our party and of Barbados that there should be full e onomic enfranchisement for every Barbadian. We seriously believe that this Bill, when properly administered, will help us to achieve that objective of enfranchising the normal Barbadian, and I will go into details about it.

It has become fashionable for the Opposition – and I cannot blame them, Sir, the Opposition is not there to agree with everything a Government does, and it has to put its slant on how Government does things – it has become fashionable for the Opposition, particularly the Official Opposition, to try to convince Barbadians that in two years the Barbados Labour Party has sought to reverse its own philosophy of well over 56 years now, of helping the wider Barbadian, particularly the poorer Barbadian, particularly the working-class Barbadian, whether rich or poor, or white or black. That has been our philosophy.

They are trying to give people the impression, and this happens every time the Democratic Labour Party loses office, that our intent is merely to make richer people who are already rich and make poorer people who are already poor. Now, Sir, that might be good politics but really it misrepresents the position. Also, I do not believe that any thinking Barbadian who looks back at the last 18 months and sees the human effort which this Government has been making, particularly led by the Prime Minister, will ever believe this slant toward the historical development in the last few months. No sensible Barbadian will take this, Sir.

For one thing we have tried to restore the economy to some semblance of balance and stability, and we have been achieving it. There has been not only growth in the economy, but there has been growth in the economy with jobs. It is a fact today that more people are in employment than before we came into office and jobs that are sustainable as well, and that is where we make the difference. We make the difference. We are not merely going for a job to create a job for a job's sake but we have to create a job that will be there, that will contribute to the standard of living of the people and, at the same time, will see economic growth in the country.

Now, Sir, the Honourable Members, both the Honourable Leader of the Opposition and the Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central of the minority Opposition should agree that all three political parties recognise that Barbados is only going to develop if there is more money invested in this economy, and not more money printed by the Central Bank. I will give it to the Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central. He has always been against an excessive printing of local money because we can print as many Grantleys, we can print as many O'Neals, as many Frank Worrells, as many Errol Barrows, as we like but if we do not have the foreign exchange and the foreign investment to back those, then they are worth nothing so that it is crucial to the stability of the Barbadian economy that our currency be stable and that we be earning more by way of foreign exchange and our foreign exchange balances go up. When we are able to do that, we must combine it with greater savings by Barbadians as we earn more. We are saving too little in this country and together we must then use that for developing Barbados in the areas which are ripe for development.

We must also dissuade people from believing that the Government's function is to take on the total development of the country, each one of us. Each one of us has a stake and each one of us has a duty to let our savings help and if we cannot do the development ourselves, to invest and to allow those with the ideas to get on with the investment.

We are agreed so let the political parties stop the posturing and tell the people that we must agree that we have to attract investment, whether it is local investment backed by foreign currency, or even domestic investment without foreign currency as well as we have to attract foreign investment because that will contribute to a growth in the economy. It will contribute to savings and when we have savings, particularly domestic, we must channel those into enterprises which will, in turn create jobs and earn foreign exchange. To .this extent I agree with the Honourable Member that this will lead to export oriented growth in that sense when it will, at the same time, create a higher standard of living for our people. If the parties are agreed on that, Sir, what is our quarrel about this Bill? This Bill seeks to achieve that objective by providing incentives to those who would take the risk of putting their money where our objectives lie, if I may put it that way.

Now, Sir, we are in competition with several countries. What we have to bring before our people is a comprehensive programme of tax incentives and concessions that are necessary if we are to attract the capital for development, and the consideration which inspired this Bill as it inspired the thinking of the Government is that such incentives have to be based on the total investment involved. The export potential which the Honourable Member has raised, the employment opportunities, the foreign exchange preservation impact on the general conduciveness to economic activity in the context of Barbados, always bearing in mind, and I agree with the Honourable Member, the objectives that we have to widen the class of share ownership and property ownership in Barbados and that is the key philosophy of this Barbados Labour Party Government.

4.10 p.m.

We do not go out there and preach black and white because it is divisive in Barbados at this time. That battle has been won politically a long time. What we go out there and preach is that if you are a Barbadian you have the right to have a job. You have the right as well to participate in owning Barbados and we would be mistaken if we do not recognise that there has been a tremendous shift in ownership patterns in Barbados. That shift has not been followed by a shift in management personnel and human resources and we have to place a good deal of emphasis on that.

Mr. Speaker, let me be specific because I do not like too many generalisations. Today the major ownership of the Barbados Light and Power is within the hands of Barbadians. Over 60% of the ownership of the Barbados Light and Power is owned by Barbadians and of that percentage 23% is owned by the National Insurance Board which is owned by all of us, the workers of Barbados. That is reflected in dividend yields which help us in turn to keep down the contribution rates. That is a way of spreading the ownership in Barbados.

Likewise, Sir, the Honourable Members do not say it but I am going to say it because there is a lot of misrepresentation. The biggest investors in Barbados today in the utilities and elsewhere happens to be pension funds and institutional investors, and who owns them? If it is the Mutual Pension Fund it is not owned by a group of people up there. It is owned by all of us. The Honourable Member for St. Lucy, for instance, has a little bit in that too. He is a policyholder, I believe. So am I. So is the Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central, so is almost every Honourable Member in here because it is a genuine mutual company. That is what it is. Therefore what we have to recognise is that as that fund and the social security funds and the pension funds of the big companies in Bridgetown own more and more of the shares and of debt or equity financing, whichever way you go with these companies, we are widening democracy and we have to follow this up. The women have more sense than the men. The women are getting into the right areas. We have to follow this up with people like us in here being in the management positions and in the directorate positions so that we would stop this quarrel in Barbados on the political level to make people believe that the Democratic Labour Party or the National Democratic Party or the Barbados Labour Party is out to put black people down and to put white people up.

Now nothing can be more further from the truth because I am telling the other Honourable Members that we must be serious about politics. That is not the way to win office. The Honourable Members will come to office some time and we can do that game as well. In my view politics should advance beyond that game and let us come and bring criticisms that when the Government is wrong, give the Government a hard time but do not use the pejorative, do not use the emotional in a way that Honourable Members know is not justified in order to debate this type of thing, Sir.

Sir, let me go back and make this point. The history of incentives in Barbados is not new. The Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central and I agree on that. If you read the history of Barbados, the development of the Empire Theatre and that whole area by the Methodist Church was done by way of incentive legislation. I do not know how many Members take the opportunity to go back and look at the Statutes that have passed this legislature, even when black people were not part of it. Back in the sixteen hundreds and coming up into the eighteenth century when we started to become part of it you will see that there was incentive legislation of this nature being brought down in order to encourage development in special areas.

Likewise, Sir, both major political parties and the Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central was a Member of a major political party once upon a time, Sir, until he broke with them. In fact he should not get provoked by that, Sir, because the Democratic Labour Party was once a member of a major political party over here and it broke with us but we happen to be able to generate people who think that they are better than we are but we am still the stalwarts. We give birth, Sir. Even as we get older we are still capable of giving birth so we generate new movements but they are part of us in our philosophy. They understand genuinely where we came from.

But, Sir, fiscal incentive legislation came from us and it came from them and some of the type of concessions that am in this legislation are concessions spread in various acts throughout Barbados, the fiscal incentive legislation, the hotel aids legislation. None of us at that time, not even the Right Honourable Errol Barrow – he was then merely Mr. Errol Barrow – ever criticised the fiscal incentive legislation under the then Barbados Labour Party on the basis that it was discriminating or that it was going to forget the small man or the small black man.

When they amended and upgraded the legislation we never offered that type of criticism. We saw the legislation as applying to all Barbadians and this legislation has no limitations in it. The taxi driver, the school teacher, the credit union member, like myself and the Honourable Member for St. Lucy. I am a credit unionist. We can get our credit unions to invest and to lend money, Sir.

Aside.

Mr. H. deB. FORDE: I am a 'member of a credit union. I do not own one but I participate in it because I understand their importance, Sir. We can get them to invest in this son of development and I want to get it out of the way once and for all, Sir. The Government has no intention, unless they come in here and create a fracas in Parliament, both with the Opposition and the Back Bench, the Government has no intention of selling Government departments in the area.

As a matter of fact, in June, I am informed that as late as June 1996 the Cabinet took a decision to jest the Government properties along Bay Street, inclu[illegible] the Hilton Hotel, including the former Child Care Board, including the Harbour Police Station, including the Marshall Hall, including the Town Hall, in the Barbados Tourism Investment Corporation.

Now it is being vested there and, Sir, I would go so far as to say this to the Government that that should not preclude the Government from doing joint ventures in that area with other persons. That should be its philosophy and if it has to give to a company any ownership at all over any of those properties the Government can give a 50-year lease or a 99-year lease so that the real estate remains vested in the people of Barbados.

The Government has, and we have as a people the brains to think ahead now to make sure that we can make an instrument which the Honourable Member calls for, that is marketable. A 99 year old lease is completely marketable but the future generations of Barbados will retain the ownership of these things. Now the Honourable Members will be surprised but when the Empire Theatre was developed the Government 99 years ago, almost 100 years ago now, retained exactly that form and gave a 99 year lease. That is why the Empire Theatre is coming back into the ownership of the people of Barbados. It made one mistake. Its review provisions of the lease term were not favourable but nowadays we know more than our forefathers knew and it is possible for us with the public sector behind us to put in those safeguards for the development of Barbados.
4.20 p.m

Sir, this is nothing new so the Honourable Members must not go out and give the impression that this Government is bringing special legislation for some special class of white person or blue person or pink person. We are bringing legislation for Barbadians as a special class. We Barbadians are very privileged in many respects. We have the human resources as shown by the recent report of the United Nations. In 50 something years these two major political parties have transformed Barbados today where our people are now more inclusive than exclusive than years before. There is not one of us in here that have the guts or can be so nonsensical as to reverse that trend, not one of us.

Sir, I really must ask us to lift politics beyond making the narrow point. Here is a Government that is trying. Not that you should not criticize things that are wrong. Some of the suggestions made are valid suggestions which I hope we will take and the Government as the legislators will improve. But I do not believe that this Government can be criticized on the basis on which some of the criticism was impliedly put. That is one of the reasons why I have intervened in this debate, not only to give some true and historical perspective to what is happening but as well to correct any inaccuracies that are being sent out about a Government to which I belong. One of the things that enthused me about the Labour Party when I read history was that it was in the forefront of those who fought in the 1920's and 1930's particularly who believed that there had to be political enfranchisement as well as economic enfranchisement for all of our people. It does not matter that they misrepresent me in public life, Sir. I believe that my stability in public life, by the privilege that the people confer on me, is the testimony of how weak are the arrows being thrown at me. I live by example and not merely by words, Sir.

Now the widening of share ownership I have spoken about. This Government has done a lot to widen share ownership by way of bonus shares, contributions to credit unions as well as encouraging the Government funds of the National Insurance to be invested in certain matters so as to ensure that more Barbadians own their home and the land of Barbados. There has been the historical shift of institutional ownership. We now have to get that as much as possible to local ownership as well. But we have been trying as well to fashion instruments of investment. Both Honourable Members of the Opposition who have spoken are right in this respect that the instruments available for investment in Barbados are too limited. You either invest in Government paper, a Treasury Bill or a Debenture if you can get one, or a Treasury Note. Now those are not as marketable, although they should be, they are not as marketable as we think. There are a limited number of companies listed on the Securities Exchange here and all of us are deeply conscious of the need therefore to widen the instruments of investment.

Sir, a person who has money in a commercial bank and is getting let us say these days an interest savings rate of 5 per cent per year is not doing all that well if they have to pay tax on it, because it is not tax free to them unless you are over 60 or 65 years and you are a pensioner and retired. The Honourable Member knows that and I know it, Sir. So we have to try to make areas in which the small lady up in Balmoral Gap or over in Brathwaite's Gap in Deightons or in Fordes Road or in Bannister's Land, instead of putting $2 000 or $4 000 in a commercial bank, can put it into any company that is doing development where she gets interest on it free of tax.

Now what the Government has to ensure is that these companies have some stability behind them and that she is not put at risk, if the Honourable Member says that the criteria which the Minister must take into account, even if it is not stated in this legislation, should include the stability of the investor of the developer so that we have a broad brush and make sure that they are not coming in for a kill whether they be local or otherwise. But I have no difficulty with the legislation which gives the tax free status to the loan as made. I have not got the fear of the Honourable Member for St. John that this will mean that the developer cannot get benefits. The developer can get two benefits. He can get the benefit of his investment with the write-offs both in capital and otherwise and he can then get the benefit if he structures his company in such a

way as loan capital that he has put in. So it is not correct to say that this is not equity base. I have two more minutes and I am going to be very quick, Sir.

I want to agree with the Honourable Member that the Minister in looking at development areas will have to widen the whole of the Christ Church development area. I am not making a special plea for me here because my family owns land which the outskirts of the whole Garrison stood. The wall is still there standing and that historical area obviously should be a development area right up to that. But I believe that the south coast has so developed and is so developing as a major tourism area that the Honourable Member is right in making the suggestion that, if the Minister adds development areas – (Give me two minutes more. I am not going to waste the House's time.) – we should widen the areas. However, I think that he is not on firm a ground when he speaks of the area in St. John and elsewhere on the East Coast because the Scotland District extends from the boundary line between the parishes of St. Andrew and St. Peter beginning at Pico Teneriffe and goes right up to Consett point in St. John including where I live. Codrington High School is especially mentioned and Stewart Hill and along the boundaries between the parishes of St. John and St. Philip. It does exclude, however, the very vital area in the constituency of the Honourable Member for St. Philip South of the Crane and coming right up to Harrismith. I believe that those areas too should be encouraged to develop and could get not only the hotel aids incentives but the other incentives as well.

Now I want to make two points and I am finished. I agree with the Honourable Member of the need for us to pursue the sidewalk expansion programme for Christ Church. It is unfortunate that even that sidewalk expansion programme became a divisive political issue between the Democratic Labour Party and ourselves in 1985 and 1986 when the Honourable Member for Christ Church South was leading our Party, because the Right Honourable Errol Barrow made many political speeches about cutting down trees, he said we were cutting down trees whereas the trees are still there. In some areas if you cut down a tree, as has happened in some developing areas, you must replant the tree and we could have dealt with the problem that way. But as a result, the sidewalk programme was temporarily halted so this Government is already committed to widening the sidewalks.

The last point I want to make is one not made by Honourable Members. We have to develop as well not only the legislation to take care of the 10 years. We have to do what Singapore, Malaysia and Mauritius and others are doing, that is, we have to have the post-incentives legislation to keep the permanency of the investment there and there are enough precedents available for us to follow. We do not have to reinvent the wheel but we certainly have to be ahead of our competitors to make sure that we have in place the instruments, the legislation and the governmental will and determination to fashion the instruments to entice our people to consider Barbados as more than an island. It is their home and their birthright. They have every right to own every square inch of it, Sir. I appeal to Barbadians outside to take this opportunity to be the first to jump in this Special Development Bill and make use of its provisions. I leave the House with this knowledge, Sir. The National Insurance Board has already started discussions with the Barbados Development Bank and the Board of Tourism for the acquisition of the old Marshal Hall so that together with other institutional and other developers we can contribute to this process and invest part of the workers' money in Barbados for the benefit of future generations.

4.30 p.m.

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: Mr. Speaker, I had hoped at this time to be paying my respects to the late Shirley Bryan, but nevertheless I will perform the national duties I have been called upon to perform in a somewhat historical debate in this country, even thought some of us may want to treat it casually as maybe just another tourism debate.

Mr. Speaker, at the outset I want to make it very clear that I understand that this debate today has very little to do with the forward planning of the present administration and more to do with the fact that Barbados finds itself in an economic environment which has almost come to a halt, which is almost at a complete standstill where our people are desperately putting their heads against each other wondering what will happen tomorrow. Where will my next job come from? Where will my next meal come from? There are many people in Barbados tonight wondering what the future holds. I remember the great Martin Luther King who once said, when asked about the future: "I know not what the future holds, but I know who holds the future." This evening, Mr. Speaker, there are very few Barbadians who can speak confidently about the future of this country, and if they could they would tell you that they know the future does not rest in their hands.

