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THE House of Assembly Debates

(OFFICIAL REPORT)

FIRST SESSION 1994 – 99

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

Friday, August 9, 1996

Pursuant to the adjournment, the House of Assembly met at 11.20 a.m. on Friday, August 9, 1996.

PRESENT

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

Prayers were led by Rev. Canon Ivan Harewood.

Mr. SPEAKER: The House is in session.

MINUTES

Mr. SPEAKER: The Minutes of Tuesday, July 30, 1996.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that the Minutes of the proceedings of the Honourable the House of Assembly for its meeting of Tuesday, July 30, 1996, which Minutes have been circulated, be taken as read.

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

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

GOVERNMENT NOTICES

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Mr. Speaker, I beg to give notice of the following:

1. The Value Added Tax Bill, 1996.

2. Resolution to approve the compulsory acquisition by the Crown of the parcels of land at Benn Hill in the parish of St. Peter for the construction of access roads.

FIRST READING OF BILLS

On the motion of Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER, seconded by Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS, the following Bill was read a first time:

1. The Value Added Tax Bill, 1996.

OBITUARY SPEECHES

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Mr. Speaker, the occasion today is taken to pay tribute to the late Cyril Gordon Sandiford who was the father of the Right Honourable Member for St. Michael South, who passed away on June 20, 1996 and was buried at the St. James Cemetery after a service at the St. James Parish Church.

Mr. Cyril Gordon Sandiford who I did not know personally, was born on October 3, 1899 and he died at the age of 96. I have had to rely substantially, and had no hesitation in doing so, on the Eulogy which was presented by his son at the service at St. James Parish Church which was a very touching Eulogy, and certainly, in that he sought to exemplify the great influence which his father had on him. In fact, in the course of that Eulogy he indicated that his father had the greatest influence on his life.

He was the son of parents who worked at Porters Great House in the area of Porters, St. James where the Sandiford name is still legendary and he attended the St. Albans School up to 7th Standard. He married Eunice Carlotta Benn and they had three children, Hugh, Zelda and Erskine. He had two other children, Winston and Gloria.

We are told that he became manager of Porters Great House and plantation lands. It was clear that role would not have been enough for him that he was sufficiently ambitious, sufficiently resourceful which clearly is a trait in the Sandiford family and it has been passed down to subsequent generations, that he was able to purchase a portion of the land of Porters Plantation when it was sold. He became a self-employed man for the rest of his life as a small farmer, also a trait part of which he passed on to other members in his family and, to my certain knowledge, one of them still tries his hand, not with the same degree of success, but nevertheless it is a trait passed on.

In the Eulogy, and I suppose as he looked down upon his son Erskine delivering that Eulogy, the words which he used to describe his father perhaps established a link between the very early part of the Eulogy when he spoke about his strong commitment to education, the fact that he had reached 7th Standard and had returned to the school and spent some time teaching at St. Albans School and then the facility of language which his son used to describe his father, in my view, demonstrated that strong link and commitment to education which obviously had been passed on.

Perhaps he may have been as thrilled to see his son as Minister of Education in Barbados and eventually as the Prime Minister of Barbados. His greatest thrill must have come from the fact that his son became a Barbados Scholar and that his other children were very successful Barbadians rising to the top of their respective professions, and that in paying tribute, though there was no economy of language, what was important is that the language and the words which were chosen were as usual very apt and appropriate. His son regarded him as esteemed, splendid and affectionate. He said he possessed a keen intellect, a good power of recall, and strong powers of argumentation. He did not suffer fools gladly. Candour, unfailing integrity and high standards were the hallmarks of his behaviour.
11.30 a.m.

Many of us have already extended our personal condolences to the Honourable Member for St. Michael South but on behalf of the family of the Democratic Labour Party and all members of the Opposition, I want to extend to the entire Sandiford family, the children of Cyril Gordon Sandiford, his grandchildren and great grandchildren our sincere condolences and move that the appropriate arrangements be made to convey the House's sympathy to the family of the late Cyril Gordon Sandiford. I thank you.

Hon. R. C. EASTMOND: Mr. Speaker, the parish of St. James would have lost a noble son in the month of June this year, this son of course being Cyril Gordon Sandiford. In many respects even though he was the beneficiary of what people in those days would have termed a seventh standard education, Mr. Cyril Gordon Sandiford was still very much a self-made person. When I say a self-made person, Mr. Speaker, I mean a person who by the sheer dint of his own personal characteristics of hard work, of industry and of thrift would have gone on both to have made a success of his life and to have made a success of his progeny.

He was an extremely thrifty man and as the Honourable Leader of the Opposition said, having worked at Porters Great House which is by Porters Factory for some time he then devoted himself to a career in which he took a very close interest in the soil. He loved agriculture and farming and to a considerable degree he was able to use the fruits of his labour to sustain his family and to sustain himself and to defeat a lot of the problems that would have been associated with his life were it not for his own hard work.

He would have been living in an era when for the average Barbadian of our hue, Mr. Speaker, life would have been difficult. But he decided through setting out to save as far as he could, through setting out to make the best use of his money as he could, through setting out to see in the land an opportunity for noble and dignified living, to ensure that he would make something of his life and the life of his family.

He was known in St. James as an extremely diligent, hardworking person who was so disciplined in outlook as to be almost stern. There are those in St. James who felt that he so manifested a particular dedication to anything he put himself to that reflected a severe discipline that bordered on sternness. There were those who did not quite understand him for the reason that they believed that there are those of us in this life who should be given to fun and frolic but Mr. Sandiford made sure that he adopted a most serious attitude to life.

We can say that he was a person who did not meddle in other people's affairs. There would have been those who, especially in the last 25 years of his life, would have referred to him as being reserved. It was not so much that he was reserved it was that he was not prepared to meddle in the affairs of others. We can use the Barbadian parlance to say that, he was not malicious, he was not gypsy. And to prove the point that he was not that reserved he opened his house quite frequently, almost every evening of the week, to those persons who loved draughts and he played draughts, as we say in Barbados, hard.

He lived in an era when there was not yet any organised draughts tournaments and I would rather think that if he had come at a time when draughts was an organised game at community level or national level he would have emerged one of the principal players in Barbados in draughts. I can recall him beating people of the likes of Rufus Cummins and others who would frequent his house to share moments of some social levity but also to engage in that game he loved so much.

I know that he also performed acts of charity. There was an old lady called Mena Forde and her daughter who used to, on Saturdays, go to Mr. Sandiford's place and be the recipients of charity. He helped a number of people but in a quiet non-boastful way and these were the characteristics that were the traits of Mr. Cyril Gordon Sandiford.

He stressed the fact, Mr. Speaker, that for those of us of this hue, our opportunities for any sort of mobility in this country lay in being educated. He loved the idea of seeing our people educated and would have inspired his own children to have achieved education. He would have delighted, Mr. Speaker, to know that in his own house, several persons who did not receive secondary education, went there to his daughter Zelda, on evenings, for lessons in shorthand and typewriting and business English. He was delighted to know too that he would have influenced Zelda and the other progeny to go on to considerable heights in Barbados. Zelda would have been one of the finest netballers in Barbados in the fifties and early sixties and in fact a couple years ago she and others called "the Golden Girls" were able to go up to Singapore where they may have won a championship for persons not entirely very young.

He would have also seen his son the Right Honourable Member for St. Michael South go on to please his heart, because his son the Right Honourable Member for St. Michael South was able to go to that primary school that so many St. James people love, St. Albans Junior, and would have followed in his footsteps at St. Albans Junior in a situation where children at that time had a choice between St. Albans and St. James Elementary School now called St. James Primary School. But he would have enjoyed the idea of his son walking in his footsteps at St. Albans School and then going on to crown it all with a scholarship granted in recognition of his scholastic ability.

As God would have had it, Mr. Speaker, he was blessed with long life thereby contradicting the ancient Roman Poet who claimed that those whom the Gods love, die young. There is a Roman Poet, perhaps the Honourable Member for St. Michael South would be able to tell me who it is, who claimed that those whom the Gods love, die young, but Cyril Gordon Sandiford was able to prove that that poet was by no means accurate. I belong to that school of thought, Mr. Speaker, that believes that long life is something to be cherished and is something that is often given to those of particular qualities.