We have found ourselves in a desperate situation where the Government is very dependent on accepting international funds for investment sector loans from the Inter-American Development Bank, and these reform Bills are part of that process that has been negotiated. Whether it is BLP policy or IADB policy, there is an agreement and an understanding that this is one of the requirements before any of that reform financing can be advanced to this present Administration. So let us understand this debate. There are some matters that we will discuss at a domestic level, but I want to make it very clear that this Bill is as a result of the dictates of the Inter-American Development Bank.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. In my introduction I was at pains to point out that particularly Sub-programme B, the urban renewal component in the Tourism Development Programme, we took out of the hands of the Inter-American Development Bank. We could not wait on their bureaucracy. I made the point.

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: In the Investment Sector Reform Programme document, which was agreed to by this Government and made a document of this House, at page 12 it identifies and it states as part of the understanding between the Government and the Inter-American Development Bank that the current land use policy in Barbados as expressed in the Physical Development Plan – and I am going to read it into the record again even though it is a document of the House:

> "... and as reflected in day to day administrative decisions applies highly restrictive controls to the transfer of lands to alternative uses. Complicating the problem of land use policy is the legal and financial situation facing many of the sugar estates. Until these problems are resolved, transfer of sugar lands to alternative uses will be difficult. Each of these issues will be discussed in more detail below.
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> The Town and Country Planning Act vests considerable discretionary authority with the Minister and the Chief Town Planner. The law gives them the authority, the power to grant approval to development projects in special circumstances. Neither the law nor the regulations attempt to define these circumstances. Such an exercise of authority without clearly defined and well publicised land use principles creates uncertainty in land markets and acts as a constraint to development of a more rational structure of production."

This is the understanding, Mr. Speaker, between the Government and the Inter-American Development Bank, so it is necessary, and you have to ask yourself the question: If in fact the Minister and the Town Planning Chief have the right within existing legislation to grant concessions or to give direction in terms of land use policy, why are we today passing legislation to make sure that it is not left to the dictates of a Minister or the Chief Town Planner. It must be written into and carried out in order for a Government to draw down tranches from the Inter-American Development Bank. Up until today, 180 days after this Administration signed an agreement, since January, they are still unable to draw the first tranche. Not one of the Members on that Side can get up and deny it. They have as a matter of policy to put every single condition as set out by the Inter-American Development Bank, propelled by the IMF, in place before they can proceed with any kind of development in this country. No development can take place unless they conform, but they want to give the Barbadian public the impression that they have some dream or some vision of Barbados based on total confusion.

I have often wondered, Mr. Speaker, what would have attracted people to her? The Minister speaks very well and sounds pretty when dreaming about the development of Barbados. If you listen you will get carried away, Mr. Speaker, and believe that you are in a fool's paradise.

Mr. SPEAKER: This is to you or to the Minister?

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: You will get carried away, Mr. Speaker, because the Minister has the ability to speak in very glowing terms but to completely miss the boat of reality. We can dream and we can make promises, but the man in the street is tired of political talk and tired of dreams and promises, He wants action. Tell me how I am going to benefit from the system, but that has not been forthcoming and this Bill before us today certainly has nothing whatsoever to do with that.

I will speak about why I consider the Barbados Labour Party's boast that this is some visionary exercise to be total nonsense. Can you imagine, Mr. Speaker, the amount of money that will have to be spent to realise the dream of the presenter of this Bill today? An enormous amount of investment which this Caribbean region has not seen. There is no evidence in support that there will be massive investment flowing into Barbados just because of any vision of the Minister or because somebody wants to deal with the Synagogue or the Cheapside Market.

Mr. Speaker, these are strange proposals that have been submitted. Can you imagine a Minister has the right to designate any area in Barbados a Special Development Area, but we would seek now in 1996 to restrict that authority to four areas? The Minister was quite clear when she said she would ask the Minister of Finance if he would include Baxters Road so that they can benefit etc.

4.40 p.m.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order, comprehension seems to be beyond some people. I pointed out that at clause 3.(3)(b) that the Minister has the power by order to amend the first Schedule by increasing or decreasing the number of special development areas.

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: Mr. Speaker, I am fully aware that the Minister has that special power. I am saying very clearly that it seems very strange to me that a Minister that sits with so much power, that has the capacity to give concessions to grant ABCDEFG, would want to come to Parliament to be restricted in a particular manner, in

a particular framework to be dictated to by the Inter-American Development Bank, that you have to set out clearly what your policy is. The charade that went on is that you would want to give the impression that this Bill has something to do with the pulling along of the small man in the street or small business when, in fact, we accept that it is an attempt to attract foreign investment into the country which would eventually ensure that the future of Barbados is in the hands of people not Barbadian.

Aside.

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: Mr. Speaker, when this lady was speaking I never said one word and every time I try to speak in this House she is either shouting, raising her voice and I sit like a perfect gentleman and listen to her all the time.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! Please proceed like a perfect gentleman. Just continue please. You are a perfect gentleman.

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: It is a strategy that she would want to distract me. She is a person that likes to distract you every time you are on a road as far as they are concerned. But she is not going to get me off my track.

The development of Barbados, Mr. Speaker, must be done by Barbadians. I take very seriously to heart the comments that were made by the last speaker from Christ Church West who, in his final submission, made what I thought was a genuine call to Barbadians, both local and overseas, to participate in an exercise that would seek to advance new development in Barbados. I think that that is a very serious point and I spoke about it during the debate on the returning nationals where I indicated that the time had come where we should seek to grant concessions to Barbadians living overseas who have the wherewithal, who have acquired significant savings *etc.*, to invest them and to benefit from any concessions that are going to be granted. I fear, Mr. Speaker, and as a black Barbadian, I would hate to come to this country or to try to pass down Sandy Lane which as I understand it is now a private enclave, recently by this same Administration so that all the roads down there are now private. Very shortly you are going to need permission to get from here to there to there because foreigners will tell you that you used to own this part of Barbados but now I am sorry this is our land, this is my country and I am telling you what is happening here. Mr. Speaker, that will cause a lot of problems in this country because Barbadians are people who stand up for their rights and they do not want to be confronted with any situation with any person telling them they cannot go here or there because that is one of the few things that bother Barbadians. Barbadians like freedom and they object to any chains, gates or anything that bars them. They like freedom of movement and I think that we have to be very careful about it.

Mr. Speaker, let me just explain why I think that the whole plan of the Barbados Labour Party is confused and totally disruptive to the whole development process of Barbados. We are talking about development at a time when this country is desperately battling with a water resource shortage. It is well known locally and internationally that Barbados is in deep trouble with regards to our water resource base and I will say again for the benefit of the Barbadian people that the present capacity of our water resource base is approximately 47 or 48 million gallons of water per day. That is what we produce. The present allocation is approximately 45 million gallons. It represents about 95% of our water resource base that is presently allocated. The growth trend was approximately 4% and if that growth trend of 4% continues in terms of new developments, it means that by the year 1998 or 1999 that the entire water resource base available to us in Barbados will be allocated, which will mean that any further development will hamper districts in Barbados and deny them the right to potable water that we have become accustomed to. And it has started to happen in St. Philip, in St. John, in St. Andrew, in St. James and parts of St. Michael where residents are going for days without water at this present time.

I am not going to get into the question why because I am not in the Government. It is a fact already even though we have not reached the 100% point that there is a problem and a critical shortage of water. Can you imagine, Mr. Speaker? We are encouraging development and I have heard nothing yet in this debate. Even if we accept there is going to be new investment we must tie it in to what is realistic in Barbados and we must tie it into our environment and where are our shortfalls and our shortcomings.

If we are going to attract new investments we would have as a matter of policy to indicate that any new development must be tied to a desalination plant to generate your own water. There are certain strictures that affect new investment that they must be told up front. Don't give people the impression that you can come to Barbados, give concessions and that they will create jobs overnight. I will deal with the fact that they will create some jobs, but I was waiting on the Honourable Member for Christ Church West to explain how he would be able to create economic enfranchisement which he failed to address during his address. He went adrift and failed to make it even though he made a point? I was waiting for him to explain to me how he would have been able to enfranchise economically the small black Barbadian. He failed to do it.

Mr. Speaker, if we are going to give the impression that all you have to do is to bring some money, invest in projects, what projects we don't know, but projects of the magnitude that we are hearing it, they will certainly

wipe out in a very fast time the potential for Barbados to supply water and we are going to have to look at the whole question of desalination and the whole quality of water will reduce and the cost of water may even go up as a result of having to put in these plants *etc.*

It is necessary if we are going to attract real investment that these investors must bear the brunt of any new water resource use that must occur in this country. So you have a government that is proceeding before it is even sure that it can provide a simple product like water to new developments. Then, Mr. Speaker, you have the amazing – you talk about the Scotland District – scenario where this administration is now inviting – investment into the Scotland District and last year on August 3rd when the Great Carew lost his life during those floods there was a picture in the newspaper that formed part of the public relations exercise of the Barbados Labour Party where they projected that Mangrove was a flood prone area and that there was no flooding in the Scotland District, precisely at Greenland. Would you believe that this week, one year after, Government, this same Government on the development on special projects identifies the areas prone to flooding in Barbados and prominently among the names listed is Greenland? So, on the one hand, one year ago, you have the Government saying Greenland is safe for a dump, and one year after saying that it is now a flood prone area. It is total confusion, Mr. Speaker, and you are talking about an Administration which is inviting investment.

4.50 p.m.

Now there is a Scotland District Association who are already placing projects in the pipeline in that Special Development Area, and who would want to benefit from concessions. Here are briefly some of the comments that they would want to make on some of the projects that they have put in place so far.

Morgan Lewis Mill, Mr. Speaker:

"The Barbados National Trust has embarked on the restoration" –

I am reading from a memorandum from the Scotland District Association and I can make it a document of the House. I have already made it a document of the House.

> "The Barbados National Trust has embarked on the restoration of Morgan Lewis Mill. This will receive international acclaim because of the patronage of the venture. It will be the outstanding heritage attraction of the island. A British company of mill restorers is to start work on June 12.
>
> The site is to be developed as an outstanding heritage attraction and the Mill will be restored to full working capacity. This building is within 500 yards of a proposed dump."

So, in terms of macro planning for this country, if the Government is really serious about total planning and wants to encourage investment, and certainly in the Scotland District, are you going to go and place a landfill in the middle of an area that you are today designating as a Special Development Area and placing garbage in the Scotland District Development? It goes on, Mr. Speaker:

"The Organic Sugar Project in the sugar district,"

I am making this point to show you that already there are persons who are interested in investing in projects that will redound to the benefit of Barbadians. This is a project proposal made by Higgs and Hill in California and the BADMC of Barbados.

> "It is to put 1 000 acres of land in the Scotland District which has not had chemical fertilizer for the last three years into organic production. The land is to be prepared by organic methods by controlling weeds in an organic manner and supplying compost as an organic fertilizer.
>
> The cane is to be milled at Nicholas Abbey. The product is to be exported as organic sugar to Higgs and Hill California and marketed in the USA. It is estimated that some 1 000 local people will be employed year round on small acreages using traditional methods. The product will draw further attention to the Scotland District as the producer of organic products and as an area for eco-tourism."

Mr. Speaker, I am just curious why an Administration would on the one hand be encouraging special development, and on another hand encouraging total disaster in a flood prone area and have the temerity to come to this House to suggest that this is their plan, that this is a plan that they have had for 10 years. I simply do not believe it.

The facts remain, Mr. Speaker, that this Bill today is as a result of one of the conditions, or a series of the conditions that have been set out by the Inter-American Development Bank in the Investment Sector Reform Programme document. If the Government is serious about filtering and financing the man in the street who will have no part to play when this Bill is passed in this House today, it means nothing to him, because tomorrow, the day after, there will be no opportunity for him. He will still be waiting on the false promises of the 30 000 jobs that were set out by this Administration. This will not create any jobs whatsoever.

Now let me explain some more of the confusion to you, Mr. Speaker. This administration today passed very glibly over the Carlisle Bay. The Minister identified Carlisle Bay as a Special Development Area. Yet she spoke for 47 minutes about 6 projects, none of which is in Carlisle Bay. She spoke about the Synagogue, the Cheapside Market, which was a project left in place by the Democratic Labour Party which the Minister of Agriculture will be able to confirm, where we said that we will refurbish the Cheapside Market.

Asides.

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: It does not matter. We were waiting on the funding just as you have been waiting on the funding.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order please, order please.

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: They were left in place, all of the proposals for the re-esfablishment and the refurbishment of the Cheapside Market. It was a matter that we articulated during the last election campaign. So there is nothing that the Barbados Labour Party can come and claim credit for, that there is this big palm tree, shops and that kind of thing.

The point is that in her presentation it took her 47 minutes to explain about Bridgetown what we have heard in this House on three occasions. None of the areas is part of the Special Development Plan. This is total confusion.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order please, order.

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: All of the projects that the Minister spoke about had to deal with Bridgetown, no part of Carlisle Bay whatsoever. Yet we had to sit and listen about the Empire Theatre. I am going to tell you that the Empire Theatre is going to sit right there and when that administration is thrown out of office in 1998 or 1999, then we will have to consider doing something about the same Empire Theatre when we get it back in the hands of the people of this country.

Asides.

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: That is precisely the point. A proper development. That is what you call a proper development that is in the interest of all Barbadians, because the Sherbourne Centre is a centre that you can create activity around that will redound to the benefit of hotels, restaurants, taxi drivers, the whole works. The Ministry and this Administration, even though they condemned Sherbourne, have been using it more than the Democratic Labour Party used it when they were in office.

Asides.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order please, order. Honourable Member, please.

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: Mr. Speaker, I thought today the presentation that was made by our leader, the Honourable Member for St. John, was an outstanding contribution where he took his time and explained to the people of Barbados that they are going to be paying taxes in this country when other people are getting away "scot free". You are going to ask yourselves the question over and over again. "Is this the price that I have to pay as a Barbadian for being poor in Barbados?" Yet they do not want to raise the argument of big businesses *et cetera,* but it is a fact that will have an impact on the minds of all Barbadians when they realise tomorrow morning that we have passed this Bill in the House of Assembly and that effective immediately great concessions, relief, *et cetera,* will be granted to investors of a particular size. Yet they will remain in Licorish Village and the Ivy without an opportunity to access money.

The Honourable Minister spoke very glowingly about small business people in Baxters Road. You can give them all of the concessions in the world, but if they do not have a cent to spend in refurbishment or in development, then all of the concessions are a complete waste of time.

The problem in Barbados is that we must stop telling people or creating false impressions that everything is going to be okay tomorrow, when we know it is a difficult road and not one that can be solved tomorrow.

It annoys me when the Minister, every time she gets up in this House, paints a picture that everything is rosy and glowing, when they know that it is going to take a long time and a painful road and every effort should be made to concentrate on the small business people and the unemployed in this country who are now presently suffering and fearful of their futures.

You have not come to this Parliament today with any great Barbados Labour Party Plan, or any vision. You are here because you have no choice. You need to get the funds for the Solid Waste Management Programme, for the Tourism Development Programme and the expansion of the Bridgetown Port. You need the money for the Coastal Conservation Programme Phase 2. You need the Rationalisation Health Services Programme and you need the funds for the West Coast Sewerage System.

Asides.

Mr. SPEAKER: Let us proceed, please.