I have no difficulty, Mr. Speaker, both in associating myself with the comments and remarks made by the Honourable Member for St. John and in seconding the motion which was moved by the Honourable Member for St. John.

With these remarks then, Mr. Speaker, I am obliged to you.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: Mr. Speaker, I rise on behalf of myself, my family and the National Democratic Party to associate myself with many of the very kind remarks which I have heard both in here and outside about the late father of the Honourable Member for St. Michael South. Unfortunately I missed the funeral because I had already made commitments to perform certain duties at another funeral at the same time on that day.
11.40 a.m.

I first met Mr. Sandiford about 42 or 43 years ago or thereabouts as a youngster. I observed him to be an extremely hospitable person, someone who enjoyed the friends of his children and whose home was available to us morning, noon and night even in the very early hours of the morning when other homes would have been closed irrespective of the state in which anyone arrived at his home. I am quite sure the Honourable Member for St. Michael South would have some very fond memories of those occasions arriving either sitting or lying on the back of a vehicle or thereabouts. He was one of those persons who made a major contribution to Barbados in his own capacity and through the kind of inspiration and admiration which he had for the youth of his day in urging them at all times to make the best of the limited opportunities available to them and really enjoying and basking in the glory of the achievements, not only of his own children but all of his children's friends. It is a remarkable generation of Barbadians because all of us inside of here can certainly recall our own parents, those who have gone to the great beyond, and we can all remember the sheer joy that they felt when they heard of the successes of the friends and acquaintances of their children and their relatives. It was as though they were experiencing the same success in life. It is that kind of dedication and achievement which I think has done a lot of upliftment for the generation of Barbados of which I am a part and he would be one of the very foremost persons in that kind of inspirational exercise, that kind of sharing, that kind of understanding that are the very fundamentals for the importance of education and development and forward movement of the next generation of Barbadians.

He also had very significant agricultural skills which he passed on to his son and I distinctly recall those skills which he passed on to his son manifesting themselves in mixed farming, because I can attest to this Honourable House that I saw one of the finest examples of mixed farming not far away from where he lives in Porters, St. James – one hole of canes, Mr. Speaker, one cucumber vine, one pumpkin vine, one lime tree, one pepper tree and I think there was one sheep as well. That is a perfect example of mixed farming or organic base that he has passed on to his son.

But in the area of advice, I have had numerous conversations with him over the years and he was able at all times to look back and look forward and always remind us of where we stood in the scheme of things in Barbados. He always understood the social structure of this country. He always understood the vital importance of ownership of part of Barbados and how critical that was to the development of the black people of this country.

Mr. Speaker, I have also witnessed the relationship between himself and his children and much of the stability, the politeness, the dedication to public affairs and to people and I think he was able to pass that on to his children. I certainly am one of the beneficiaries not only of his advice, hospitality and indeed I was able to share on more than one occasion his favourite drink. I do not know whether or not his son still participates in the same drink. I have not seen him with it recently, but certainly that kind of relationship with young people is something that made a difference. Based on that kind of example, I have tried over the years to foster the same kind of relationship with my children and the friends of my children and so on. It is a fine example that he set. He was indeed, Mr. Speaker, a fine Barbadian, someone who has made a substantial contribution, someone whose work and whose life will continue down the generations because I think that he is one of those who has created the environment and created a situation where they see their work being expressed from generation to generation. Although this is a sad moment for all of us because these moments are always sad, I think that we have always to be thankful not only for his contribution but also for his long life and I am quite sure that that long life would have given him the opportunity to see the fruition of much that he stood for. He was a very serious Barbadian and he understood the need for Barbadians to be serious about the development of this country for them, the need to make sure that we all own part of this little rock, the need to make sure that we make it easier and better for the generation that follows. I think that in his way he made a major contribution in all of those respects. These are things that people of that generation understood instinctively. They are lessons that we must never lose and, in common with the fathers and mothers of many Members of this House sitting right here now, that is a philosophy which they have espoused which clearly has borne fruit and which we must continue to carry that baton even further looking back at their successes and their experiences.

I thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.
11.50 a.m.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I did not know the late Mr. Sandiford, but having heard those who spoke before me it is clear to me that I certainly knew those of his ilk. As the Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central has just said, this was clearly a proud and contributing Barbadian of a generation that unhappily is leaving us now, but of a generation which

I can safely say on both sides of this House there was always somebody like that behind us, if not in the immediate generation behind us, then the one before that, because this was a man too who was blessed with longevity and, like so many Barbadians, he lived to see the fruit of his labour and to be well pleased in the effort that he made toward making Barbados what it is today is worthy of comment and worthy of remark. It is good that this day these words are being said of him.

I would wish to add my own sympathies and those of the Government offered to the Right Honourable Member for St. Michael South on the passing of his father. He has now joined the ranks of those of us who are orphans and I would wish to support the motion that a suitably worded Resolution with the accompanying letter be despatched to the immediate relatives of the late Mr. Sandiford.

Thank you, Sir.

Mr. L. R. TULL: Mr. Speaker, like many others I did not personally meet the late Cyril Sandiford, but if I accept the biblical dictum that by their fruits you shall know them, I feel I knew him, because for better than 40 years I have known his son, the Right Honourable Member for St. Michael South, and if what I have gleaned from a very long relationship is any indication of the kind of man that the late Cyril Sandiford was, then I feel that he must have been all that I have heard spoken of not only today but subsequent to his death.

I use this opportunity, Sir, to tell the Right Honourable Member for St. Michael South that my absence from the funeral of his father was because of my absence from Barbados. I am sure he appreciates that were I in Barbados and in good health I would have been there.

As Honourable Members have said, the late Mr. Sandiford represented a generation of Barbadians who were self-sufficient, independent, proud and with a strong sense of family. They appreciated that opportunities that were not available for them could be made available for their children through knowledge and education. They appreciated that knowledge and education were not only vehicles to allow their children to scale the ladder of opportunity, but that they also had knowledge with an intrinsic value. They felt that if their children could acquire knowledge, and they themselves took an important part in imparting that knowledge, they could be confident individuals who could make their mark in the society if nothing more, the very fact of knowledge was enough for them to make their mark.

That generation of Barbadians, Mr. Speaker, Sir, has made an indelible mark on the national character of Barbados. Those of us today who speak as Honourable Members of this Chamber are the beneficiaries of their wisdom, their insight, their leadership and their concern.

I would wish on behalf of my own family and myself to express very deep and very sincere condolences to the Right Honourable Member for St. Michael South, confident in the knowledge that what his father gave him, like he gave to other people of his generation and the people of his community, will last for ever.

I am grateful to Your Honour.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Mr. Speaker, I would not wish this occasion to pass without recording my own personal and my family's condolences to my distinguished colleague, the Right Honourable Member for St. Michael South, on the occasion of the tribute to the memory of his late father.

The passing of this generation of Barbadians has become, and no doubt will become, more and more the subject of our discussion in this House from time to time by virtue of the fact that that generation is the one that has been able to produce the first fruits, so to speak, of the genuinely upwardly mobile poor in this House of Assembly. Because of the time frame – for example, had my own mother lived she would have been 100 years old on the 25th of this month and, as Your Honour knows, my own father who was buried a couple of years ago lived to the ripe old age of 89 – and as we talk about our respective late fathers and mothers we cannot help but be proud that we emerged from that generation.

Mr. Speaker, what impressed me the most about the words spoken by his son at the Eulogy was the reference made to his father's abiding commitment to choral singing and his great ability as a bass. I took the opportunity to announce to my colleague that it was regrettable that the Sandiford clan had lost the only bass that they had, with the death of his father, notwithstanding protestations by himself and his brother to the contrary, and utterances which from time to time have passed as a reasonable facsimile, if you pardon the expression, of what has been described as his father's very strong, powerful and mellifluous bass.

12.00 noon

But more seriously, the fact that throughout a long period of his life he was committed to and participated in the singing of church music, more particularly hymns and psalms, is something which endeared him to me and endear all those persons who have that capacity and more, indeed, that love for music of that kind. For me it signifies a certain kind of disciplinary approach to life. Persons who are familiar with choral music and persons who are familiar with Barbadian sol-fa traditions will know that those people who can in fact sing sol-fa, who know it, are a very different and disciplined lot.