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: You have to do what the Inter-American Development Bank and the IMF dictate to you to do, and you have no choice in this matter but to

bring this legislation as well as the other piece of legislation. The Financial Institutions Bill is another criterion that you have to bring as well as the VAT later down in this year. These are all conditions and part and parcel of a total package for you to access this money. Stop grandstanding and coming into this House as if you have a policy. You have no policy. You are confused in your mind about development. We were on a solid growth path in Barbados bearing in mind the constraints we are up against in this country. We have a lot of obstacles in our way that we have to correct, serious obstacles, so stop the grandstanding and understand that people do not accept your dreams. They sound good but they mean nothing. It is false talk. It is complete mockery.

5.00 p.m.

Mr. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member conclude, please.

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: Face the reality and understand that the people in Barbados come first and you have let them down when you create these scenarios where you are trying to give them the impression that you are passing legislation in their interest when you know it is not in their interest but in the interest of the people that you serve.

Thank you.

Hon. R. C. EASTMOND: Mr. Speaker, the last member who spoke, the Honourable Member for St. Michael East, would have this Honourable House believe that what we have before us today is a Bill which we are seeking to enact in conformity with the wishes of some external agency. For his benefit, Mr. Speaker, and for the benefit of all Honourable Members of this House, and indeed for the wider general public, permit me to cite page 7 of the Manifesto of the Barbados Labour Party which speaks in terms of reducing the cost of investment and of removing and reducing taxes to stimulate investment.

More specifically, Mr. Speaker, page 8 talks about broadening of the infrastructure in areas that can support the economy such as the Carlisle Bay Project and other activities which can stimulate private sector development and foreign exchange earnings.

Mr. Speaker, this Manifesto would have been written by a party that was hopeful of capturing office, and the proposal to develop Carlisle Bay and other areas as enunciated in the Manifesto could not have been put in here in a situation where the Barbados Labour Party was in league with the Inter-American Development Bank, the IMF or any such thing.

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: On a point of order, Sir. I made it very clear that whether that is written in their Manifesto or not, it forms part of the understanding within the document agreed to by the Government and the Inter-American Development Bank with regard to the investment sector reform programme. Whether it was in your Manifesto or not..

Mr. SPEAKER: You have made your point.

Hon. R. C. EASTMOND: Mr. Speaker, is the Honourable Member saying that the Inter-American Development Bank helps political parties write Manifestos? Is he saying that, Mr. Speaker? In any event, this Honourable House will recall that in his first Budgetary presentation in the year 1995, the Right Honourable Prime Minister and Minister of Finance clearly raised this question of special development areas. What we are doing today is both a Manifesto promise that this great party made before coming to office and is also giving effect to a proposal put in the 1995 Budget of the Right Honourable Prime Minister and Minister of Finance.

Permit me, Mr. Speaker, to cite page 28 of the Financial Statement and Budgetary Proposals for the year 1995 as these were presented on Tuesday, April 25, 1995. These are the words of the Right Honourable Prime Minister and Minister of Finance:–

> "It is my view that Government's involvement in these projects should be that of an enabler providing the money to pay for the studies and that it should arrange a package of tax incentives for the private sector to make investments in new businesses in these areas.
>
> Therefore, I have decided to declare four areas as special development areas and to grant duty and tax relief as well as investment allowances to new approved areas which are established."

The areas are as follows:–

And I am still citing the Budgetary presentation of the year 1995.

"(i) Speightstown

(ii) Carlisle Bay

(iii) Scotland District

(iv) St. Lawrence Gap",

Then it goes on to address the question of special development areas. So from our stance, Mr. Speaker, what we are saying is that this great party, the Barbados Labour Party, promised...

Asides.

Mr. SPEAKER: One minute, please. The Honourable Member, please. The Honourable Member, I think you are understanding who is misbehaving now, please.

Proceed, please.

Hon. R. C. EASTMOND: Mr. Speaker, what we are therefore embarked upon this afternoon is looking at a piece of legislation which is the result both of a Manifesto promise of the year 1994, as I indicated earlier, as well as being the consequence of a promise made in the Budget of 1995 and we have no apology to make for introducing this legislation because one of the primary objectives of any particular government is to ensure that such a government does its best to stimulate enough economic activity in a given country to ensure that all the benefits that will flow from such a stimulation of activity will enure to the benefit of the people.

Mr. Speaker, permit me to tell this Honourable House that in my considered and respectful view, among the needs of Barbados at this time are:–

(a) a need for greater physical development;

(b) the need for rehabilitation and refurbishment of rundown stock;

(c) the need for increased commercial and industrial development; and

(d) further business opportunities.

This legislation we have before us here, Mr. Speaker, is doing exactly that. The Honourable Deputy Prime Minister, as she made the opening address to this House was clear, and nothing that the Members of the Opposition can do can either detract from the quality of an excellent presentation, or deter this Government from pursuing stated objectives. In my opinion, Mr. Speaker, what we have before us is a Bill that is going, in the medium and long run to improve employment opportunities. It is going to both strengthen our domestic economy and diversify in the process. It is going to lead to increases in the Gross Domestic Product, and will make for a more general and beautiful environment while increasing opportunities for Barbadians.

Mr. Speaker, to put it differently, the clear purposes of the Bill are to entice developers to develop Barbados, to mobilize idle capital and permit me, Mr. Speaker, to develop the point of the need to mobilize idle capital. There are often times in an economy where all types of economic occurrences go on and many of these occurrences tend sometimes to be rather negative.

I have seen at the height of an economic depression a large amount of money built up in banks through deposits coming as a result of high interest rates on savings. We have seen in the midst of economic recession and depression instances where a large amount of money has lain idle. Now, money which is idle whether in the commercial banks, whether in insurance companies, whether in credit unions is of no use to anybody.

Part and parcel of the whole aim of this legislation is to get capital which is now lying idle mobilised for the purposes of investment for our lovely country. What is wrong with that? In every situation wherever any resource lies idle, whether it be capital or any other resource, it is of no benefit to a particular country. What we are suggesting is that this package of incentives will act as inducements to private sector personnel to take money now not in use and put it in the economy for purposes of investment The consequences of investment when once the investment is well-placed and well thought out are usually beneficial f a a given country.

If, for example, out of this in the first three years, Mr. Speaker, 50 businesses came into existence, we would have a situation where these 50 businesses will naturally need labour, will naturally be producing some goods or services, will naturally be paying some taxes, not necessarily the taxes that are in contemplation this evening. I am not contradicting myself because I would still expect certain businesses to pay basic things like Corporation Tax while, at the same time, benefitting from other tax incentives. We would have then a situation where such an investment will impact positively on the economy. When you have a large country, Mr. Speaker, with a high population and an intractable level of unemployment, there must never be any opportunity lost for trying to capture new investments and this Bill seeks precisely to do this. There are possibilities in Barbados yet to be tapped and so this Bill sets out quite clearly to ensure that in instances where there are possibilities but nothing has happened to make these possibilities real that we can have more and more business activity going on in the local economy.

5.10 p.m.

Mr. Speaker, permit me to look at the incentives as they are thought out in respect of the Scotland District I heard the Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central indicate that all of the economic activity pursued in the Scotland District in recent years has been by the small man. That is true. Now, nobody will do anything to discourage the small man from continuing investment but one reason why the activity was limited only to participation by the small man was because of the absence of the incentives to encourage people with more c, ..al to get involved. These incentives are not only going to encourage people with more capital they are also going to continue to spur on the existing small businessmen down there to continue activity.

What we are saying, Mr. Speaker, is that the Scotland District with its natural beauty, with its unique character, has in the past hundred years or so not been able to reveal its true potential as an economic gold mine for the reason that nothing has happened to spur on economic activity there. We in the Ministry of Agriculture have done a study of the area and we are contemplating potential for the Scotland District in the area of eco-tourism and in this regard, Mr. Speaker, we have identified areas like Joes River, Tuners Hall, Morgan Lewis and Fosters Funland and other areas around as areas with potential for eco-tourism.

There is an area, *Mr.* Speaker, just east of Indian Ground. I think it is known as Sedge Pond. It is an area that is almost in its natural state. It is beautiful and presents lovely scenery and such like and we would like that as people take advantage of this legislation that things like nature based recreational activities result in consequence. We would like to see entrepreneurs use their enterprise to set out on guided tour operations. We would like to see more mining of sand and clay. We would like to see the potteries getting a shot in the arm thereby permitting them to become a greater economic force than they are at the moment. We would like to see in the Scotland District too the evolution and development of fruit orchards. What we are saying, Mr. Speaker, is that the legislation which this Government has brought in today permits that type of scenario to become possible where in the past the potential has always been there but nothing has happened to tap it. So, *Mr.* Speaker, this is just an example of what we are contemplating that the legislation which we have before this Honourable House can do.

We are also looking to see, Mr. Speaker, where we can integrate specific types of economic activity with others. Very often you have a tourist sector which craves supplies from other sectors. There are occasions when the tourist sector would naturally need things like souvenirs from the small business cottage industry sectors and we are perceiving a situation coming out of this legislation, Mr. Speaker, where people in the Scotland District, involved in handicraft and in the making of souvenirs can help to build our tourism more by providing basic materials which are needed in the tourist industry.

Mr. Speaker, I heard a remark coming from the mouth of the Honourable Member for St. John which is a very strange remark. He said that in his perception the State is on the retreat. He said exactly that. Part of his contribution was the state is on the retreat. I interpret that, Mr. Speaker, giving it is most liberal and favourable construction that what he is saying is that Government is virtually delegating its responsibility to manage the economy to the private sector. I interpret it to mean that.

Nothing should be further from the truth. It is not a question of Government handing over the responsibility for the economy to the private sector. What it is, Mr. Speaker, is that the legislation is contemplating a situation where out of the development that would flow from this legislation the production of goods and services and in particular services would flow from this legislation.

Now, Mr. Speaker, you are aware of instances where all over the world for the last 40 years and up until recently a lot of Governments got involved in the direct production of goods and services very often at huge cost, very often at increased taxation levels, very often seeing inefficient production and such like. It is not a question, Mr. Speaker, of this Government delegating away its responsibility to economic prosperity to the private sector. What it is, is an admission that certain activities are best and most competently handled by the private sector. There are times when the Government should step back, not retreat completely, but should step back and limit its role to regulation and to facilitation and to enabling. But what is the point of having a monstrous system of state capitalism where the state gets involved in every type of commercial activity at huge cost and at a burdensome costs to the public and engaging in all types of undesirable and inefficient economic activity.

The last party, Mr. Speaker, that should speak in terms of Government beating a retreat and handing over the throne is the Democratic Labour Party. Who would forget, Mr. Speaker, that as part of their economic management between the years 1991 and 1994 they deliberately set out on smaller government? They cut the cost of running the Government by substantially laying off large numbers of people the principal aim being to save money and to reduce the amount of money Government was putting in the economy. It was a cost saving thing. At the same time that same Democratic Labour Party Government had divested itself of shares in BET, had sold Heywoods, had virtually handed over the Port to the very same interests that the Leader of the Opposition is claiming that we are extolling here today.

Mr. Speaker, it is not a question of our being interested in permitting any narrow small minority of special interest people to try and leaving out other people. This legislation has within its contemplation a whole range of business people, small, medium and large, who can make use of these opportunities and get involved in the business of setting up businesses and running them for the benefit of Barbadians. There is nothing either on the face of the legislation, Mr. Speaker, or in its core to suggest that this is big business, Barbados Labour Party Government trying to pander to the wishes of big business out there!

Mr. Speaker, at the same time those Members of the Opposition who have hinted partially that their heart is not so much against the legislation but that it has

reservations, have tended to suggest that perhaps even when this Bill is passed it may never achieve the objectives that this Government is hoping that the Bill will achieve. Mr. Speaker, it is always within the competence of any ruling administration, any party in power, to look back at legislation to see how it is functioning and if it does not serve the purposes for which it was passed to review it and I am not by any means throwing cold water on this but I did hear the observation, Mr. Speaker, that the Bill seems to have an ambition which nobody knows will succeed and to that extent they were doubting Thomases speaking over there who tended to suggest that perhaps we are a little grandiose and a little over optimistic by hoping that the mere passage of incentives will do everything for the economy which we are hoping will be achieved.

Mr. Speaker, I never intended to be lengthy in this debate. But I would want. to say that this Bill has the potential for inducing all types of people including people who have never had a chance to own anything. There are thousands of Barbadians involved in cooperatives and there are hundreds and hundreds of Barbadians who are involved in the credit union movement. The credit union leaders themselves are arranging all types of training courses in entrepreneurship, management, accounting and business systems to try to educate their members. Indeed, Mr. Speaker, whilst I say this, I must also observe that I have heard from the mouth of all political parties in Barbados much excitement about the whole question of economic enfranchisement which the Honourable Member for Christ Church West so eloquently spoke about. This legislation provides all these opportunities. This legislation is giving us in Barbados an opportunity to have a stronger private sector develop for us in Barbados enterprises which they only bring here for Barbados.

5.20 p.m.

Mr. Speaker, with these very few remarks, I have no difficulty in supporting this Bill and in commending the Honourable Leader of Government Business of the House and Deputy Prime Minister for having made such a sterling contribution to what is going to redound to the benefit of Barbadians for generations to come. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: Mr. Speaker, I want from the outset to commend the Honourable Deputy Prime Minister for bringing this Bill to this House today. I also want to say that the Member for St. Michael East seems not to understand that we are living in 19%. Way back in 1994 the Barbados Labour Party's Manifesto spoke to urban development, the construction of sites and public markets, improvement of highways, the renovation of the Pelican Village and the upgrading of Temple Yard. It spoke also of constructing of roads and drainage within urban tenantries. Therefore, one can dismiss the argument that this is an IADB propelled programme.

I also want to speak to the point which was raised by the Member of St. Michael South Central. He is asking if Government is proposing to sell the prime land and if Government is proposing to give the prime lands to non-Barbadians. I can assure him that Government indeed has vested these lands in the BTIC and the lands are not for sale. The lands will be Government's equity in business where we hope to attract local business as well as foreign business to develop the infrastructure within Barbados. We also hope that out of this exercise that lots of employment will be generated in these areas.

Mr. Speaker, I want to speak primarily to the fact of housing and urban development in this area. Since 1994 we have set up an Urban Renewal Committee within the Ministry of Housing to upgrade the infrastructure within the urban area and we have looked at providing opportunities for communities which are run down over the years, providing opportunities not only for renewal but providing opportunities where a number of persons who are unemployed can get help. This year's Budget one will recall that $1.2 million was earmarked for urban renewal and we are hoping, Mr. Speaker, to provide opportunities where persons can obtain funds to get their toilet upgraded. We are hoping that soft loans can be provided for those persons who are employed but who find it very difficult to upgrade their home. We know also that there are a number of people whose foundation of their homes need upgrading. We hope that this will help a number of people within the urban tenantries.

Also pavement, drainage, and so on – we noticed that heavy rain came this year but we can tell you that a lot of the water was able to run off because of the Drainage Unit which was set up within the Ministry of Public Works. This helped because a number of people were complaining within the urban area of poor drainage and flooding. This year we did not see much flooding because of early cleaning within the urban area.

Mr. Speaker, I believe that over the next couple of months that with the help of the Drainage Unit and the Urban Committee we should be able to alleviate some of the problems that are confronted by urban people. Many Members were speaking to the fact that there are poor people who do not get help. We want to assure Barbadians that those persons who are working but finding it difficult at this point need to be underscored that soft loan will be provided to upgrade their infrastructure. Wherever possible where persons are not working grants and subsidies will be provided to help those persons who are over 65 years, and those persons who live by themselves and are not

working and this is within the urban area. I also understand the Rural Development Commission will also be doing a similar thing within the rural area because many poor Barbadians which Members have been speaking to, have been asking from time to time – what is being done to help upgrade facilities, to help upgrade the infrastructure and so on? But Members must bear in mind that we have already earmarked a number of areas for development which we hope will be undertaking within the next year or so.

Now in terms of the project at Pondside, the Pondside area is part of the Special Development Area we are hoping that the project can begin as soon as possible. I think that it is earmarked to start in October. There are only 3 homes remaining there. The site has been cleared and an engineer has been appointed and we are hoping that work can commence at Pondside very soon. That area at Pondside will attract high-rise housing and will also attract shops for poor black people. It will attract a day care centre and it will also attract small craft shops, barber shops and so on for the people within the area. We are hoping that within the next financial year we *can* also look at areas in Church Village as well as the Roebuck Street area where there are a number of derelict buildings existing. These developmentsonce they have taken off, Mr. Speaker, will see a number of residents back in the City. Because today Members have spoken to the fact that cities are strong when people are living in the city and the Barbados Labour Party's programme underscores this we believe in providing a strong urban as well as suburban areas where they will be free of derelict buildings, where drainage will be properly put in place and where people will have opportunities for funding, where they will have access to funding not only from banks but from an organization which will provide low interest rates to them.

Now there are also other areas in St. Michael which can be earmarked for development, for example, the Warrens area. In the Warrens area which is suburban but has been attracting a number of businesses in recent times, I believe that this is another area which can be earmarked for development since a number of people have been asking for sites in that area to erect businesses. We are also looking at the Glebe. I notice that the Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central asked about the Glebe, St. George. The Glebe, St. George was mentioned in our 1981 Manifesto where we were hoping that an area would be earmarked for the development of small shops for a number of people in the area.
5.30 p.m.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: On a point of elucidation. In fact it was in the 1971 Manifesto that the Glebe was mentioned when there was a Keynesian declaration where Barbados would create two cities, according to Charles Dickens, and one was supposed to be at the Glebe.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. This was a very serious proposal of the Barbados Labour Party, that the Glebe would be the focus of a subtown. Today the Glebe has a polyclinic, it has a post office, it has a cricket ground, it has a school, it has a church, it has a housing estate, it is indeed a subtown and growing. There is nothing to stop it.

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: I am hoping in the not too distant future that we will be able to earmark the Glebe as a special area as well, because as the Deputy Prime Minister has made the point, since 1981 or even before that the Glebe Development was considered where it would link the Oistins Development. Since then there is a bus service between Oistins and the Glebe. As the Honourable Member pointed out, there is also the George Park facility in the Glebe, there is the Public Library, Church and so on, and we are hoping that we could earmark the 1.2 acres of land which we are now negotiating with the Church to develop small businesses in the area where there will be a turning bay for the bus service linking Sargeant Street and St. George, from St. George to Bridgetown and Oistins, so we are hoping we *can* use the Glebe in the future not mainly as a subtown but as a central focus where it will be earmarked for development and small shops which will be leased to many of the small entrepreneurs within the St. George area.

Mr. Speaker, I just want finally to say that I believe this legislation is in keeping with that of countries which have gone before us. For example, in Mauritius they use a similar model of development and it has sustained tremendous employment opportunities for the Mauritians, and I believe that such an opportunity will help Barbadians not only in employment generation but also in sustaining economic stability in the future.

I thank you,

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Mr. Speaker, this evening I rise to speak on this Bill which provides for the designation of Special Development Areas and for related matters. When one looks at the areas that are supposed to be designated as special development areas, one would have thought that these areas, seeing that they were in existence for so long... You take Speightstown. One would not believe that in the 90s we would be dealing with the narrow area of Speightstown as a special development area, seeing that over the years it has been the centre of attraction, the area where people come together. One would believe that we would be looking at a Bill that would be expanding Speightstown. One would expect as we had started previously in the 70s and the 80s where we decided that in developing Speightstown that we would look further north and develop areas in Checker Hall and Heywoods.

Aside.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN. Sir, the Prime Minister might laugh and talk about Checker Hall in Speightstown, but that is why the word "Speightstown" should not have been used. We should have been talking about a special development area in the north of Barbados which runs from Checker Hall in St. Lucy, Benn Hill in St. Peter, down to Speightstown and probably to as far south as Gibbes. You cannot expect to have the type of development that you are talking about in Speightstown without putting the necessary infrastructure in those areas. In an area that is less than a mile in length or width you are asking for all of this development and the areas around Speightstown not having the necessary development, so that when this development comes to Speightstown then you have to channel it back to Bridgetown.

We need a map to see when we are talking about Speightstown whether it is just the narrow Speightstown or whether you are talking about Six Men's also. History will tell us that it was at Six Men's, not Speightstown, where the commercial activity started, and we cannot have a special development area that ignores Six Men's. Six Men's must be part of the special development area.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. The area delineated for Speightstown reads as follows: Six Men's on both sides of the new highway to the limit of Road View in a southerly direction.

Mr. SPEAKER: Is that the same Six Men's?

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Yes, Sir. The same Six Men's, it is no other half dozen.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Thank you very much. I can always rely on the Deputy to counteract what is said by the Prime Minister. When I mentioned Checker Hall they asked me what Checker Hall has to do with Speightstown. Now they tell me Six Men's has something to do with Speightstown. Do you understand the difficulty, Mr. Speaker? I am not going to allow them to narrow me to Speightstown, I am saying that, seeing we have development already in Checker Hall with the Cement Plant, and seeing that there is enough space starting from Benn Hill right down to Speightstown which would also allow us to give a special investment to those people who are interested in buying the St. Joseph Hospital, because, let us face it, we must have St. Joseph Hospital and St. Joseph Hospital must be included in the special development area. I believe there is no argument about that on the Other Side. They must admit that we must get St. Joseph Hospital into Speightstown Special Development Plan. The same way that Road View is in, from Benn Hill right down must be in, because the type of development I am seeing for the north of Barbados must include these areas. If we do not include them, then we will be wasting money and time.

If you really want to help poor people, then you will give these poor people running from the Arawak Cement Plant right down to Speightstown the opportunity to get special incentives and develop that whole coastline. Let us face facts, Sir. If these incentives are put in place from the Arawak Cement Plant down to Road View, including the special development area, the necessary incentives to create employment in this country will be gotten. We cannot keep putting our eggs in one basket, we have been putting our eggs in these baskets now for a long time. From the time I was born I have been hearing about development for Speightstown, Bridgetown, Carlisle Bay and the Christ Church area and the time is right for a special development area to be also at North Point Hotel. We have evidence now. It is a myth that they only have great swimmers in the south. It is time that the North Point Hotel be reopened and be designated a special development area so that the pool could be back in use in St. Lucy, so that the great swimmers in St. Lucy get the opportunity too, to get to the Olympics and not try to win a gold, but to win golds. The best swimmers are in the north of Barbados. They swim in those seas over there, and I am telling you when it comes to the pool they will do better. So I am saying that the special development areas must include St. Lucy, and if St. Lucy is not included I cannot support this. Let me tell you something. The Honourable Member for Christ Church West has suggested in this Assembly today that it should not stop at Bay Street or Garrison Hill, it should go right up to Christ Church. I agree with that. I have no problem with that. I would expect him to support me, that instead of it just going south, it goes north also.

Aside.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Apply? I am applying all like now. Places like Ellerton...

Aside.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: You all are famous for putting seas in those places. Redman's Village is another good area to be a special development area If one looks at what is going on in that area, one will see that if the necessary infrastructure is put in, there is a lot of potential to create tourist related jobs.

Aside.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: I am talking about Redman's Village, I am talking about' where the poor people live, not at Warrens where the rich people live. I am speaking on behalf of the poor, so I would like you to leave me alone and let me speak on behalf of the people on whose behalf I am always speaking. If you want it at Warrens where the rich people are, that is up to you, but I am speaking about Redrnan's Village. The problem with the Barbados Labour Party is that they are always talking

about the airport for St. Lucy, but let me tell you somzthing. Any good politician must not be limited to a narrow view.
5.40 p.m.

Any good politician must be able to expand his knowledge and go into the future. Let me tell you all something, this foolishness you talk all the time about I am always talking about an airport for St. Lucy, if we had serious problems at the airport, do you know what would happen with tourism in this country? I am saying, Sir, that any country that depends on tourism should not limit itself to one airport. I am saying that if as the Honourable Minister said that he had to extend this and that and call for $43 million and $80 million, why expend $80 million to extend when you can build a new one with the same amount of money?

I am saying to all those who have problems with my talking about an airport for St. Lucy, that is their problem. I am clear in my mind and I know exactly what is in the interests of Barbados and when I speak on behalf of the people of St. Lucy they understand exactly what I am speaking about. So you see, Mr. Speaker, I heard the Honourable Member for St. George North on this Special Development Areas Bill speaking about drainage, but I would like him to know that we have a problem in Pie Corner which is a flood prone area, also Archers, Crab Hill, Hope Road, Spring Garden, Checker Hall, Rockfield, the Risk, Lamberts, Maycocks Terrace, Northumberland and there is another problem that I want you all to solve shortly, because this is the hurricane season and if you are talking about special development areas you also have to think about if we have a hurricane. In the western side of St. Lucy there is no hurricane shelter. The Half Moon Fort School is in need of repairs. It used to be a hurricane she ter and now it is not. So the westward side of St. Lucy – St. Thomas is in the east but I am talking about Half Moon Fort in the west.

I heard members in here talking about beautiful churches and they forget to mention St. Lucy's Parish Church. When you are speaking about beautiful churches you must speak about the best. Have you visited St. Lucy lately? So how can you visit St. Lucy and ignore the fact that St. Lucy's Church is now the best looking church in Barbados?

Aside.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: St. Clement's will get there soon. You see, Mr. Speaker, we have a situation in Barbados where areas that we should not have been ignoring by now we are still talking about. There is no way that we should be still talking about developing Speightstown when in the 70s Mr. Barrow was putting a hotel in the environs of Speightstown, when he had other developments for Speightstown. You know the problem in Speightstown is that there are some Prime Ministers who cannot understand what other Prime Ministers are doing.

I would say this, Sir, that the way the Speightstown Bypass Road ended up was a bad stroke and I would also say because it was mentioned in here about a fishing harbour again for Speightstown and I am saying that if a fishing harbour is placed...

Aside.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: ... it was mentioned. You have to have good memory when you are in this House. If a fishing harbour is placed where it was supposed to be placed it is going to spoil the development of Speightstown. What I am suggesting for Speightstown, and I know the Prime Minister will agree. with me, is that where the present fish market is that the land to the west of that be reclaimed, that we expand Speightstown to the west, and that we build the jetty that the Prime Minister promised to build for the people in Speightstown and the North of Barbados. He has my support on that. There is no doubt about it. I am saying that you cannot keep the fishing harbour in the middle of Speightstown. It must be moved and put somewhere else.

Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Member for St. James North did not mention anything for St. James North. He has spoken already and I hope he realises that there is a lot of potential for St. James North and that he has to please the investors in St. James North too. I was saying that when one looks at the Scotland District one must agree that the Scotland District is one genuine area out of the four that needs special development, there is no doubt in my mind, and an interesting point was made today and that is that all the development in the Scotland District was done by poor people. There was a rebuttal by my friend the Honourable Member for St. James North and he said that the reason why there was no development in the Scotland District is because there were no incentives.

Mr. Speaker, it hurts, because it is telling me that we have to live with a private sector in this country, Sir, who can only get involved in development when the country is giving it something and that the private sector is not prepared to invest unless there is something called an incentive coming from Government and that is hurtful, Sir, because I believe that any caring private sector would look after the unemployed and they would get involved in projects that are also capable not only of making money but also to employ people of Barbados.

When that statement was made, Sir, I had to ponder on it. I am saying, that if that is true all the development that has to go on in the Scotland District should be

given to the poor people and the Prime Minister should make sure that the necessary finances are put in place for poor people to continue to develop the Scotland District, not people who are prepared to come and sit on the backs of poor people and then try to buy them out.

We have to be very careful because in these 4 areas what you are going to see is that these special incentives are going to encourage the so-called rich to come in and get more power to purchase the properties of the poor people who have been developing the area without incentives. So we have to make sure that incentives are not used against the poor people, because if you empower the rich more, all they are going to do is purchase from the poor man and they are going to push him out.
5.50 p.m.

Asides.

Mr. D. St.E. KELLMAN: So I am saying, Mr. Speaker, that we must be careful that when we are designating areas as Special Development Areas we must think through the proposals and we must be sure that at the end of the day what we set about to do we achieve. What I am saying here, Sir, is that the reverse is going to happen, that the poor people in these areas who have been holding these areas and developing them at their own pace, are sooner or later going to be pushed out by people who can do without the incentives, but who will be getting the incentives.

Another area in St. Lucy that is right for development, Sir, is the Naval Base Facility. There is a lot of history. I heard the Honourable Member for the City this morning talking about the caves, bridges and the tunnels. I would ask her to go the Naval Base Facility, Sir, and find out if what she is talking about are not there also. I will also ask her to check and see if our problem with our North American tourists could not be solved by developing the North Point Surf Resort.

We talk about tourism, and sometimes we tend to forget what people are looking for. The British come to Barbados because they see Barbados as Little Bristol and because we have cricket and they can identify with cricket. The only thing in Barbados for the Americans could identify with is the Naval Base, and we have never exploited that, Sir.

The time is right, Sir, that we start exploiting that facility. We can do the reversal. It is time that we remind Americans that this is part of their history. The Naval Base is part of the history of the Americans and we have to use that facility, Sir, to make sure that we tap into the North American market, Sir.

I do not believe, Sir, that because the Naval Base is beyond the Judge Gap, the other side has decided they are not going to encourage anybody to get involved in that project. Listening to the Honourable Deputy Prime Minister again, Sir, Six Men's is up to the Judge Gap. NCC can only see development up to the Judge Gap. Now the Ministry of Tourism is only seeing development up to the Judge Gap. It is time, Sir, that the Prime Minister tells his Ministers that St. Lucy must get its fair share of any development that is coming to Barbados. It is about time that all of the development that is happening in Barbados not only stops at the Judge Gap. It worries me, Sir. By chance I could have been the representative for the Prime Minister because he has strong roots in St. Lucy. His grandfather's navel string is buried in Pie Corner, and that is why I cannot understand why he allows his Ministers to treat that beautiful constituency the way they do.

Asides.

Mr. D. St. E, KELLMAN: He likes his grandfather. I will not get involved in that. I will not agree with you, he likes his grandfather. I know that he will scold the Ministers. Do not get involved in this. This is Northern Access Road here now.

Asides.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN. Mr. Speaker I am saying, Sir, that you cannot have development in Speightstown and ignore St. Lucy. Neither can you ignore St. Andrew nor ignore St. Joseph, nor St. James North. I am suprised at the Honourable Member for St. James North, as one of my parliamentary representatives – because I have two of them – I thought that he would have been defending the interest of the people of St. James North. Not once has he done it, even though I was begging him. I begged him to mention St. James North. He is forgetting that he is my parliamentary representative.

Hon. R. C. EASTMOND: Mr. Speaker, I really do not want to interrupt the Honourable Member but, on a point of order, this debate is about a particular matter under the rules governing relevance I tried in my contribution today to be as relevant as possible, quite unlike what the Member for Sr. Lucy is doing.

Mr. SPEAKER: Thanks, but he is trying also.

Mr. D St. E. KELLMAN: Mr. Speaker, I am extremely grateful to the Honourable Member for St. James North for telling me that there are no areas in St. James North to be classified as Special Development Areas. Now I will speak to my friends from St. James North about that matter, Sir, because he is saying that there is nothing relevant about St. James North. You heard him, Sir, and you said that I would get to relevance and I did just now.

So you see, Mr. Speaker, we have places like Six Roads, and I believe that the Members of St. Philip South and North would agree with me that they are good areas that can be classified as Special Development Areas. The necessary infrastructure is there, they just need the incentives. Once the incentives are put in place, Sir, I believe that these are areas that can help with the unemployment situation we have in the country today, Sir.

We cannot ignore a place like Nesfield, Sir, which happens to be the centre of St. Lucy, and we have already the Atlantic Manufacturing plant there. With the necessary infrastructure and investment, I believe these areas will give us the necessary development that we would like, Sir.