There is nothing, Mr. Speaker, in my view more pristine in its beauty than an a cappella rendition by a group of Barbadians in rural Barbados using the sol-fa method. It has brought me great pleasure in my life already and I have no doubt that it brought our colleague and his brothers and sisters tremendous pleasure. Indeed, one feels a sense of achievement when one reaches the point when one can say truthfully that one understands and knows sol-fa. Therein lies another truism, that these people who lived in that time were able, it seems to me at all times, under the most difficult circumstances, to rise above their own difficulties and point their progeny and all others who would learn towards a higher plane of understanding of existence and therefore of achievement.

The people of that generation had a morality which we in many respects can only envy even as we try to emulate them. I have had the privilege of working with the son of the late Mr. Sandiford for more than 30 years and of the characteristics of which one can speak, apart from verification of the mixed farming which my honourable friend spoke about accurately, one can say with impunity that the Honourable Member has a high sense of morality in public affairs.

Only a few nights ago we were discussing a particular issue and I was able to say to him with certainty, if not certitude, that we would have taken a particular decision and that was based on a knowledge of a long association of how each of us thinks in certain circumstances. Lest one misunderstands that sentence and lest one participates in the deification of the living, let me simply say that the morality of which I speak moves even beyond purely the establishment of mores for living. I speak of that sense of the fitness of things, the rightness of things when one moves beyond what may be described as the mundane and which from time to time those of us who are the products of this elderly generation have been able to experience.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, one cannot speak of sorrow when a man has lived beyond 95 years, but one can be sad that he did not in fact get to that century which has become a measuring rod for real longevity in Barbados. Even so, it is obvious that he had 95 years of quality life and we should all be grateful for his life and his witness and it is therefore easy for me to join with all the others who have spoken in offering to the Rt. Honourable Member and his entire family my condolences.

Mr. SPEAKER: I would like to associate this Honourable Chair with the sentiments expressed. My family and I offer our sincere condolences. This House accepts the Resolution of sympathy and instructs that the appropriate condolences be sent to the family.

As a mark of respect, I now ask this Honourable House to stand and observe 1 minute's silence in memory of the passing of the late Mr. Sandiford.

Honourable Members stood in their places in silence for one minute.

Rt. Hon. L. E. SANDIFORD: Mr. Speaker, I have been very deeply moved by the words of tribute paid by all Honourable Members who have spoken on the passing of my father, the late Cyril Gordon Sandiford, to the extent that I am really at a loss for words as the memories come gushing back even at this time.
12.10 p.m.

Let me, with all the economy of words with which I would want to speak, express my own appreciation and that of all of the relatives of my late father thank all of you for the words spoken and for the Resolution adopted.

I shall not attempt to revisit the words of the Eulogy which God gave me strength to utter on the occasion of the service of thanksgiving. I would merely wish to say that when this Honourable Chamber pays tribute to the passing of anyone in the society, and particularly to the relative of members of this Honourable Chamber, we are really performing that quintessential duty as law makers of getting to the essence of what constitutes our society and of what stuff our hopes, aspirations and, yes, Sir, regrets may be made of.

Basically, when we are stripped, each one of us, of the paraphernalia and the accoutrements of office, when our dignities and honours are removed, we are reduced, Sir, to that basic elemental essence of which all human beings are made and we come down to those forces that made us men and women, boys and girls, and those values which glue our society together, and the family represents one such elemental unit in our society. I have always been moved by occasions such as this one, because I realise, and have for a long time, that what we are doing is seeking to penetrate those mysteries that constitute life in Barbados.

Mr. Speaker, there are many facets of the life of my late father that I could refer to, but certainly this is not the occasion. Let me acknowledge that from him I did receive, either genetically or through those environmental influences that constitute learning patterns in our country, a good voice.

Asides.

Rt. Hon. L. E. SANDIFORD: Sir, the Deputy Prime Minister and the Minister of Education can attest to that. We have sung at certain places together and I believe, Sir, some of those who pursue sacerdotal professions can

also attest to that because in holy places, such as the Christ Church Parish Church, I have joined in singing praises to God on high.

Many a time my colleague and friend, the Member for St. Michael West, has himself had to stop singing, and listen while dulcet tones came forth from me. Sir, I regret that my friend of very long standing, the Member for St. Michael South Central, cannot be joined in these particular talents, because he himself will admit that singing is not one of his strengths. He will admit that, Sir, but I would certainly like to thank him for his recollections.

We know, Sir, that time does play tricks with our memories, and if he got it a little distorted about my inheritance as a farmer, a small farmer or mixed farmer, I attribute that to the passing of time and to the effect such passage has on all of us.

Let me say, Sir, for the benefit of the Minister of Agriculture, that I do not use words lightly. When I say that I am a research farmer, I believe that perhaps I bring to this Honourable Chamber experiences which, perhaps, you do not even know that I have undergone.

The only experiment in Barbados in relation to a search for self-sufficiency in Barbados by which we might have been able not only to feed ourselves and house ourselves but to clothe ourselves, was put on trial right in Porters, St. James and I participated in that, Sir.

A number of mulberry plants were imported into Barbados and were planted under the project. The idea was that the silk worm would also be imported and when the plants reached maturity, an effort would have been made to develop silk in Barbados, just as we have been able to develop cotton. I leave that for the next seminar on self-sufficiency and I will not pursue that now.
12.20 p.m.

Let me thank those Honourable Members who have, by their presence, by their tokens and by their words spoken to me directly and intimated their sympathy. I know the Minister of Transport and Works was out of the country and he did indicate that to me; so too did the Member for St. Joseph and the Member for St. George South. I thank them for their words and I thank those who attended the funeral for their personal presence.

I thank the Leader of the Opposition for his very eloquent introduction, and the Member for St. James North, my representative, for his presence as well as for the very kind words he has spoken about my father. My father had a very close relationship with his relatives and he has – I suppose modesty prevents him from saying it – an uncle who I believe lives in Canada, a very close friend of mine as well, who was a very good draughts player. Let me say I myself was not backward on the draughts board. I could spot the moves and strike. I would say about my father that he would always be there – you will permit me, Mr. Speaker, just to make this observation – whenever I scored a century in cricket to observe my performance.

In closing, Sir, let me say it was his particular interest and pride in education that perhaps shaped me into what I have been able to become. He felt he had done the greatest thing for me when he bought a very expensive book at that time, the Concise Oxford Dictionary, and gave it to me. I was able to pass on some words to my friend, the Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central, with authority in that regard. Let me thank him, Sir, for the very kind words he has spoken, as well as thank my colleague, the Member for St. Michael West, my friend the Member for St. George South, and the Deputy Prime Minister for the words they have spoken.

My family is deeply indebted and I express on behalf of all of them sincere thanks for the sentiments expressed on this occasion.

Thank you.

CONGRATULATORY SPEECHES

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

Please, Honourable Members, we are going to break at 1.00 o'clock. You know we have made arrangements for televised debate starting at 2.00 p.m. I will advise Honourable Members to be as brief as possible in making their comments, please.

Mr. W. C. C. CALLENDER: Mr. Speaker, I rise to congratulate the Barbados Olympic Team at the last Olympics just concluded. I also move the motion that this Resolution be adopted by the House. The Resolution reads as follows:

> "BE IT RESOLVED that this House on behalf of the people of Barbados and ourselves congratulate the Barbados contingent, both athletes and management, who represented our country at the 26th Olympiad held in Atlanta, Georgia in the U.S.A. from July 19 to August 4, 1996, and the pride, industry, honour and commitment so nobly and aptly demonstrated and exemplified by them during the Olympic Games.
>
> BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this House extends our congratulations and those of our nation for their outstanding personal achievements to Miss Leah Martindale, finalist in the Women's 50-metre freestyle swimming race and Mr. Obadele Thompson, finalist in the Men's 200 metres sprint.

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED that this House commends to our nation the preeminent examples of endeavour and achievement set by the Olympians of Barbados in Atlanta and extend to them our heartiest felicitations for even greater accomplishments in the future."

Sir, it was indeed a proud moment to see our athletes perform at the Olympic Games. In an era when we are hearing so much talk about the youth and people are talking about deviant youth, it should please our hearts to see the examples set by these youth at the Olympic Games. So many times we forget the good that our youth are doing. I think this is a shining example for us here in Barbados and also for our youth.