You know, Sir, Mr. Speaker, I will not forget you. Around the Howard Supermarket area is another good area, because the development has already been started.

Mr. SPEAKER: This is Bush Hall you are talking about.

Mr. D, St. E. KELLMAN: Yes, Bush Hall. The development has already been started, Sir, by these poor people who do not run away from the country when it is in crisis. They stay and they fight and fight and they help the Prime Minister. I know that like the businessmen in the North you would also like to see areas in your constituency designated as Special Development Areas.

Sir, I would like to see that in this Bill, Sir, instead of having narrow areas like Speightstown, we talk about the areas from Road View stretching to the Arawak Cement Company or North Point, or something like that, but not just Speightstown, Sir. If you put Speightstown, here, one would expect you to come further down and explain what you mean by Speighstown.

The same thing with St. Lawrence Gap and Carlisle Bay development. These names should really be removed, Sir, and be given a map of these other areas because we do not want to be back two years in 1999 or the year 2000 saying that we are going to extend it to Checker Hall or the North Point Surf Resort. We want it in such a way that you give a wide area and you phase in the development, if anything, Sir.

So, I am saying, Sir, that if the people of St. Lucy are to get any benefits from these special designated areas, the changes and the necessary investment and infrastructure must be put in place. What you would get, Sir, is that Speightstown would get development and, if I have a say, Sir, you will get a lot of development, but then you would not have any place for the spill over.

I am saying that if you are getting cruise liners coming into Speightstown, if you are getting tourists coming into Speightstown, Sir, you cannot keep it in one narrow area. You must put it beyond Speightstown so that everybody in that area can enjoy the benefits from the development.

Sir, we do not want a situation where people believe that everything is being placed in Speightstown and St. Lucy is being neglected. We want to believe that Barbados belongs to us, Sir, and that we are working in the interest of everybody in Barbados.

So until they can give me a commitment that they are prepared to amend this Bill, I cannot support it as it stands right now, Sir.

Thank you.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I welcome this opportunity to be part of this debate to discuss an important piece of legislation that will have a tremendous bearing on the course and on the nature of the development of this country for many years to come.

If I may put the legislation in context, it would be to say, first of all, Mr. Speaker, that this legislation was an initiative first announced in the Budgetary presentation of 1995, conceived of as part of an approach of the development of the country which saw the Government as being largely an enabler but seeking to create an environment within which the investment activities of Barbados could be so focused as to have the maximum impact while allowing investors to make a reasonable rate of return on their investment.
6.00 p.m.

I need to broaden the concept because although there have been very strong speeches in this debate, the House is in danger of not understanding the concept of a special development area. The notion of special development legislation, Sir, is not new to tax law. If Members of the House would take the time to go through this Summary of all the taxes in the world, they would see that provision is made in the tax regimes of many countries for special incentives to be given to investors in special areas.

The notion of a special area, Mr. Speaker, recognises that in the course of a country's development, there may be at various junctures areas that "ave enormous potential that is not being optimised or is ignored, or neglected, that there might be other areas where the cost attendant upon development is sufficiently massive that in the absence of special incentives the areas will not be developed. Equally so that there are certain areas which, because of their special location, can be a catalyst in the transformation of others. Therefore, in determining what should or should

not be a development area, obviously we could not take in the whole country, as the Member for St. Lucy would want us to do, but we have to choose areas where there is obviously great cost attendant upon development. The Scotland District would naturally qualify, because given the nature of the environment in that 1/7th of Barbados' land area, any investor who wants to invest in the Scotland District is going to face enormous costs, will have to stabilize the land, has to protect it from a hostile marine environment and the like, he is entitled to special development concessions.

Equally so, Mr. Speaker, there are some areas that can serve as a catalyst in the transformation of others. Without having to put Checker Hall, or Pie Corner in the pot, it is quite obvious that if Speightstown can be developed as a focal point of economic activity, it *can* be a catalyst for the development of the north. So you do not have to put Checker Hall in the pot to develop Checker Hall. You develop a focal point and that will carry the rest of the north with it.

Equally so, Sir, if you were to take a boat ride along the Carlisle Bay area, you will see beachfront property in Barbados inappropriately being utilised and developed. You have Government offices on the beach. You have, for example, the Child Care Board with a building on the beach. You have police stations on the Beach. You have the Welfare Department on the beach. The whole purpose of special development legislation is to try to provide incentives to convert existing properties from inappropriate low economic usage to their maximum economic returns to the country and the investors.

It is for that reason, Mr. Speaker, that the Carlisle Bay area has been identified as a special development area because if you were to traverse the entire Carlisle Bay area you will see a situation where there is a tremendous potential but the potential is not now being maximised from the point of view of national development because the existing investments are not designed to do so. In many countries in the world, in London, for example, they have had to take the old dockyards where the old sugar boats used to dock and reconvert them for greater economic use.

What we are seeking to do, therefore, Mr. Speaker, is first of all to have a focused approach to the development of the country targeting incentives not by granting across the board incentives as some people would wish, but so targeting incentives that in those areas of tremendous economic potential, in those areas of high cost development and in those areas that can be of catalytic benefit in the development of Barbados, incentives can be brought to bear to allow those areas to grow to their true potential. This legislation therefore is intended to serve that purpose.

It is intended also to serve a broader purpose by adding to the instruments that we propose to use in order to generate income, jobs and foreign exchange in this country, Mr. Speaker. The potential of Speightstown, if properly developed, the potential of Bridgetown, if properly developed, the potential of the Carlisle Bay area, if properly developed, and the potential of the Scotland District, if properly developed, is such that a large amount of income, jobs and foreign exchange *can* be derived from this particular initiative.

The legislation is very simple legislation. It has benefitted from my staffs perusal of similar legislation in many countries in the world taking account of the Jamaican's Urban Renewal Act, Trinidad's Special Development Zone legislation and legislation used in other countries of the world where specific problems facing some of our special development areas have been addressed by way of this legislation.

I would want to say, Mr. Speaker, that the legislation is designed to allow the process to be very transparent. What the legislation says at section 3 is that the Minister may prescribe a development period, that is the number of years. The Minister may prescribe development areas. He can prescribe the boundaries of the development areas and he *can* add or subtract from the number of areas and the boundaries thereto.

Mr. Speaker, any developer making an application to the Minister whose application is approved will find that that developer's proposal will be published in the *Official Gazette.* That is captured at section 4(3), so that there will be no secret deals or secret transactions surrounding the application of this legislation. Equally, Sir, all developments carried out under the auspices of this Act will have to comply with the provisions of the Town and Country Planning Act so we are not going to be creating two Barbadoses where special developers can do as they like and the rest of us have to comply with the Town and Country Planning Act. They will have to keep within the four corners of that Act.

What we are making provision for is for persons who are approved developers in these development areas to benefit from a lower rate of corporation tax than that of other developers in the rest of Barbados. They will pay a 30 per cent corporation tax. We are also making provision for their cost of business to be reduced to the extent that they will be given duty and tax relief on their inputs. We are also seeking to mitigate their tax liability by putting in place a relatively attractive range of allowances that will serve to reduce the taxable income of entities qualifying as approved developers.

This legislation will vest a lot of power in the Minister of Finance and I *can* only pledge to the House that I will be faithful to the intentions of the

legislation. This debate however, Mr. Speaker, has saddened me because once again this Parliament, in the thirtieth year of this country's independence, has had to endure a tiresome tirade of speeches by politicians who are lacking in confidence. Mr. Speaker, one of the saddest things that has happened in this country is that every two bit politician who wants to carve out a name for himself believes that the way to do it is to invoke the name of the small black man. I am a small man and I want to say, Sir, if it were possible for us to collect all of the false tears that have been shed on behalf of the small black man by politicians and intellectuals over the course of the last 50 years we would have enough salt water to run the Atlantic and the Pacific oceans out of business.

6.10 p.m.

There is a kind of charlatanism that is exhibited by people who believe that merely by invoking the name of the small black man they have succeeded in making atonement for whatever pangs of conscience that would otherwise attend their social behaviour. Many of them, Sir, who like to invoke the name of the small black man will not send their children to schools where the small black man goes to school. Many of them, Mr. Speaker, Sir, who invoke the name of the small black man would never send their children to the University of the West Indies, they send them to North America and so on. The relationship of many of them, Mr. Speaker, with the small black man is in the nature of they engaging them only as servants. They cannot sit at their tables, they cannot marry their children. The public is wise to it, the public is tired of politicians, merely for the sake of cheap popularity, believing that they can set themselves up as these masters of public conscience by merely speaking, and I want to say very softly, Sir, about how much they are in love with the small black man.

It saddens me that many people in this Parliament still believe that a discerning public is going to be taken in by politicians coming and just, one after the next, trying to make people believe that they are so deeply in love with small black people that they and they alone are the guardians of the interest of small black people, Sir.

I am not going tarry on my speech, Sir. I know where I have come from. I am confident, Mr. Speaker, with where I have come from. But I want to urge this House, Sir, that we must rise above it. Mr. Speaker, is we have a situation in Barbados where the second largest contributor to our national economy, the offshore financial sector which has been deliberately developed by all of us, Sir, to be a centre in which foreign capital has been concentrated. It is now earning $150 million a year in foreign exchange for us and we must adopt a mature approach to the development of this country.

I am, Sir, confident about this Government's ability to deal with all investors, great and small. I am not going to pander to foolishness this evening by trying to cast any false impression that only small investors should benefit from this legislation. That is foolishness. I am not going to, Sir, go out of my way either, to apologise or to be intimidated for foolish criticisms coming from a foolish opposition that would want this Government to stop doing what is in the interest of this country. When Mr. Errol Barrow died I gave a short eulogy where I said that he had his genius that was shown in his classlessness and that was incorporated in an ability on his part to take persons of all various classes and get them to work together in the interest of the development of Barbados. This country has been strong and stable because we have been hospitable to small investors, we have been hospitable to medium scale investors, we have been hospitable to foreign investors, we have been hospitable to white investors, we have been hospitable to black investors. And we have to stop, Sir, in this Parliament, believing that we can fool ourselves and the public by doing, even in our own personal affairs, things that we want to come to Parliament and profess that are not proper.

I want to beg this Parliament, Sir, to rise from this pandering, these false tears and see that Barbados must be developed by the bringing together of small black people, medium people, white people, black people, foreign people, all in the interest of national development. I make the point, Sir, that this legislation vests a tremendous power in a Minister of Finance and I give this House the assurance that I will, to the best of my ability, see that this legislation is administered, that what is done is in the interest of national development of Barbados, if it involves me having to fuse small, black, white, medium all together to carry forward this country. We have come too far, Sir, as a nation to keep intimidating and terrorising ourselves about foolishness.

This legislation, Sir, is broad enough that all can gather within it. This administration is making a case for small black businessmen and that is not the only thing that we are doing because it is not the only thing that will suffice to develop Barbados. I am not going to recite what we are doing, Sir. The small black businessmen know what we are doing for them but I am not going to cause anybody to believe in Barbados that the only people who can develop Barbados are small poor people because Barbadians have enough common sense to know that small poor people do not themselves, acting alone, have enough capital to carry the country forward.

I am going to make sure, therefore, Mr. Speaker, that if projects are good projects which fit within the national philosophy of how Barbados can be developed, if projects, Sir, are going to generate good paying jobs for this country

by bonajide investors who have sound character that I am not going to rule out those projects merely because of nonsense about small black people.

I would like to remind the Democratic Labour Party that on page 16 of their Manifesto these were the projects that they saw as carrying Barbados forward, the multi-million dollar Westmoreland Golf project, no small black people; the major extension of the Sandy Lane Golf course, no small black people; the proposal to construct a major tourism facility and Golf Course at Bushy Park in St. Philip, no small black people, Sir. I am reading from the 1994 Manifesto of the Democratic Labour Party. The Kingsland Golf Course Project, no small black people; the proposed screw dock project in Bridgetown, no small black people; the eco-tourism project at Cane Garden in St. Thomas, no small black people; the major renovations to Paradise Beach Hotel, no small black people; refurbishment of several hotels through Barbados, as we know, no small black people and the major refurbishment of the duty free facilities which will stand forever, Sir, as a stain on the Democratic Labour Party's propaganda that it loves small black people in Barbados.

I would like, Sir, also to remind the Member for St. John that he went through a general election campaign. Night by night we had the opportunity of seeing the Member for St. John relating to the people whom he felt were the future investors of Barbados. Mercifully for us, Mr. Speaker, a record of this has been kept because they appeared on the front page of newspapers and I would like, Sir, because one picture is worth a thousand words to bring these 8 photographs that appeared as front page photographs of who would have been the investors under a DLP administration. Each one of them, Sir, has the Member for St. John with a group of investors. This first one I think, Sir, is at Westmoreland.

Mr. SPEAKER: Your pictures will be made ...

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: ...documents of the House, Sir. The Member for St. John, Sir, and a group of white people, and he is not picking grass, Sir, extolling the virtues of the Westmoreland. This other one, Sir, the Member for St. John and a group of white investors. This other one, Sir, the Member for St. John and another white investor. The Member for St. John and a group of white investors. The Member for St. John and a group of white investors. The Member for St. John, Sir, and a group of white investors. The Member for St. John, Sir, and the Inter-American Development Bank, and the Member for St. John, Sir, and another group of white investors. Sir, I make these documents of the House. I make the point not to condemn the Member for St. John but to refresh his memory, Sir, because I am not going to stray from my point that Barbados' development has been driven by investments from all sides. We have to be deliberate in ensuring that specific opportunities are created for small black people in this country. But we will mislead the country if we will cause it to believe that only small black people can carry Barbados forward. I want therefore to say that the range of investment opportunities that have been generated by this investment will be so broaden that we can deal with these small investors, medium investors and large investors. That has been part of the Barbados tradition and we shall not now for false and foolish reasons depart from it on this occasion.

6.20 p.m.

Mr. Speaker, I am particularly proud as the Member of Parliament for St. Peter to be in a position to be able to bring to Parliament legislation to create incentives for people investing in Speightstown. If you drive through Oistins or drive through Holetown, you will see towns that have been the beneficiaries of public investment. They have well-defined civic centres. They have facilities that are appropriate to their standing as regional centres. Speightstown has been the subject of tremendous neglect over the years despite its enormous potential as a national focal point for heritage tourism. Speightstown can also be developed, and I have insisted on this, as a place where international business companies locate their businesses bringing new jobs and a greater catalytic effect to the region as a whole.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, in the area running from the junction of the Speightstown By-Pass along Queen Street is a tremendous opportunity for people to make investment in high quality housing. Americans have come and one very recently and made investments in the area. What I have to do now is to make sure that the area's potential for good quality housing is optimized. Speightstown has tremendous water base related potential. I must announce to the House that as Minister responsible for Town Planning that I have already granted permission for a private developer to develop jetty facilities in Speightstown to serve pleasure crafts and small cruise ships, because obviously to develop the town we have to add to its income base and Speightstown will develop when more people come in to shop. I want to stress to this Parliament that I have been careful in ensuring that a Speightstown Business Association is formed because those people who have stayed with the town historically must now participate in its transformation and redevelopment. The redevelopment must not bypass Speightstown. I want to stress that I believe that a redeveloped Speightstown can be a catalyst for the transformation of the north of Barbados. If other areas are not sited in this legislation, Sir, it is because there is no need to site them because that would be defeating the purpose of special development as I have defined.

Mr. Speaker, the execution of special development legislation will create very many novel financial opportunities for the Government and the private sector

in this country. For example, in relation to Speightstown, to get a jetty built in Speightstown I have agreed that not only a private developer can spend money building it but that he can offset the expenses incurred developing the jetty for Speightstown against the future profit of some of his related companies. We will have in redeveloping Bridgetown to look to novel ways of financing investment in this country and I believe that the Deputy Prime Minister has already indicated that it is not Government's intention to...

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. During the course of his presentation this afternoon, the Honourable Member for St. Peter presented a number of photographs, the majority of which are duplicates, but he made some allegations about the photographs which either unwittingly or consciously led to his misleading this House. Mr. Speaker, Sir, I am just asking that you give me a couple of seconds to correct the erroneous impression which the Honourable Member for St. Peter has given. One of these photographs, Sir, is a picture of me with a former public servant, Major Sam Headley - I do not know what his colour is - together with the owners of Four Roads Gas Station in St. John both of whom are Barbadian who own a gas station and who had a long association with my constituency at a private function. They are not white foreign investors.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, the second photograph is a photograph of the Permanent Secretary in the International Business Unit and I am signing an agreement with the United States Government. The official from the United States was not chosen by me, Mr. Speaker. He was sent here by the Government of the United States and I had no control over who they sent to sign this agreement.

The third photograph is a picture of me at the launching of a new product for Texaco. The persons who were launching that product were Barbadian business executives. They are not foreign investors in Barbados. They were introducing a new product line in Barbados. The Director of the IADB with whom I was signing this loan is the daughter of a former Prime Minister of Trinidad and Tobago who to the best of my knowledge was a black man because I do not know that Trinidad had a white Prime Minister. The only foreign investor I am signing this agreement with is a man from Canada who was a partner of the Honourable Member for St. Thomas as well as the former Honourable Member for St. Michael North on this side relating to concessions on a golf course which I indicated earlier in this debate and I was attending with Mr. Pembleton who has been a long standing investor in Barbados at the Westmoreland Golf Course when they were pointing out to me the quality of the grass which they had planted at the Westmoreland Golf Course and which subsequently the Minister sitting in a golf cart drove over and praised the development to the fullest. So I do not have a picture of that yet, but in due course I will make that available. What I will say, Sir, if you will permit me two more points is this. I am sorry that the Honourable Member for St. Peter did not also produce the pictures of the gentleman who he said was my very good friend who is a black businessman from an insurance company together with me opening the successful Haggatt Hall - Julie 'N Project because those do not answer his questions about my involvement in the development of black business in this country.

Mr. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member, please. Will you take your seat now please?

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: This is really a surprising, unbelievable and untruthful and facile exercise which we are engaged in this afternoon. I am happy that these are made a document of the House for the purpose of the explanation that I gave during the course of this debate.

Mr. SPEAKER: Please, please, before you begin, I am not going to allow this debate to pursue along that line anymore. Please. I am talking along the lines relating to race and colour. We will try to focus and I suggest to you, Mr. Prime Minister, that in your further explanation...

Aside.

Mr. SPEAKER: Please, just hear me please. I am suggesting to you, Mr. Prime Minister, in your further explanation to relate what you have to say to the Bill before us.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: No Standing Orders in this Parliament say that I cannot refer to or raise on colour. I am only dealing with the matter to the extent that it has been started by the Opposition Party and they have injected into this debate the fraudulent notion that this Government is bringing this legislation with a view to promoting the interest of certain people of race and colour in Barbados.

Mr. D, J. H. THOMPSON: Mr. Speaker, Sir, on a point of order. The first point that I want to make is that no Honourable Member can accuse Members of this Parliament of fraudulence and therefore I am asking Your Honour to rule that those words are unparliamentary and should be struck from the record.

The second point I want to make is that nobody made any such allegation and the Prime Minister, if he believes that any person made such an allegation, should specify who made it and what they said. There is nothing that stops him from doing that. If any allegation like that was made on this side, tell us who made it and when the allegation was made. If there is something affecting the Barbados

Labour Party, I expect him to defend it but he does not have to carry it this far. What the public is saying is not necessarily to weigh so heavily on the Prime Minister's mind that he has interpret it that we have said it.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Speaker, Sir, the reason why the Opposition called for this debate to be televised because they hope to intimidate this Government from proceeding with this on the basis that we are not going to try to help small black people in Barbados and the notion of small black people being disadvantaged by this administration has ran through all of the speeches issuing from the Other Side. At no stage in my presentation did I speak about foreigners, Sir, but I do know that the Honourable Member for St. John throughout the election campaign was featured night after night on television with a certain class of investor. I do not remember his being in the company of any small, black investor and if he wants to continue to mislead himself into believing that anybody in Barbados believes...

6.30 p.m.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: On a point of order. I cannot account for what the Right Honourable Member for St. Peter recollects, but on several occasions during the election campaign I met with the Small Business Association in Barbados, I met with individual businessmen and I was featured in the advertisement of the Barbados Labour Party as having discussions with black businessmen in Barbados and those discussions were openly questioned. What could these men be talking about? If I was talking to a white man, it was not an issue, but their advertising and public relations campaign was actually asking the public what could these two men be talking about, as if it was some kind of crime to talk to a black businessman in Barbados. This is absolute foolishness, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. SPEAKER: Okay. Thank you.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Speaker, I am not going to be distracted by the Leader of the Opposition, I know when the licks are biting. All I want to say to him is that if he wants to believe that the developers at Haggatt Hall are regarded by the ordinary Barbadian as small, black men, he can continue to delude himself. He is also, as far as I am concerned, welcome to deepen his association with the person who has the finger pointing in his face – I think they call him the man at the helm – because he is not, I must say respectfully, and this is my choice, he is not my model for what businessmen should be about. I am expressing a personal view. But I want to proceed to the debate, Sir.

The reality is that this Government is not going to be intimidated in not allowing developments to take place in the interest of the development of this country merely because of cheap DLP propaganda that the Barbados Labour Party does not like small, black people. I am going to approve investments arising from this legislation by small people, by medium sized people and by big people. I am going to approve, I hope, investment, as have all previous Ministers of Finance, arising also from foreign capital. I want to cast this debate in this sense, Sir, we have come safe thus far by creating an investment climate in Barbados where people of various classes have felt that Barbados was a good place to do business, that you could make an investment in this country with the reasonable expectation that the investment was sound, that we welcome foreign investment. As I said, the fastest growing areas in this Barbados economy are areas in which there is a concentration of foreign white businesses. They have made a contribution to this country. We should judge this legislation and the results ensuing from it by reference to the way in which it seeks to accomplish the purpose of furthering the development of Barbados. Barbados is at its best and has been distinguished among developing countries by the sense of maturity we have exhibited today in accommodating a development philosophy of this nature.

I have said, Sir, that Errol Barrow was a contradiction to many people. He said a lot of things about white people, but at the end of the day he was able to bring people of various classes and ethnic backgrounds together and make them work in the interest of the development of this country. I believe it behoves us, who are now sitting in the same Parliament he once dominated, not to depart from that approach to doing business in this country.

At the end of the day, Mr. Speaker, the proof of the pudding is in the eating. People are seeking to castigate this legislation even before it has had the opportunity to work. I give the House the assurance that the concept of a special development area, as I have explained it, is the concept that will guide me in executing the very enormous powers that this legislation vests in a Minister, I give the House the assurance that I will be seeking to have investment take place in those special areas that is not by shady characters but by people who have a genuine interest in the development of Barbados. I give this House the assurance that everything that is done in the execution of this legislation will be done in a manner that is a credit to this country and I feel that all Members of this House should recognise that this is another step in the direction of the fullest and sustained development of this Barbados society, and I am proud this evening to be able to bring legislation of this power and imagination to this House. I would like to join with those who are anxious to support this Bill before the House.

I thank you, Sir.

Mr. F. J. STUART: Mr. Speaker, I intend a very brief intervention in this debate. I believe Barbadians would be quite mistaken were they to underestimate the importance of this debate.

If I may contextualise it, Sir, the debate is taking place a short 18 days, I believe, after the country paused for a brief while to reflect on the lives and the contributions of those heroes who, some 60 years ago oppressed, suppressed, repressed and depressed by the social and economic arrangements of the 1930s, rose up and gave their lives in some cases and their reputations in others in the cause of social and economic change. From that period have come names which we now seek to immortalise. Names like Darnley Alleyne, Menzies Chase, Ulric Grant, Israel Lovell and Mortimer Skeete, amongst others.

The question that faces Barbados tonight as we debate this Bill is a very simple one, in my view, having regard to the cause which those named men fought. Is Barbados being developed for the benefit of the descendants of Alleyne, Chase, Grant, Lovell and Skeete? *Or* is it being developed for the benefit of the descendants of those whom they fought? That is the question. That is the question I face in the constituency of St. Philip South, that is the question that I encounter as I move around Bridgetown from day-to-day in the pursuit of my professional responsibilities. For whose benefit is Barbados being developed? Who has had the last laugh? Have those who fought against the system had the last laugh? Have their descendants had the last laugh? *Or* have the descendants of those whom they fought had the last laugh? That is basically the issue raised by this Bill, raised by this debate.

I listened with interest, Mr. Speaker, and in some cases with amusement to the Right Honourable Member for St. Peter, because he spoke with equal passion about the cannibal and his victim, he spoke with equal passion about the mongoose and the chicken, he spoke with equal passion about the exploiter and the exploited. He defended all interests in his speech, so that nobody in Barbados can be heard to complain tonight that the Right Honourable Member for St. Peter is not on their side, for he has defended everybody. Cannibal and victim, mongoose and chicken, cat and mouse, everybody has benefited from his anger and his advocacy and the vigour of his oratory, such as it was.

The Bill before the House, Mr. 'Speaker, has received comprehensive treatment from the Honourable Member for St. John and from my colleagues, the Honourable Members for St. Lucy and St. Michael East, and I really do not intend to get back into the details and the specificities of the Bill. The Bill emerges, as has been correctly said, from the Budget Speech of the Right Honourable Member for St. Peter delivered last year, and the content of the Bill derives from a belief that the role of the State should be as an enabler for the private sector. Now the Democratic Labour Party's position has always been and continues to be that the private sector of Barbados has a critical role to play in this country's growth and development but we also believe, and I believe the Honourable Member for St. James North tried to address this point, that when we go and shout in the ears of working-class people during election campaigns that we are going to do this and that for them, that we are going to give them this amount of jobs, they expect us to account to them on that point. They don't expect to hear from us the lame defence some time later that they tried to mobilise the private sector but the private sector did not respond.

6.40 p.m.

Therefore, we expect that if the Government is committed to this path it would be ready to account to the masses in Barbados in terms of jobs promised for the failure or success of the initiatives we debate today. I do not want to influence anybody in Barbados on this question. I have my own views about the Barbados Labour Party and the issue of jobs. I lived in Barbados in 1976 when 25 000 jobs were promised by 1981. In 1981, I went across Barbados listening to the platform of the Barbados Labour Party, and I heard it said on many platforms by men, dead and alive, men now dead, and some still alive, that those 25 000 jobs had been created. It was not true.

More recently, since 1994, had it not been for the vigilance of the Democratic Labour Party and the National Democratic Party this country would have been led to believe that 10 000 jobs had been created in the first year of the Barbados Labour Party Government. Only the vigilance of the Democratic Labour Party and the National Democratic Party saved the country from that horrendous untruth. Therefore, I do not believe the Barbados Labour Party on the issue of jobs at all. If I am wrong, I am prepared to face the consequences of being wrong, but I do not buy any of this.

As far as I am concerned, this Special Development Areas Bill is another opportunity for private sector operatives to milk the State. I do not believe that the job hope held out by this initiative will bear the expected fruit. I do not believe it. If this turns out to be true, then when the Honourable Member for the City today said that businessmen are breaking down the doors of the Ministry of Finance, the Rt. Honourable Prime Minister's office, I think President Clinton should be doing it, because he wants a solution to his job problem too. I think Prime Minister John Major should be doing it, because he

wants a solution to his job problem as well. If it is as simple as this then the western world has the solution to its unemployment problem before and should grasp it with both hands.

In this profit making drama a number of actors appear, the two principal of which are somebody called "the approved developer" and somebody called "the investor". The approved developer is the person who the Minister approves to carry out work in a special development area and the investor according to the Act is the person who provides the funding for the carrying out of the contemplated investment.

I represent the constituency of St. Philip South and at the end of the day what I say or do in politics has to be hinged securely to their daily reality. I look in vain across the constituency of St. Philip South amongst the people with whom I interact, amongst the people whom I meet at the street corners, whom I give a ride to town on mornings, for those persons who will satisfy the definition of approved developer or those persons who would satisfy the definition of investor. This Bill does not make any contact with their reality at all, and it is not without significance that hollow expressions like national development have been clouded in the speech of the Right Honourable Prime Minister because at the end of the day the question has to be asked, national development for whose benefit? The victims of the most cruel economic alienation in Barbados, the unemployed, the homeless, they are the ones who want to feel the impact of what this Parliament is doing and I want to suggest to the House that that impact will not be felt through the passage of this Bill in this Parliament tonight.

The approved developer amongst the concessions contemplated for him will be an exemption from land *tax* on the improved value of land. A few months ago, trembling citizens in Barbados from the constituency of St. Philip North, St. Philip South, Christ Church East, Christ Church East Central were descending on my constituency office in Four Roads, St. Philip with letters from the Land Tax Department in their hands threatening to sell their lands and so on if they did not pay the land tax.

What was painful about that exposure is that these poor citizens were certain that they had paid the land taxes but had paid them so long ago that they had thrown away the receipts. The result was that as a result of the choke and rob tactics of the Land Tax Department these citizens had to pay land taxes all over again and a few months ago the Department was heard to boast, I think – I rely on a memory now growing dim by the onset of old age – that it had raked in $24 million as a result of this choke and rob effort.

Put that alongside the fact that these investors and these approved investors and so on will be benefitting from these concessions. The approved developer will not have to pay land *tax* now on the improved value of his land. This must induce the cynicism of which the Honourable Minister of Education spoke and it is this cynicism which as a Parliament we have a duty to try and reduce to a minimum.

Mr. Speaker, I am not impressed by the hollow rage and the mock indignation of the Right Honourable Member for St. Peter. The reality is that before the debate on this Bill started nobody out there on the streets of Barbados believed that the Barbados Labour Party was committed to the cause of the small man and after it is passed tonight nobody out there on the streets will believe that the Barbados Labour Party is committed to the cause of the small man. That is a reality that the Barbados Labour Party has to live with and this Bill does nothing to reduce that reality to manageable proportions.

Ever since 1991, the Barbados Labour Party promised the country in its manifesto – it was then led by the Honourable Member for Christ Church West – that with immediate effect the Party would abolish land tax on residential properties of a value not higher than $150 000. Ever since 1991 that promise was made. Has there been a policy change now to shut out those persons who own residential properties at a value not exceeding $150 000? Is the Barbados Labour Party, now that they have power, extending a warm embrace to this category called "the approved development?" Ever since 1981, the Barbados Labour Party Manifesto told this country that employment protection legislation was ready for implementation once the Government was returned.

6.50 p.m.

Asides.

Mr. F. J. STLJART: The 1981 Manifesto. Yes it said that. It said that law was ready for introduction to Parliament. The Barbados Labour Party went through 1981 to 1986 and the law has not been passed. Priority is being given to every brand of legislation except the interest of the workers who need security at their places of work so that some certainty can be injected into their lives.

Mr. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member, please, would you not stray from the Bill before the House?

Mr. F. J. STUART: I am just dealing with priorities.

Mr. SPEAKER: Well connect them in some way, please.

Mr. F. J. STUART: Mr. Speaker, this legislation, I contend, is really unhinged from the reality of the people in Barbados who need to benefit from the legislative effort more precisely, the people who have no jobs, who have no homes, who have no house spots, who are wrestling from day-to-day with the challenges of life. They need a ray of hope emitted to them that something is happening that can touch healingly and transform their lives.

This legislation is not that healing touch for them. I think that when once all this effort is over the Government should go back to the drawing board and pose the question honestly: "Is the legislative effort to be used for the benefit of the descendants of Darnley Alleyne, Menzies Chase, Ulric Grant, Israel Lovell and Mortimer Skeete or is it to be used for the benefit of those whom they fought?" If they answer that it is to be used for the benefit for whom they fought, they stand condemned in the eyes of the working class of Barbados, but that will not cause the Democratic Labour Party to retreat from its commitment to serve that class in the society with all the vigour at our command.