What is significant, Sir, about this team and those who did extremely well is that they were all below 21 years old. The great achievers of this team were all below 21 years old, Leah Martindale, only 18 years old, Obadele Thompson, only 20 years old, Nicky Neckles who also broke a Barbados record, only 18 years old. I think we need to place this in the annals of our country so that when we speak of our youth 1996 should stand as the year of great achievement of the youth of Barbados.

I therefore think this House needs to have it placed on record that we are congratulating, not only these three persons whom I have mentioned, but also, for example, Mr. Cummings who made it to the quarter finals of the 100 metres and also the other team members whom I believe would have given encouragement to these athletes. Sir, many times we forget that the morale and management are essential for great achievement. I believe there would have had to be good team spirit and good management for this team to do so well. I believe that later on those who were there would want to comment on that.

I want to place in the record, Sir, that Leah Martindale became the fastest female freestyle swimmer in the Commonwealth. This means she was faster than those people from Britain, Canada, Australia, all of those places when she came 5th in the 50-metre freestyle event and this is a great achievement for a small country of 250 000. She became the first West Indian woman to reach the finals, Sir and she also became, I am told, the first black woman to reach a final in a swimming event. In doing that, she twice broke her national record, and in the final she did the unbelievable time of 25.49 seconds after having a time of 25.91 seconds, so this shows that she gave all she had in her to reach that standard.

12.30 p.m.

As she said, Sir, "I did whatever my body could do". Could you want a greater testimony than this to the discipline and to the striving of the youth of this country?

Sir, I want also to speak of Obadele Thompson who after being hurt with a hamstring and a groin problem he was able to come back, having not been in any competitive event and to improve on his times. In the 100 metres he was unlucky not to reach the finals. He did a good time of 10.14 and when we thought all was lost he came back in the 200 metres and did even better, Sir, getting to the finals and placing fourth in the fastest 200 metres there ever was. The three people who beat him did 19.90 and less than that time, Sir. The race in which the winner did the amazing 19.32.

Sir, we are talking about achievement and I believe no one would ever believe that he would have reached so far, where not only one person but two people below the age of 21 were able to reach a finals in the Olympics where we have the best in the world and on their way to doing that breaking Barbadian record after Barbadian record.

Sir, this therefore calls for great discipline and I believe that it also required him to have a dependence on a superior force. As Obadele himself said, he dedicated the season to God. He said, speaking about God, "He has been my strength, my hope, to pick me up when I was down with my injuries and I am just thankful to Him".

Sir, Obadele Thompson is the world junior champion. He was hurt and one never knows if he had not been hurt what he would have done. The future looks bright for Barbados in the sports arena and I believe that we just need to put things in place to ensure that this country shines bright on the world horizon by the year 2000, another signal year, so that would set the tone as we go into the twenty-first century.

Sir, there are many others I can speak of but I am just going to dedicate myself to highlighting the great achievements of our Olympians here and I believe that I should leave the rest of the time for those who actually saw the splendour and the greatness of our athletes to give you exactly what it meant to be there to see Barbados riding high, making great achievements.

Sir, I am proud to be part of this moment because it says to us that the future of Barbados looks bright and in times when it looks as if we have a problem we can surmount that problem and our youth, I believe, will lead the way for us.

Sir, I would want that a suitably worded Resolution with the accompanying letter be sent to the President of the Olympic Association and the Management of the team as well as the Members of the team. I believe other Members will speak on this but I am just making a point at this stage.

Hon. R. N. GREENIDGE: Mr. Speaker, I too rise to speak on this Resolution and indeed, Sir, to second the Resolution at the same time. I believe, Mr. Speaker, that Barbadians should be extremely proud of the performance of their athletes at the recently concluded Olympic games in Atlanta. When I say this, Mr. Speaker, I speak of all of the athletes even though we will perhaps single out Leah and Obadele. I want to say that all of the athletes did their best and we have to realise that athletes such as Melissa Straker did a Barbados record in her 400 heats. That Nickey Neckles who swam two races broke the national record on each occasion that he swam and the only reason he did not get into the finals obviously was because of his time but he did win his heat which is the point I want to make. Kirk Cummins also did his best to reach quarter finals. Indeed when you reach the quarter finals at the Olympic Games you are not disgraced. So even though a lot of our attention might be focussed on Leah and Oba, I want to congratulate the entire Barbadian team for the work which they did.

Now, for the first time, Mr. Speaker, our country's name was proudly displayed on the scoreboards in two finals at Olympics. Never before in the history of the Olympic games did we see Barbados' name put there, not even in one but we had it on this occasion in two final events. This has obviously been our best showing to date.

Now I believe that this achievement, Mr. Speaker, would have brought smiles on the face of almost all Barbadians. Certainly for the ones at Atlanta it was a great feeling and I could not help but recall how something like goose pimples came up on your skin when you actually looked and saw this Barbadian, especially in the case of Leah because she was clearly identifiable throughout. Every time that she was swimming you felt proud because people who were not Barbadians obviously would have been asking who is she. She stood out and you felt extremely proud to have been there and to have been a Barbadian.

Mr. Speaker, these Olympians who have returned have caused us now to realise that Barbados is capable of winning a medal in the year 2000 in Sydney, Australia. That our time for coming back and saying that we went and we have gained experience, that that time is over and that our days of making up a number at the Olympics are finished as well.

In the year 2000, Mr. Speaker, we have to let the world know that Barbadians have arrived. There were those who were very skeptical as to how far we could have gone in the first place. Even before we left some were saying we could not reach this, we could not do this and so on but what I can say has happened is that Barbadians are now awakened. I say this in light of the fact of the reception which was held when they arrived at the airport. I say this in light of the turn out because the very first thing I remember is that people were saying they did not win any medals so why the big hurrah. The mere fact that Barbadians turned up there that night told me that Barbadians realised that in spite of the fact that they did not win medals, they had done their very best and that they had made Barbados proud and that we are on the threshold of medal winning. We are a potential medal winning country now.

I believe, Mr. Speaker, that athletes are by nature unselfish people, that athletes are by nature very patriotic people and I believe this stems from the fact, Mr. Speaker, that when you run you are always told you are representing China, Barbados, wherever and therefore that association with your country is always there.
12.40 p.m.

Patriotic too, because when you see most athletes displaying their flag and running around it is an expression of patriotism, and it is clearly so with these Barbadians. In fact when I first spoke to the athletes, one of the things they agreed with was this that having reached the Olympics they had achieved their dream and that they had done their personal best and so on already and that they were going to extend themselves now not for themselves any longer but for Barbados. That was the agreement which was made and no wonder they had, Mr. Speaker, so many personal best, so many national records being broken because they were putting Barbados first when they were there. I can vouch for that because that was the agreement that they made. You will see when the U. S. A. Athletes win, that one of the first things they do is point at their chest with the big U.S.A. across it, patriotism. You will see, Mr. Speaker, that when the South African athlete won the Marathon, I think his name is Josiah Thugwane...

Aside.

Hon. R. N. GREENIDGE: He said that he did not win it for himself, that he won it for his country and for Nelson Mandela. That is what I mean by athletes being patriotic and since our athletes have been that patriotic – this is the point I want to make. I have done it already and I will do it again – that I have appealed now to the private sector to join the government to lend some assistance to these athletes. They are not fully yet on the map in terms of athletics. I agree with that, but with the assistance of the private sector I am positive that we can be.

These athletes need a lot of overseas competitions and these can be very expensive because when you go to overseas competitions you are going to need good equipment and gear and you need supplements and, in terms of accommodation, it can be expensive. One of the reasons why people like Leah Martindale could not go

in the European circuit was strictly finances. She did not have a lot of swims in Europe and so on and therefore the Sandra Volkers of Germany and so on were pretty much unknown quantities to her. Therefore, we are calling for some assistance in this regard on this occasion.

We have an idea for the Sydney 2000 and it is a joint thing between the Olympic Association and the Barbados Government and we are asking business houses to help us by contributing to it so that these athletes can have ongoing competitions to do their country proud, in fact, to continue to do their country proud. I want to close on one final point and it is a point which was made and I am glad it came from young Victor Houston when he said that he was appealing to the media – and I did it before he came. I do not realize if he knew that I had done that – on the day before. He said that a few minutes before they virtually go into their competition the journalists should not put those negative articles in the newspaper about who cannot win a medal and who is going to come back and disgrace the country. He said that it put too much pressure on them and that is the way he put it. In other words, you are fighting against somebody who is telling you that you cannot do well and you are running against that, and you are running against the competition as well. I have made the point before and I make it again in the House that the media has to be a bit more sensitive in terms of the timing of these negative articles. So, Mr. Speaker, I join with the Honourable Member for Christ Church East in moving this Resolution and I support him 100 per cent.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Mr. Speaker, I will be very brief. I want to say that the Opposition gives its full support to this Resolution. In my capacity as Leader of the Opposition, I conveyed by cable my best wishes just prior to the various finals of the athletes who were involved and I did so on behalf of my colleagues and, in particular, I am very proud of the achievements of Leah Martindale and Obadele Thompson and all of the other athletes from Barbados and from the Caribbean as a whole at the Olympics which were recently held and I am very proud that Barbados was displayed in the way in which the Honourable Member for St. Philip North mentioned. Perhaps the most solitary lesson from this exercise, assuming that the Honourable Member will continue in the office of Minister of Sports between now and when the next Olympics are held or the lead up to the closest, that a greater effort will be made to give assistance and support to the efforts of these athletes.

I think that the Honourable Member for Christ Church East Central can tell you that about a year ago I had to make an appeal to him as Chairman of the National Sports Council for appropriate assistance to be given to Victor Houston who had been receiving the encouragement and help from the shadow Minister of Sports. He was unable to obtain the correct pole to do his vault because the pole he was using was too heavy and was retarding his progress. His mother had to be walking from door to door in this country trying to get assistance. So all of the platitudes that I hear about the private sector matching Government's contribution and I do not want to be contentious on this issue because I only wish to make it known that the Honourable Member for Christ Church East Central and the Olympic Association respond very quickly to the needs. But there is no way that his mother in Barbados should have to be traipsing around soliciting assistance of that nature for any athlete who is destined to be going to the Olympics.

There has been a lot of talk in this country about how wonderful the achievements of Leah Martindale and Obadele Thompson are, but between now and the year 2000 it is the Government's responsibility by direct intervention and assistance to those athletes who have been identified to help them to reach the highest potential possible and not simply jump on a band wagon of sentiment and congratulations and seek to be part of a process which has not to date involved Government as much as it should be involved. I make that very clear. I feel strongly about it and I believe that the parents of these athletes make considerable sacrifice and are by and large ignored until the eve of the Olympics when everybody wants to jump on a band wagon talking about how wonderful it is to see Barbados at the top of the rankings and reaching the finals. Those athletes will only bring back medals to this country in the year 2000 if all of us give them the kind of encouragement and support on a daily basis which is required and if we develop a national ethos which is going to make them feel that nothing less than the winning of a medal for this country should be their contribution at this time. The frustration which they have felt in the past should now be allayed as long as the enthusiasm of the Honourable Member for Christ Church East is matched by the action of the Honourable Member for St. Philip North in ensuring that these athletes are not just congratulated but are given the resources and access to the right kind of training and support from Barbadians and we will give our support to any efforts in that regard which the Government announces. I will make bold to say that we will be specifically asking what initiatives the Government will be undertaking other than asking the private sector to help. What other initiatives specifically will be undertaken to give support to these athletes? So we congratulate the athletes of Barbados for their achievements. There are many other teams such as the Volley Ball Team which won the Caribbean Championship now for 5 years and we have not congratulated them.

12.50 p.m.

There is a whole series of other Caribbean athletes and sports persons throughout the region who are excelling who need encouragement and support and need real resources, because they bring home glory to this country

as well, and if people were more aware of those achievements perhaps they would seek to meet them at the airport when they return with real success under their belts.

We agree with the Resolution and look forward to the accomplishments of the outstanding Barbadian athletes as they move toward the year 2000.

Thank you.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: Mr. Speaker, I will be very brief indeed, as I assume that other Members may wish to add a word or two. I would certainly like to join in the congratulatory remarks and support the Resolution which acknowledges and pays tribute to the outstanding performance of the Barbados athletes at the Olympics. I would certainly also like to join in the call for more public sector support in the form of money and in other areas for the efforts of our young people in the area of sports in general.

But, Sir, I said I will be brief and I intend to be very brief. A whole range of emotions flowed through my body as I watched the performance of Barbados' athletes, the performance of Caribbean athletes and the performance of athletes from the Caribbean running under other flags, the flags of other countries and winning medals for those countries during the Olympics. It was such an ennobling package of emotions which one felt during that period, one wondered what would happen if there was a Caribbean presence at the Olympics; if we were one nation; what would happen if all the black athletes that perform so magnificently in field and track if there were a United States of Africa. In other words, what I am saying is that the performance of these athletes not only make us proud as a country, but make us proud as being part of the race that civilised humanity, the black race. I sincerely hope that one day these athletes running and representing countries throughout the black diaspora somehow the glory would be to a united country where the next day after they won their medals, the day after the athletes finish, they would wake up the following morning in the sunshine of a country in which they are first class citizens, just as the Australians, some Americans, some Canadians. Fortunately for us in Barbados, an independent country, our athletes can have that kind of feeling. I only hope that something will happen to bring us all together over time so that this new dimension that I dream about, that I think about, that I feel about, and the feelings that were brought about as I watched the sinews, the courage and the strength of our people performing at the Olympics.

Thank you very much.

Mr. D. CARTER: Mr. Speaker, I should like to support this Resolution before this Honourable House and to endorse the sentiments of the Honourable Members for St. Philip North and Christ Church East. I have been fortunate to attend the Olympics and I would first like to congratulate the management and the team as a whole for their performance.

I believe for the first time in this country Barbadians are not going to the Olympics for experience, but we are now going to medal, as the athletes would say. I am quite sure the dedication I saw exhibited by those athletes would help them to be a shining light to this country in the next four years.

I heard the Honourable Member for St. Philip North say he was having goose pimples there, but as a member of that audience when I remembered the amount of money that was spent in this country trying to promote Barbados, I realised that if only one of our athletes could obtain a medal on that occasion Barbados would have been exhibited all over the world. I know we are asking the private sector for help, but this administration has done sufficiently well up to now and I would like to remind the Honourable Member for St. John that the request for help he had made about six months ago for Mr. Houston, within 24 hours after a call to my Minister, the Honourable Member for St. Philip North, the go ahead was given. In relation to Leah Martindale, she was experiencing some difficulty financially because she was training abroad and the Sports Council did help on that occasion. As I said, this administration is doing all in its power to help sports persons in this country and I am quite sure that down the road there will be better coming from this Government in relation to sportsmen in general.

Finally, I should like to say to the athletes and to the management that we as a Government stand here to assist and I hope that they in turn will give back Barbados what we are looking forward to in the future, better performances than they had at the Olympics.

I thank you, Sir.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Mr. Speaker, first of all I wish to participate in the general congratulations to all of the athletes. I have known Leah from the time she was a baby and I can say that apart from being a great athlete she has grown up to be a fine...

Mr. SPEAKER: You were not one of her swimming instructors, though.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: No, no. She is a fine young lady. The point I want to make, Sir, is to appeal to the authorities in the Olympic Association not to put the young man from Canada into double jeopardy. He did what he did, he apologised and we did what we did, he had

his punishment. I have seen and heard people suggesting that he should be banned for life. Linford Christie did worse than he did and suffered no sanction whatsoever and I believe that Barbadians need to understands that things like that will happen from time to time and we need not have run headlines shouting "Shame!" because in the final analysis this was a human reaction in a human situation.
1.00 p.m.

I believe that Barbadians need to understand that things like that will happen from time to time and we need not have run headlines shouting shame because, in the final analysis, this was a human reaction in a human situation. I do not take any position on the merits or demerits of the action clearly, it is not something we would have liked to see happen. What I am appealing to the authorities about is to avoid bringing greater punishment than is necessary and let the punishment fit the crime.

I do not believe that we should persist as a country in putting a young person into double jeopardy, especially when that young person has apologised and indicated how sorry he is. I thought that would be necessary in all the circumstances to include in the general comments which are being made.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Speaker, I beg to associate myself with all the remarks made so far with respect to the congratulations being meted out to all of our athletes who participated in the Olympic Games but, particularly, those who shone in the finals in which they participated, Leah Martindale and Obadele Thompson. It is not simply that one's realisation that both of these persons are under the age of 20 and have brought a level of honour and pride to this country that is usually expected from persons who are much older than they have been and usually attained by persons with far greater experience than them.