I am obliged to you.

Hon. R. N. GREENIDGE: Mr. Speaker, my intervention in the debate is going to be brief. I want to begin by saying that what we are doing in this Parliament tonight is nothing really revolutionary in terms of the Caribbean. Indeed, we have Special Development Areas in Trinidad and we have them in Jamaica. Even in the Cayman Islands, Sir, I do not recall whether they call it Special Development Areas, but the concept is the same. Therefore what we are doing is nothing revolutionary or wrong. As I said, Barbadians will agree that the idea has good sense in it, and we are just being part and parcel of what is really a regional process.

This debate, more that anything, is about making the maximum use of properties in Barbados which have tremendous potential, economic potential, and which currently are not really being maximised. These properties, clearly, are not being put to the best use. I understand, Mr. Speaker, that when the Barbados National Bank, the Bridge House and the other stores in Speightstown are closed in the evening there is very little that happens after that.

We know what happens along Bay Street. We have to say that on Bay Street itself, as the Honourable Prime Minister has said, we have certain buildings there, buildings like the old Child Care Board and the Welfare Department, as he has mentioned, which are, really and truly, taking up what you can virtually call "good waterfront properties" and they are not being used to the maximum.

I believe, Mr. Speaker, that the peculiarity of these properties must be taken into account. These are waterfront properties and yet when the Child Care Board or the Welfare Department uses the properties, there is no real user linkage between the actual water or the waterfront and the building itself. You go into the property to type, answer the telephone or to interview someone, but the full extent of the property is not utilized. There is no full advantage and there is loss where the water usage and so on is concerned.

Mr. Speaker, I believe that this is a matter about identifying an area and actually developing the area properly. What you have to do is to determine how the locality should be used. You have to do it in a very systematic way, and you should not leave it to chance and let people do whatever they like with the property.

We in Barbados, Mr. Speaker, have come under a lot of pressure, both administrations, a lot of criticism for taking, "good agricultural land" people say, and using it for housing projects. So therefore Barbadians are very keen to let you know when you are misusing property, and the same type of argument can be translated into what happens along places like Bay Street.

We have been accused, Mr. Speaker, for instance, of putting houses in water zones and so forth. Barbadians are watching. I believe that happened because there was no planned policy and people were just doing things willy-nilly, as they liked. We have to realise, Mr. Speaker, that unlike places like Guyana, Barbados has a very limited land space and therefore whatever we do we have to ensure that the land is put to its best possible use.

I think, Mr. Speaker, the key thing in all this is that there has to be a marriage of the objectives. When I say this, Mr. Speaker, I mean that you are going to have commercialisation. You are going to have commercial buildings. You are going to have the protection of your heritage and so on. All that has to be balanced with the whole idea of making it a residential area as well. I guess, Mr. Speaker, that some people may want to move out. There is no problem with that but the point I want to reinforce is the point which was made by the Honourable Deputy Prime Minister when she said that no City can really exist unless people live in the City.
7.00 p.m.

We do not want to see something like Emmerton all over again. We do not want to see that. We must be aware that there are a lot of people who do not actually want to move away from the place where they were bred and born and were raised. We are trying to prevent at the same time a mass exodus of people so the message which we are sending is that you must bring yourself up to scratch. Government is going to give some incentives which will enable you to improve yourself. If you have no real

waterborne facilities and so on, Government will assist you because when people pass they should be proud to look at where you are and where you have come from. The whole idea of people improving themselves must be taken into consideration.

I believe, Mr. Speaker, that over the past decade or so the National Trust has done excellent work in Barbados and must be commended for the work which it has done. I feel that the National Trust recognises the fact that we should not modernise everything at the expense of our Barbadian historical heritage. This too sends the message that we have to marry all of the objectives.

The significance of the National Trust has grown so much over the past decade, Mr. Speaker, that I believe when we come to refurbish some of those buildings that Town and Country Planning approval will only be given when we get comment from the National Trust in that respect. I do not think we can have Barbados photographed as being another member State of the U.S.A., that there are certain buildings and so on which are so Barbadian that we have to try and keep them that way.

Now, the idea of granting concessions to developers I know, Mr. Speaker, is very interesting. Nobody, like the Honourable Member for St. John says, is stopping the person in Baxters Road from actually getting into activities over on Bay Street. Nobody is stopping that at all. If a person from Baxters Road wants to open a restaurant in Bay Street, no one is stopping that person. I believe it would be a real travesty if small businessmen were heard to say that they could not take advantage of the concessions because of lack of capital. I believe it offers an excellent opportunity for the businessmen to amalgamate, to come together and form groups to take advantage of these concessions. If, for instance, one businessman finds it impossible for him to purchase and run a restaurant, then perhaps three of them could come together and do it. I hope to see some women as well involved in this particular undertaking because it is not going to be limited just to the men alone. I know there are lots of women who want to get into businesses in particular things like food businesses and, therefore, I believe that they too can benefit. Also, the whole idea of the returning nationals. I believe they too can benefit from this.

I agree with the Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central when he says that we must encourage Barbadians to own a piece of Barbados.

Aside.

Hon. R. N. GREENIDGE: I can speak about Six Roads, of course because I realize that the Minister has power under the Act where he can add areas onto this particular piece of legislation. I believe that, yes, indeed, when you got to Consett you would even have gone beyond Consett and improve Ragged Point Lighthouse. They also have included Harrismith, Bottom Bay and so on. There is nothing wrong with that but the point is that provision is there where the Prime Minister can add areas onto the particular piece of legislation.

Mr. Speaker, I want to join all those who have supported the Bill and to say that I too lend my support to it.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Mr. Speaker, at this hour, and bearing in mind that we have been depriving the Barbadian television viewers since 11:00 o'clock this morning, we are prepared to close second reading, move very swiftly in Committee and close this down.

I want to move, Sir, that this Bill be now read a second time.

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

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

On the motion of Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER seconded by Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS, Mr. SPEAKER left the Chair and the House resolved itself into Committee, Mr. W. C. C. CALLENDER in the Chair.

COMMITTEE

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The House is in Committee.

Clauses 1 to 4 inclusive were called and passed.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Mr. chairman, I would beg to recommit Clause 3 for the purpose of correcting a typographical error. "For the purposes of this Act, the areas (plural) specified in the First Schedule are special development areas." Put an "s" on area.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The copy that I have has "areas." The official copy has "areas" already.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: In that case, Sir, I withdraw it.

Clauses 5 - 9 inclusive were called and passed.

7.10 p.m.

Clauses 10 to 14 were called and passed.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: I beg to move that the Second and Third Schedules be the schedules to the Bill.

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

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: I am making a request that the Committee seeks to amend the First Schedule to include as Item 5, Baxters Road.

Asides.

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: Okay, it can't be done. I was just asking.

The question that Schedules 2 and 3 do stand part was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

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

On the separate motions of Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER, seconded by Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS the Bill was read a third time and parsed and cited as the Special Development Areas Act, 1996.

SUSPENSION

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that this House be suspended until 8.00 o'clock.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Seconded.

The question was put and resolved in the affirmative without division and Mr. SPEAKER suspended the Sitting accordingly.

RESUMPTION

Mr. SPEAKER: This sitting is resumed.

ORDER NO. 5 – THE FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS BILL, 1996

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Speaker, Sir, before Parliament is a piece of legislation that is intended to regulate activity in one of the most dynamic areas of national economic life. When I say dynamic, Sir, I mean subject to change. The area of the operation of financial institutions is one which nationally, regionally and internationally has been characterised by more dramatic change in the last 2 decades, particularly as the pace of globalisation has been accelerated and has had at its core the transnationalisation of financial activity.

The financial sector, as you know, Sir, in Barbados and internationally has been one that has featured not only substantial growth but tremendous diversification with the evolution of new institutions and new products, and the regulation of the financial sector has been one area in economic management that has featured sustained and far reaching changes in the scope of the powers assigned to those responsible for the regulation of the institutions.

In our own case, Mr. Speaker, we have in 1992 seen the bringing to the books of the Financial Intermediaries Regulatory Act which replaced the 1963 Banking Act and which had as its special feature the inclusion of non-bank financial institutions such as finance companies, trust companies and deposit taking institutions which had as a special feature, the inclusion of those institutions as institutions subject to regulation. If I may put that more accurately, Sir, for many years our regulatory apparatus *vis-a-vis* the financial sector had been restricted largely to regulations under the Banking Act and regulations under the Insurance Act and obviously diversification in the financial sector made that very limited focus of the regulation far too constrained for the purposes of a sound financial system. So that the Banking Act was abolished and the Financial Intermediaries Regulatory Act was put on the books in large part, Sir, to broaden the scope of the financial institutions that were subject to regulation.

There is no doubt, Sir, that all economists of all persuasion and particularly even those who do not believe that there should be proactive role for the State recognise that the regulation of financial institutions is something that is not only deserved but is an absolutely necessary function to be discharged by the state. There is nothing that provides the basis for really economic distress that large sums of money managed by institutions that are not themselves subject to a clearly defined regulatory system. We have seen it in the case of the United States of America, the Savings and Loans, that neither were banks or non-banking institutions and as a result large sums of monies were badly utilized to the taxpayers distress. We have also begun to see it in the Caribbean where the proliferation of financial institutions many times are not subject to appropriate regulatory mechanisms have put strain on the functioning of the financial sector.

8.15 p.m.

The purpose of regulations therefore, Mr. Speaker, have been enshrined and have been designed to ensure that the interest of depositors are protected, that sufficient scope is given for the diversification of the financial sector and that there is sufficient information provided about the operations of the financial institutions themselves as would allow the regulators if necessary to indulge in early intervention, because it is only early intervention that the kind of preventative policies can be taken to preempt problems with the financial sector with a view to maintaining confidence in it.

Mr. Speaker, as I said, the Banking Act of 1963 was replaced in 1992 by the Financial Intermediaries Regulatory Act which effectively brought the finance companies, trust companies and deposit taking institutions under the auspices of regulatory authorities and which increased the minimum paid up capital of commercial banks among other things. But since the enactment of the Financial Intermediaries Regulatory Act of 1992 there have been some changes in the ownership of Barbados' financial system. We have seen where a number of financial institutions in CARICOM and across the world have run into great difficulties. As a result, international conventions have been devised with a view of establishing prudential norms for areas such as capital adequacy, measuring and controlling the large exposures of financial institutions, increasing marketing transparency through disclosure and establishing criteria to apply to bank owners, comptrollers and managers. In our region and of special interest to us where this debate is concerned, there has been a CARICOM Bank Harmonization Project which has been established by regional Governors of Central Banks in 1993 which has been designed to provide the basis for the harmonization of the financial sector in the Caribbean but more especially to provide critical minimum provisions in the various regional laws governing the operations of the financial sector.

The legislation that we are considering this evening therefore, Mr. Speaker, is legislation that has been influenced by the consensus internationally of prudential norms in matters such as capital adequacy, the measuring and exposure of banks, appropriate rules to be applied pertaining to the role of directors and bank owners. It has also been influenced by an agreement within CARICOM regarding minimum provisions that should be included in the Financial Institutions Act.

Mr. Speaker, the latter point is critical. We view the possibility for the integration of the Caribbean Financial and Capital Market as one of the greatest potentials for integration within the region. The intention is therefore for all Caribbean countries to bring their regulations pertaining to the management of financial institutions together within a harmonized framework. In order to bring our financial regulations within the standards of the international conventions and within the minimum provisions agreed to under the CARICOM Harmonization Project, we will have to make certain amendments to the existing financial institutions and the Financial Intermediaries Regulatory Act. These amendments were deemed to be so numerous and so far reaching and so significant that the opportunity was therefore taken to entirely change the entire Act from a Financial Intermediaries Regulatory Act into a new financial act.

Mr. Speaker, it is late and I am not going to tire the House with a long dissertation of what are the new provisions but just to cite a few. The new legislation above all seeks to establish fit and proper criteria for persons to be shareholders, directors and officers of financial institutions with a view to protecting their integrity. For the first time, Sir, we are requiring that branches of foreign banks in Barbados assign capital to their local operations. Historically, we have depended upon the foreign banks' operation systems and their own safeguards as the basis upon which the integrity of their own branch's operations was established. But we have decided that foreign branches of banks should have capital assigned to them by their headquarters and in this instance we are requiring that the branches of foreign banks should have stated capital of $4 million assigned. We are also using the opportunity to place restrictions on lending by banks to their directors, officers and their affiliated companies. One of the most important provisions is the repeal of the old Part 4 of the Financial Intermediaries Regulatory Act and the House will be aware that Part 4 of the old Act provided a basis for certain large companies in Bridgetown to function as deposit taking institutions.

It is our view that those institutions should be encouraged to issue paper which would enable us to develop a securities market in Barbados. We are using this opportunity therefore to repeal that section of the Act with a view to changing the operation of those big business houses which are like savings banks and which have a selected clientele of people in this country making deposits in them. That is the intention to help develop a securities market.

Another major change being contemplated, Mr. Speaker, is the relationship between the Barbados National Bank and the new financial institution Act. The Barbados National Bank as you know has historically occupied a special place in our banking system by reason of the fact that it was not subject to regulation by other banks under the old Financial Intermediaries Regulatory Act. As a result, the Bank did not have to follow as carefully as the other institutions provisions pertaining to the adequate classification of its loans, provision for bad or doubtful debts and also, as you know, there was no established relationship between the size of loan that the bank could make and its capital. The implication of putting the Barbados National Bank under the regulation of this new piece of legislation will mean that the BNB will have now to follow the kind of prudential practices, the other kinds of capital adequacy practices and the other kinds of loans to capital practices that are required of other institutions in the system. We propose that the BNB should be fully brought under the auspices of this Act within a 3-year period on the understanding that there will be a grandfather provision that will allow it to carry loans exceeding 25 per cent of their capital for the next 3 years. But aft the end of the 3 years the bank will have to reorganize its business that it will have to have adequate relationships between capital and the maximum size of loans.

8.25 p.m.

There are other areas that would have excited me if I wanted to give a massive debate on this issue. One, of course, has to do with the areas for which these regulations may at the discretion of the Minister of Finance be extended. I am a strong believer in the view that the existing regulations regarding credit unions in this country are not adequate for the purpose. When credit unions were only institutions in which people held shares they were true cooperatives in the best sense of the word. But credit unions are now institutions that are deposit taking institutions. And while there is no crisis yet in relation to the function of credit unions we have in recent times seen evidence that some credit unions can fall into bad practice and without careful regulations what has happened to the Savings and Loans can happen to badly regulated credit unions.

I just want, Sir, to warn in particular about the tying up of a lot of credit union funds into real estate. Institutions do very badly when they use their depositors' funds to speculate widely in real estate.

Without explicitly making it necessary and mandatory for the Minister of Finance to bring the credit unions under the regulations of this Act, that door 'is open by the provision that the Minister of Finance, I think, it is section 120, may designate other financial institutions to become subject to the kind of prudential norms that are built into this legislation, particularly in areas like criteria to be taken into account in making loans to directors and other people affected and who directly take decisions in these institutions.

The legislation, Sir, is also intended to transfer a lot of routine Central Bank inspection powers presently vested in the Central Bank directly into the Act. And to expand the areas in which regulations can be made. Generally speaking, Sir, what we are seeking by this legislation to do is to be part of a regional effort to harmonise the regulatory system in relation to the operation of the financial sector, to put in place additional provisions that can provide security for depositors to make sure that those persons who are involved in taking decisions or are involved as directors of institutions have a clearly defined criteria that covers the relationship.