I think that the significance, therefore, of their participation in these Olympics, given their limited experience in sporting endeavour, given their limited access to training and indeed, Sir, even young Nicky Neckles who only had limited training in Puerto Rico before he went up but was still able to place first in a number of his heats is indicative of the fact that we need to become serious at two levels in respect of sports in this country. One, in terms of the mass based community training which this Government has in fact undertaken. In January of this year between Sports and Culture we trained over 1500 young people and started another 1500 in June of this year.

At the second, those who have clearly shown that they are capable of far greater pursuits at that mass based level should then be taken out and should then at an early opportunity be given exposure to the best possible training even if that training cannot be found within the expertise of this country alone. I believe that is the commitment of this Government. I want to laud the Minister of Sports also for making a call on the private sector to be a part of this effort. I believe that it is within the sports and cultural activities this country will see significant satisfaction both in terms of the psychological welfare of the country as well as the foreign exchange and jobs as we enter the 21st century.

I want to warmly salute these young Barbadians who have brought so much pride to this country and the feelings of gladness that we had the opportunity to participate in the Centennial Olympics. Thank you, Sir.

SUSPENSION

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that this House be suspended until 2 o'clock this afternoon at which hour it is proposed that the televised debate on the Facilitation Unit for Returning Nationals will begin.

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

The question was put and resolved in the affirmative without division and Mr. Speaker suspended the House accordingly.
2.00 p.m.

RESUMPTION

Mr. SPEAKER: This sitting is resumed.

Mr. W. C. C. CALLENDER: Mr. Speaker, I move that the item of congratulatory speeches to the Olympians be postponed until a further date.

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

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

ORDERS OF THE DAY

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

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

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

ORDER NO. 2 – RESOLUTION CONGRATULATING GOVERNMENT ON A CHARTER AND FACILITATION UNIT FOR RETURNING NATIONALS

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Mr. Speaker, Sir, on February 27 this year I tabled a Resolution and I would wish to reiterate it, Sir.

> WHEREAS the Government of Barbados recognises Barbadian nationals overseas as an integral part of Barbados' assets and resources and the invaluable contribution they have made to the development of the nation;
>
> AND WHEREAS over the years a number of Barbadians have been returning to Barbados to resettle; and the Government, recognising that every effort should be made to facilitate their settlement and re-integration into the national society, has created a Charter for Returning and Overseas Nationals and has established a Facilitation Unit for Returning Nationals in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs;
>
> BE IT RESOLVED THAT Parliament welcome the creation of the Charter and the establishment of the Facilitation Unit for Returning Nationals and endorse their objectives;
>
> BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT Parliament congratulate the Government on the creation of the Charter and the establishment of the Facilitation Unit for Returning Nationals.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, it gives me on this occasion absolutely nothing but pleasure to move this Resolution formally and to speak to it.

The Facilitation Unit for Returning Nationals is now, I think, generally known both at home here in Barbados and abroad as FURN, that is the acronym as we would say. FURN has an interesting history, Mr. Speaker. As I think I have said on a previous occasion in this Chamber, there is nothing particularly new about the concept, about the idea of FURN. What is new is that it has happened. There are many over the years who have said that it could not be done. There were even some who said that it would not be done and that it should not be done. But we are here today, Sir, to give testimony to the fact that it has been done. It has been accomplished and it is well done and the Government is indeed worthy to be congratulated in this connection.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, we didn't do this by ourselves alone. It is true that if we go back to the manifesto of the Barbados Labour Party, its 1994 manifesto, which we described then and still regard as a charter for change in Barbados that we said that we would embark upon a programme and I quote: "transforming Barbados into a dynamic, prosperous and stable democracy capable of sustaining a high quality of life for all of its people." That, in fact, came from the Throne Speech of 1994.

Mr. Speaker, the Barbadians who left our shores in large numbers in the 1950s, in the 1960s and even some in the 1970s – I am pleased that although you cannot see them Sir, there are many of them in this Chamber who are our special guests today – some of them have been heard to say that it was an earlier Barbados Labour Party Administration which helped them with their single, lonely suitcases to go abroad in the 1950s and 1960s.

It now happens that in 1996 it is again a Barbados Labour Party Administration that is helping them to return to their beloved Barbados, not with a single, lonely suitcase, but with containers, but with skills, but with experience and that is what we welcome back to Barbados. I believe that there are some who are saying Mr. Speaker, Sir, what is the big thing about FURN. My answer to that is, speak to any national who has returned here, people who have been abroad 25, 30, 40 years. You ask them what is so big about FURN. Ask them why they thought that it was so important that last month they planned themselves a mighty service of Thanksgiving at the St. George Parish Church to give thanks, as was said on that occasion, not only to God but to this Government for at long last hearkening to their plight.

It has not been an easy passage for them. We have heard sad stories, Mr. Speaker, Sir. I remember that in 1995 when I brought this concept of a facilitation unit to the Cabinet, the Cabinet needed no persuasion and was exceptionally receptive. I have to say to the idea that this was something that we had to do, whose time was long overdue and that it had to happen. I was given the green light to go ahead.

I had already called a town meeting which we held at the Dover Convention Centre. I remember it well, an evening meeting. It gratified me that several hundreds of returned nationals turned up to that meeting and it was quite a watershed. We shared views from one side to the other. It was a very emotional experience for many. On that occasion, I saw grown men cry, Mr. Speaker, and we heard of chilling stories that the generations coming after us cannot begin to appreciate. Chilling stories of, in the United Kingdom in particular, seeking employment, seeking accommodation, reading signs which said: No Dogs. No Blacks.

Some of us who would have gone to university in the United Kingdom, some of us have had those experiences as well, and so we are in a position to empathise with a lot

of the horrible experiences, unhappy experiences, uncomfortable experiences that Barbadians were subjected to, not only in the United Kingdom, in North America as well, the United States and in Canada.

Mr. Speaker, maybe into a second and third generation now some of these Barbadians are returning and I regret to say that there are some among us in Barbados who behave as though these are refugees from some other country; but these are Barbadians. These are our own people and we have to learn to be more welcoming in our attitude and the Government has sought to lead by example and that is what FURN is about.

Out of that town meeting grew a committee. I gave them permission to have their meetings in the conference room at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. I put the offices of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs at their disposal and I invited them in what has turned out, Mr. Speaker, Sir, to be a tremendous good example of public/private sector collaboration to plan what the unit would look like, how to operate it – who best to inform our thinking than returned nationals themselves. They volunteered their time. They volunteered their ideas. They volunteered their skills freely.

We decided that it was important that an information booklet, this booklet – I have presented a copy of it to all Honourable Members, Sir – should be put together and my answer was, "you go ahead and you design it. Who better than yourselves could know what information prospective returning nationals would wish to know of."

It is a very well done booklet and I offer my congratulations to all of those who worked so hard to make it a reality. This booklet is to be found in large numbers in every mission that Barbados has abroad. It is to be found in the hands of all of the Honorary Consuls that we have abroad. It is to be found in the hands of several national associations of Barbadians abroad wherever we can find them and we have been quite overwhelmed in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs at the frequency of the requests for this document even here in Barbados.
2.20 p.m.

I am suggesting, Sir, that not only among those who live abroad, but certainly among Barbadians here, the whole idea of the Charter for returning nationals has been very well received.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, we sometimes like to say that it is very possible that there are more Barbadians living abroad than there are in Barbados. Certainly in the United States of America, their Bureau of Census 1990 reported some 44 000 Barbadians. Clearly those are the ones that they know about, and that does not include the Barbadians living in Canada, the Barbadians living all over the United Kingdom and the Barbadians living in Continental Europe. There are a lot of Barbadians who live in Germany, Barbadians who have joined the British Army and were serving with the British Army in Europe and particularly in Germany. Many of them have come to hear about this, and suddenly, since the establishment of FURN, our Embassy at Brussels has been inundated by requests from people, Barbadians, they did not even know existed all over Europe but particularly in Germany.

Many Barbadians have made the point that even though they have not seriously been considering returning to Barbados, the Establishment of the Facilitation Unit is causing them to think many times about it. Several who have been thinking about it, but thinking that it might have been too costly and traumatic an undertaking for them, are changing their minds.

It is reported to me that, since February of this year, when the Unit was established in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, that some 85 persons have been the beneficiaries of the special package of concessions offered, and that more are returning on a systematic and regular basis.

The Unit is headed by Mr. Jeff Hunte. I mentioned him specifically, because he was the one who interfaced with the returning nationals from the very beginning. It was to him, in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, that the assignment was given. He has established a remarkably good rapport with the Executive Committee, in fact, several committees. There are a number of associations in Barbados, Mr. Speaker, Sir, which speak to returning nationals from the United Kingdom, from Canada and other parts as well. They have all come together in an umbrella association as well and they have provided invaluable service and assistance to the setting up of the Unit and to the running of it as well.

In fact, in a meeting with them I suggested that they should entertain the buddy system where for every returning national who was registered in a Mission of Barbados abroad and we knew was coming back, you would pair that person to somebody who had already returned, who would be there to greet them and ease them along the road which had been tough for them, but they would be prepared to make it easier for somebody else.

I have to say that the returning nationals who have been so helpful to us have been truly magnanimous. Some of them could have taken the attitude that they had not been the beneficiaries of these concessions, and therefore let everybody else who would now be a beneficiary suffer. Instead, they have been big-hearted about it, they have been generous to a fault, and they have said, "we would help in this connection".

And more than that, Sir. Our overseas Missions, especially in London – because I have to say that the greater majority of returning nationals so far tend to come from the United Kingdom – and New York are also putting together a skills bank. This is part of the role and function of FURN.

It is important to us because of the new technological thrust, because of new market niches in all the sectors of our economy, that we get a very early understanding of the quality and the quantity of skills, and the broad mix of skills which are returning to us in Barbados. Some of them are coming back home to set up businesses. In fact, we believe in the Government that an entire retirement industry is going to grow. We see the beginnings of it already out of this entire endeavour.

I can report, Mr. Speaker, Sir, that the Facilitation Unit in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and this is only one illustration, has been approached by Total Technology Solutions Limited. This is an offshore company which develops software services for Fortune 500 companies. They have approached us and requested our assistance in locating suitably qualified nationals to work with their company.

Now that company, we are told, will need about 400 of such people over the next 2 years. The FURN Unit will circulate the Missions with the relevant information, and that is only the beginning. There will be more and more of that.

I have to say, Mr. Speaker, Sir, that a number of returned nationals have been giving voluntary service, not only with the setting up of the Unit, but they have now gone into other areas, such as the area of Child Care and an area which is rising in the interest of Barbadians, the elderly. We have an aging population in Barbados and the Government, again leading by example, has given encouragement to pursuance of voluntary service in this area.

A training programme devised by some of the returned nationals has been, to my understanding, submitted to the Child Care Board for consideration and approval, and they are planning many other such programmes with many other agencies in Barbados, not only public agencies, statutory corporations and the like, but non-Governmental as well.

I have to say, Mr. Speaker, that since we launched FURN a lot of the local companies have declared an interest in our overseas nationals. The City of Bridgetown Credit Union has already visited the United States of America seeking to encourage nationals there to buy into their various schemes. Last month, in July, they went on a similar mission to the United Kingdom doing very much the same thing. The Leader of the Opposition is very much aware of that. He may very well have been there when this mission was being undertaken.

The Barbados National Bank and the Public Workers' Credit Union have indicated that they are considering mounting similar expeditions as well. They have all approached FURN in the services of the relevant Barbados Missions abroad to help them in every and any way possible.

The FURN Unit, Sir, is also thinking of bringing together a think tank of persons drawn from the Barbados National Bank, the Central Bank, the Securities Exchange, the Ministry of Finance and other private sector bodies to devise ways of inducing nationals overseas to invest in Barbados. Again, Mr. Speaker, Sir, this is a connection in which the Government is leading by example.

The Minister of Finance has promised, and as recently as yesterday in the Cabinet, at a very soon date to deliver a special investment instrument designed exclusively for nationals abroad, not only Barbadians who live here, but who love Barbados and want to see Barbados progress. Many Barbadians abroad have that wish as well and want to invest in a Barbados that at a later date they would want to come back as returning nationals do.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, we regard, therefore, that the wider Barbadian community, not only those of us who live or have our being here, but those of us who live wherever else in the world outside of Barbados, are part of our country. We are the Government of all Barbadians wherever they are.

We regard Barbadians both at home and abroad are indeed our most valuable resource, and we consider that, particularly those who live abroad are a vital element in the development process. We are prepared to service, not to give lip service only to this, Mr. Speaker, Sir. That is why we have gone to a great deal of trouble. We have gone to a great deal of effort to bring about the Facilitation Unit for Returning Nationals.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, I cannot think of anyone either inside or outside this Chamber, who would not want to support this Resolution. I have to say that it took a great deal of political will, as indeed it took a great deal of perseverance from those returning nationals who were not prepared to see this as a continuing dream into the twenty-first century, but were determined that it had to become a reality before the year 2000.

2.30 p.m.

Mr. Speaker, who would not want to wish this Unit well? Who would not want to see it go from strength

to strength? It is said that home is where when you knock on the door they have to let you in, and this Government has that as an attitude. It has it as a policy.

Mr. Speaker, in March of this year I think it was March 8, Barbadians, both at home and abroad, may well remember how we sought to do the official launch of the Facilitation Unit. I thought that this was an opportunity, not only to show Barbadians how at the level of the Government we were using the new technology, but to bring it home to Barbadians abroad and Barbadians at home that we were all one and the same. You may well recall, Sir, on that occasion what I did in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs was to organise a conference call, but a conference call with a difference.

We opened up the telephone lines at all of Barbados' missions abroad. The Heads of Mission had invited numbers of Barbadians to come to the missions on that particular day and at that particular time and we had a gathering. I am pleased to say there were a number of returned nationals among them at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. We invited the Prime Minister and members of the Cabinet. The lines were opened up and one by one we greeted each other in London, New York, Washington, Miami, Brussels, Toronto, Ottawa and Caracas. It was, I think, perhaps the most wonderful way in which I have ever seen an idea actually get up off the ground and walk. Since that day, Sir, I have to say that I am truly overwhelmed at the public response to this.

Mr. Speaker, the skills bank of which I spoke earlier is an important aspect of the work of the Unit. Almost all of the returning nationals are bringing highly valued skills with them. They are bringing capital with them. These are people who over the years made a significant contribution to our economy. These are people through remittances, not only to their immediate families but to their extended families, have made an heroic contribution, even while they were outside, and they are now coming to us. Some of them are bringing their families, second and third generations, what we are now encouraged to regard as "Bajan Brits." We can hear the accents of many of them on the television. We hear them on the radio, in almost every endeavour of business. You telephone an office and you hear a very English sounding voice but it is a Barbadian voice. It is often an occasion for pleasure.

Indeed, before I left my law practice to come back into Government in September, 1994, my own secretary was a returned national who had lived in England for 23 years out of – I would not want to say what her age was – but she lived more years in the United Kingdom than she had lived here in Barbados. She came back with parents where two or three generations were returning at one and the same time and everyone brought a skill.

Now, Mr. Speaker, if I could speak a little more particularly in respect of the returned nationals. Apart from the package of concessions which the Prime Minister and Minister of Finance so eagerly granted us, and I have to say that between February and July of this year – the Unit started up its work in February – just over BDS. $1 million in duties and taxes have been waived. Do not look so much at the taxes and duties waived but look at what would have occasioned the waiver, to get an idea of what is being brought back to Barbados.

Many times many of these returning nationals are setting up businesses, as I have said. There are two suggestions because it is an ongoing process and there are two recommendations which have been made by nationals since we have put out the booklet. If I could turn to it for a moment, Sir, a most interesting document. It deals with everything you could imagine. It sets out all the licensing offices by parish. It tells them all about putting their vehicles on the road, household and personal things, new and used, how to clear your household and personal effects. Even at page 14 it tells of procedures for complaints against attorneys-at-law, importation of animals and meats. It tells them all about electrical equipment and voltage. It has an Appendix at the back which sets out all the personal and household effects and allowances for duty free importation.