As I said, we are also seeking to bring the BNB within the ambit of the legislation. We want to help to further the development of a financial market and a securities market by excluding deposits, stopping the activities of commercial houses that take deposits and generally to bring matters pertaining to prudential norms, areas like capital adequacy, classification of loans and the like within the auspices of accepted international standards in this area.

I therefore, with that broad and cursory review would like to suggest that the House can accept this, Sir, and also to say that as it presently stands there is no grave crisis in our financial sector. Some of the indigenous commercial banks have from time to time experienced problems and we are sensitive to the fact that we have to be preemptive in the way in which we deal with the function of the banking system. The regulations that are put into this legislation will go a long way towards making our system one in which depositors can have great confidence, one that meets the needs of investors, and that can also serve the purpose of broadening the scope of the development of the country's financial and capital market.

I believe that those are worthy goals to be sought by this kind of legislation, Sir, and I beg to move that this legislation be now read a second time.

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

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I won't be long on this legislation or rather I should say I shall be shorter than I had originally anticipated because of the hour and the deteriorating conditions under which I am required to play. This Financial Institutions Bill is one of the prior to first tranche conditionalities of the Inter-American Development Bank loan. So I make the assumption that this is one of the last things that the Government has to do prior to passing the VAT legislation before it can finally draw down on the funds which are supposed to be made available to it since much earlier in this year under the IADB investment sector loan programme. Not that the Government needs the money according to what we are told.

The other projects are important but it is clear that unless some of these things are done the Government will not benefit from the US$35 million loan and if one were to turn to the Investment Sector Loan Reform Programme document it sets out quite clearly what the elements of the regulation and supervision which are contemplated by the IADB programme are. In particular, it sets out that Government wants to take a more active role in regulating non-bank financial intermediaries. This is one of the initiatives that is taken in that regard.

At the time, Sir, in 1992, when we were considering the Financial Intermediaries Regulatory Bill, the Central Bank at that time advised the Government that it had not yet put in place a regime for commercial paper and therefore it would be better to bring deposit taking companies under similar regulations to the other institutions which were being overseen by the Financial Intermediaries Regulatory Act.

This change in the legislation means that the deposit taking companies are going to have to phase out

their operations at a pretty swift time frame without, in my view, the kind of alternatives being put in place. What you are essentially doing by this legislation is that a depositor can no longer make deposits with deposit taking companies which is very advantageous to the depositor because when they call the deposit they don't lose their interest. They have greater flexibility and by and large the interest on those deposits is about 2%, higher than the commercial banks and what the Government is doing if it is not careful is going to provide yet another opportunity for the monopolistic practices of the commercial banks to continue unless it is going to put in place commercial paper which will be regulated.

I think that the Minister of Finance has to realise that the commercial banks will be very happy because the spread between what the deposit taking companies pay and what the commercial banks pay, that 2% amounts to in excess of $3 or $4 million annually in Barbados, which will now be interest paid to commercial banks instead of it being paid to deposit taking companies. It is much of a muchness. It adds some additional costs to those deposit taking companies but what it does is that the depositors have a level of comfort because now they will have to deal with institutions that are fully regulated.

So it is a choice that Government has to make and my suggestion would be that whatever efforts are going to be made by the securities exchange, by the Central Bank and by Government, to have in place a regime of commercial paper and other innovations which would replace the role of deposits which are taken by deposit taking companies be speeded up so as to offer that level of flexibility in the financial system which is desirable. That is the principal concern that we would have about legislation of this sort.
8.35 p.m.

I heard the Prime Minister talk about Credit Unions. Before I get to that point, we have three indigenous banks in Barbados. The new Basle requirements and other regulatory requirements are never, in my view, going to be met by the indigenous institutions under the present configuration. The capital markets in Barbados are not developed enough, the assets over which they are going to have control in the level of competition in the banking industry is going to be too significant for any of them to really break through.

The BNB means success hinges on Government deposits and National Insurance deposits. Mutual has been supported by an arrangement with the Central Bank and the NIS, which everybody knows about, for a fixed period of time, and the Caribbean Commercial Bank has always had to function by its parent company bringing in large capital. The Honourable Member for St. Peter knows a lot more about that than I do because he was one of the people in the forefront of the establishment. It is funny how life is, Mr. Speaker. I am glad that the cameras are off.

Asides.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: What goes around comes around. The Honourable Member for St. Peter had a very active role in the early days of the establishment of the Caribbean Commercial Bank and some of its consequential activities.

Asides.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: I am glad that you now remember it. It is not personal at all. He was then Parliamentary Secretary in the Ministry.

Asides.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: I am talking about the CCB *per se,* the Housing Credit Fund and other initiatives. I know about that, but the Honourable Member likes to pretend that he has had a detached relationship, and that as Minister of Finance I had some special soft spot for the parent company of CCB. It is an indigenous, regional institution and it has a social conscience, and both he and I recognise, even though I admit it publicly and he does not, that its initiatives should be supported. What CCB has had to do is to rely on its parent to bring in substantial amounts of capital at various points in time.

Therefore, in my view, the..,

Asides.

Mr. D. J. H THOMPSON: No, no. I was talking about your role as Parliamentary Secretary in setting up some of the systems and activities that CCB was involved in – the Housing Credit Fund and other initiatives. The principals of CCB have always credited you for your role in those days. I am not talking about anything which the Honourable Member for St. Thomas was talking about. Let me make that clear.

The Honourable Member for St. Peter would know that it is because of the indigenous nature of that institution, it is precarious. BNB and the Barbados Mutual, they are not going to meet the onerous requirements of the Central Bank. A lot of this regulation is going to be observed more in the breach than in compliance.

Therefore, the Government is going to have to engineer an outcome for the indigenous banks. A merger is one consideration, a relationship with Credit Unions another possibility, but something is going to have to

be done to strengthen those indigenous institutions, because I am supportive of their existence. I think Government is also going to help them to be more innovative, and providing adequate challenges to the established commercial banks in Barbados to answer some of the complaints which have come from that side and this, about the lending practices of commercial banks. This Bill does not address this, and I hope that when the Honourable Member for St. Peter said that, "Look this is one of the fluid and active areas of change," that, in fact, there will be consequential changes over time which will have some significance in the banking systems.

I do not want to get into regulations of Credit Unions. My own view is that there should be a greater effort made by this Parliament to define a regime. I want to say that I think the Credit Unions should have a say in how that regulatory regime is designed. There is a point at which, however, depositors must feel that there is some comfort anti the institutions in which they are investing their money are well regulated.

Barbados has had a fine reputation since the BCCI scenario. I want to congratulate the Central Bank and the Democratic Labour Party Government for engineering a very successful outcome to that problem. I hope that should matters of this sort emerge again in relation to the commercial banking system, that such an outcome can be resolved without concern.

Asides.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: All of those names that you called could not make the final decision. The final decision was the Cabinet of Barbados decision, because what the Cabinet of Barbados did, is not what any attorney in Bridgetown could do, that is, to agree to commit the Central Bank and the National Insurance to hold deposits in the institution for a fixed period of time, so that they will be effectively capitalised. Foolishness was done down there that nearly compromised that arrangement by some of those same persons whose names were called ***sotto voce***.

This Democratic Labour Party has to take credit for it, not any faceless operatives on Coleridge Street and so on. I do not accept that. It was a result that was engineered. It took, yes, a lot of creativity from the professionals, but the final decision was a decision of political will which the Democratic Labour Party took and the depositors of BCCI who got back their money should be grateful that the Government was willing to take that risk when it took it. For that matter it could have gone array, and there were things that were done subsequently which could have compromised the viability of Mutual Bank if the Central Bank was not vigilant in ensuring that the integrity of the institution was not compromised.

So we have to be very clear about this, that indigenous banks are not in as strong a position as may appear on the surface, and Government has a duty therefore to try and engineer outcomes, because mobilised liquidity is high. You have an improving fiscal and external environment in which now is the time to perhaps apply some of those creative solutions.

We have no problem with the legislation, but for the question of the draw down of the IADB funds. The other matters are not controversial and we will assist in any way in seeking to help in positive outcomes for the financial system in Barbados.

I thank you.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I do not want to be cantankerous. Now that the Press is not here, Sir, I really wish that the Member for St. John ought to be more balanced in his own perspective of his role and his relationship to a lot of the ISL conditionalities, Sir.

I want to remind him, Sir, that he was the person who a DLP Cabinet appointed to be responsible for the financial reform part of the Investment Sector Loan, and he was the person who put the Reform of Financial Intermediaries Regulations Act into the pot and made it as part of the conditionalities. All we have merely sought to do, Mr. Speaker, is carry through on a lot of work that he started and brought it to a successful conclusion.

He very often speaks, Mr. Speaker, shockingly so, to people in the IADB who know what role he played in developing the ISL, as if he does not know anything about it. I really wish he would stop it, because the reason why we are in part dealing with this matter is because this was a project that was started when he was Minister of Finance. A lot of work was done on it by him. We have brought it to conclusion, Sir. There is nothing wrong with it. It is something that we would have done, as I said, because of the change in international conventions, because of the existence of a CARICOM Harmonisation Project that is seeking to have common rules and norms pertaining to the financial sector, Sir, applied in all Caribbean countries as the basis upon which we can mount the harmonisation of the region's capital and financial sector.

We have incorporated that into an Investment Sector Loan, which set out conditionalities, Sir, but it is something that we would have done in any event. That is what we have to tell the public, not to make the public feel that somebody is coming here to Barbados and beating us over the head to do these things. He knew how it had been developed, Sir.

I am not going to speak in advance of it, Sir, but he needs not worry anymore about our meeting the conditions of the first draw down of the Investment Sector Loan. He will hear the news of it, Sir, I hope sometime during the course of this week. I say no more about it. He would know, Sir, that there is no issue over the macro-economic performance of the country. There is certainly no issue over the macro-economic performance issue for sure. There is no issue on this or other aspects of the land reform or investment facilitation as part of the conditions. That announcement will be made, Sir, I hope, shortly. He can be rest assured that there are no outstanding issues.

8.45 p.m.

Mr. Speaker, the point of substance I would really like to deal with is the point that was raised about the future of indigenous commercial banks. I would strongly support mergers of the existing indigenous banks in Barbados. As it presently stands, small banks face the disadvantage because there are limits regarding the size of the maximum loans relative to the capital. Banks with limited capital obviously cannot access large loans. From that point of view alone, the ability to be able to access small commercial banks should allow them to integrate. I hope that in the process of integration they use the opportunity to expand their capital base by bringing entities in Barbados who are not now owners of banks into the act of owning the bank.

One of the ways in which the capital adequacy can be met is if the banks in the process of their redevelopment allow credit unions and others to be able to own some of their shares. We are in the process of restructuring the BDB to first of all make it into a bank and also to make it attractive for entities to want to invest in it. This is the programme on which the bank is involved.

I would strongly suggest a merger of the institutions because there is a role for indigenous commercial banking in the Caribbean. They tend to be more sensitive to national development imperatives than other banks. If they stay alone, they will always have to depend upon special concessions by the Central Bank and the Central Bank function then as last resort to ensure them of the liquidity that keeps them going.

I do not know that the Government can force it but certainly we can create an environment within which they become feasible. We will do everything in our power to make it happen, if necessary, but the BNB is well on its way to restructuring and I hope that within three years we will have an institution that any sober investor would regard as an institution worthy of its investment.

Regarding the commercial houses, Sir, the Securities Exchange will be engaged in regulating the trading of paper issued by commercial houses. The commercial houses, Sir, now have a very select group of clientele. It is better that they look at their development as the issue of commercial paper rather than the holding of deposits on behalf of a select class of Barbadians.

I do not know, Sir, that we need to delay this debate any further. I would like to move that this Bill be read a second time.

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

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

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

COMMITTEE

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

Part I was called and passed.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: I beg to move, Sir, that Part II stand part.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Sir, there are two versions of the Bill. Some Honourable Members have the copy that was printed in the Ministry of the Attorney General and all Honourable Members will have a smaller version that was printed by the Government Printery. Now, there are one or two typos that we picked up just now, Sir.

In clause 10(2)(a)(iii) it reads:

"has been involved in any act of impropriety related to banking business or financial matters."

One version says "of' financial matters. It should be "or."

Then in clause 18 – "Reserve fund," line 3 "equal to not less than 25 per cent of those profits whenever the amount of 'the' reserve." One version left the letter "e" off the word "the."

Those are the amendments under Part II.

The question that Part 2 stand part of the Bill was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

Part III was called and passed.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: I beg to move that Part IV stand part.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Under Part IV, Sir, clause 43 (7) should read:

> "The Central Bank may publish in the *Official Gazette* and in a daily newspaper published and circulating in Barbados, information submitted on the quarterly returns of each licensee under this "section."

"Licence" is changed to "licensee" and a full stop at "section." It continues:

> "No information in respect of the affairs of a particular customer of a licensee shall be so published."

One more, Sir, 46(8):

> "Where the Central Bank is not satisfied with the annual report of an auditor appointed by a licensee, the Central Bank may appoint another auditor to make an independent report and shall fix the remuneration to be paid by the licensee to the auditor."

The word "fit" is changed to "fix." Those are the amendments.

The question that Part IV as amended do now stand part of the Bill was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: I beg to move that Part V stand part.

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

Mr. H. deB. FORDE: Mr. Chairman, just one comment I wish to make although I am not suggesting an amendment. The time is against us but I hope when the Minister gets an opportunity on any amendments to this Bill he would look at section 63 again. This really continues a very strong disagreement between the Central Bank and the courts and other people when it came to the winding up of the BCCI.

The Central Bank feels that in such a winding up they should nominate the persons whom the court should appoint as a custodian. Frankly, I believe it is arrogating too much powers to themselves because we found in the BCCI that they had chosen people who may have had a conflict of interest and therefore that evidence was brought forth in no uncertain terms.

The Central Bank has obviously insisted on this type of recommendation to the Minister. I really want to put it in the record of this House that the Central Bank has to understand that although it has independence, it must not have independence over the courts of Barbados and that this is an area where the courts exercise a balance between State depositors and other persons who may suffer. I hope the Minister will look at that and go back to the original position because it really is an unfair power for the Central Bank to be saying who should be nominated.

Of course, it makes suggestions, just like the other persons who are affected may make suggestions and rely on the courts to exercise some sort of balance in matters of this sort.

The question that Part V do now stand part of the Bill was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.
8.55 p.m.

Parts V11 to 1X were called and parsed.

On the motion of Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR, seconded by Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER, Mr. CHAIRMAN reported the passing of one Bill in Committee and Mr. SPEAKER resumed the Chair and reported accordingly.

On the separate motions of Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR, seconded by Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER the Bill was read a third time and passed and cited at the Financial Institutions Act, 19%.

ADJOURNMENT

Hon. Miss B. A. **MILLER:** Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that this House do now adjourn until Friday, August 16, 1996 at 11.00 o'clock in the morning.

Rt. Hon. O. S. **ARTHUR:** Seconded.

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

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The Minutes of Friday, August 9, 1996, were deferred.

ORAL REPLIES TO QUESTIONS

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER 3557

Notice that the Reply to Parliamentary Question No. 26, asked by Mr. D. St. E. Kellman, was ready.

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS

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Suspension of Standing Orders 6, 16, 18, 20, 42(5), 43 and 44 for the remainder of the Sitting.

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SPEAKERS IN THIS ISSUE

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CLARKE, Mr. G. A. (St. George North)
EASTMOND, Hon. R. C, (St. James North)
FORDE, Mr. H. deB. (Christ Church West)
GREENIDGE, Hon. R. N. (St. Philip North)
HAYNES, Dr. R, C, (St. Michael South Central)
KELLMAN, Mr. D. St. E, (St. Lucy)
MILLER, Hon. Miss B, A, (City of Bridgetown)
MOTTLEY, Hon. Miss M, A. (St. Michael North East)
STUART, Mr. F. J. (St. Philip South)
TUDOR, Mr. J. O. (St. Michael East)
THOMPSON, Mr. D. J. H. (St. John)