Mr. Speaker, I went to the Cabinet and I said, among other things, that perhaps the biggest bug bear for returning nationals had to do with their motorcars. People told horrendous stories that they would have bought, for instance, a car in the United Kingdom, a secondhand car, for maybe £5 000, £6 000 or £7 000 and they would be bringing that back to Barbados only to have a valuation in Barbados dollars way in excess of the purchase price put on it and they would have been then expected to pay on top of that, duties and taxes.

We had all sorts, I think, of arbitrarily imposed time limits. The fridge and stove had to be 3 years old, or however many years old to be able to attract waivers and so on and so forth. The Cabinet took the attitude that this was rubbish. People who have been away for 20, 25, 30 and in some cases in excess of 40 years, should it matter if the car is new, or old? Should it matter if there are 2 or 3 beds, and if they are 10 or 15 years old? The Government took the attitude that this was not something to detain us and we should really and truly be doing everything that we could to ease and facilitate, and that is why it is called a Facilitation Unit, the return of people and the resettlement process which for some people can be traumatic.

It is like taking up a 7-year old and taking that person to the United Kingdom and just dropping him down without anybody to say this is the way to do things, let

me take you and introduce you to the Headmistress of the School, and the Pastor in the Church or the Reverend in the Church, and whatever, and whatever. So when somebody has been away for 40 years and they come back and you drop them into a Barbadian society which does not look anything and behave anything like it did 40 or 30 years ago, it has to be a difficult experience.

Barbadians, as I have said, have not always been welcoming in their attitude. You hear it said out there, you know, these people are mad. They want this and they are picky and difficult. It is just that their ways are different from our ways and they have to take time to learn our ways again. It may well behove us to learn some of their ways.
2.40 p.m.

Over lunch just now we were discussing the whole business of that aspect of re-settlement, that some of these returning nationals are more consumer conscious, more consumer-oriented than we are in Barbados. So when they go into shops they want to be a little more careful about what they purchase, be it a good or a service, Barbadians perhaps could learn something from that experience rather than snigger at it as we are sometimes known to do.

Mr. Speaker, the two major suggestions which have come from the returning nationals since we have launched the unit and we encourage this. One is that returning nationals bringing in commercial vehicles rather than motor cars should be allowed the duty free privileges. What they are saying in effect is that the customs ought not to pay too specific or put too specific an interpretation on the word vehicle because not everybody wants to bring home a car. If it is that you have a jeep what are you going to do now, discriminate between somebody who has a jeep and somebody who has a car? Somebody may want to set up a business and instead bring the truck which they were using in their business wherever they were. There may be some who want to bring boats, yachts, Barbadians have done to a large extent very well abroad and this can only add to us in Barbados, not subtract from us. I am happy to say that the Comptroller of Customs is kindly disposed to this suggestion. I have raised it informally with the Minister of Finance who is also kindly disposed and I am very happy to say at this time that a paper is on its way to the Cabinet seeking formal approval. The Minister of Finance is smiling, he will speak to it.

Whilst I am on this issue let me press the point on behalf of returning nationals that there is a further suggestion and it is only a suggestion and it is coming from nationals, mainly those coming out of the United States and Canada who are saying that local car dealers have been suggesting that it might be sensible to allow returning nationals to buy their cars duty free from local car dealers rather than go through the business of freighting and so on. I can only say, Mr. Speaker, Sir, that the Minister of Finance is smiling. What he will say is another thing but I have to say that I am very supportive of these two recommendations and that this too is one of the recommendations on its way now to the Cabinet to further facilitate.

Aside.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: The Honourable Member for St. Lucy is saying this has his support. I am very much obliged to you, Sir. This is in the effort, Sir, to even further facilitate the returning nationals.

I hope that the Minister of Finance may be disposed at this time to speak a little more fulsomely in respect of the special investment instrument which he is designing for the exclusive use of Barbadian Nationals abroad. Barbadian nationals abroad are disposed to investing in Barbados. Where I have met and talked to nationals abroad in the course of my moving around on Government business they tell me that they want to invest in the new airport. They hear that we are building an expansion to the Port, they want to invest in that. They say they hear we are expanding the Hilton Hotel, they want to invest in that. They say they hear all about the rehabilitation of Bridgetown and Speightstown and they want a piece of the action.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, I hope that none of this is falling on deaf ears and I do not only mean public sector driven action, I hope that the private sector is understanding that there are very willing partners out there with capital, with skills, with experience, who are willing to become a part of the Barbados of the early twenty-first century.

Mr. Speaker, I welcome those who are returning to Barbados. I welcome those who continue to think of returning to Barbados. I think that it can only augur well for Barbados that its nationals should think so highly of where we are at now in the development of Barbados that they would want to return here because believe me, Sir, there are some countries in the world to which nationals abroad do not wish to return and I would not be so indelicate as to call names but I think it speaks well for Barbados that in large numbers Barbadians who have lived abroad for many years would feel that this is a place that they want to return to, this is a place that they want to live, this is a place that they feel they can still continue to make a significant contribution to and that they are now in the process.

Mr. Speaker, the Resolution speaks to resources that nationals have. It speaks to reintegration in national society. I think that for the first time in the history of this island and as I have said before, this island may not be an ancient place in the context of Greece and Rome but certainly

in the context of the Western Hemisphere we have a goodly heritage and I am pleased and do wish to congratulate the Government that for the first time in our history we are laying out the welcome mat in this way to our own.

We are very good at bowing and scraping and laying out the red carpet for visitors. It is part of what we do. The tourism industry is important to us and we like to feel that we are good at this but it is important that we do not in this endeavour overlook our own. These are Barbadians. These are not people from some other part of the world whom we have offered to resettle in Barbados. These are people with their navel strings buried here in the days indeed when you used to bury navel strings indeed, Mr. Speaker, Sir. These are people with their roots here. These are people with property here, they have sent back over the years and built houses. There are Honourable Members I know on both sides of this House who should be able to say in here that in their constituencies there are a significant number of homes built through the effort of Barbadian nationals abroad.
2.50 p.m.

It is good that many of them should get the chance to come back here to enjoy the fruits of their labour and to continue to be of service to Barbados. I salute them all, Mr. Speaker, Sir. Thank you.

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

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I beg to second the Resolution and reserve my right to speak.

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

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Mr. Speaker, Sir, a large number of Barbadians around Barbados at the moment and indeed maybe some Honourable Members in this House are probably asking: "Why are we here? What is this all about?" In the words of one of those songs in one of the Broadway plays: "What is the fuss? What is this fuss all about?" I could answer for them. It is simple. This is about politics. Up to now what we have heard so far, Sir, this is about politics. We on this side can welcome the decision finally to establish a Facilitation Unit. You noticed that I said finally, Sir. We on this side can welcome a Facilitation Unit. We believe that the Minister could have come here and made a statement to Parliament that she has decided to establish a Facilitation Unit in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and she was going to assign a special officer to do liaison work for the returning nationals. She could even have as she has done produced a booklet and called that "Wally". The nationals are returning to Barbados today and the ones who will return from tomorrow are no different from the Nationals who have been returning to Barbados from time immemorial. Mr. Speaker, Sir, you are looking at a full time totally returned national. I am a returned national, Sir. I returned to Barbados after a long sojourn in the United States. I have had the experience of having to re-integrate into my society. I have spent a substantial part of my life dealing with the problems relating to persons who are living outside of Barbados who feel some affinity to Barbados or who have had to return to Barbados either temporarily or permanently.

Aside.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I listened with much pain but silence to the Honourable Member and I hope however painful it may be for her that she will be able to listen in a similar silence. But if she does not feel able to, feel free to behave as usual. I have no problem.

Mr. Speaker, I am making the point that a substantial part of my life has been involved, certainly all of my public life, in some way with returning nationals. So there is no one who is going to doubt the sincerity with which we say we welcome Barbadians who return to their own country. But we cannot find it however hard we have searched in our hearts to congratulate the Government for what it has done. This is the first time that I have seen a Government mount up on a high place to announce that it has done its duty and furthermore that it is seeking to have the House, and more particularly itself, congratulate itself for doing its duty.

Mr. Speaker, it is the duty of the state, it is the duty of any Government and it is the duty of this Government certainly to make provisions for the peaceful, orderly and happy development of the people. But if what the Government is doing was original, Sir, if what the Government is doing was something that was happening *sui generis*, then perhaps we could understand their elation, the hoopla, the public relations output and the general environment in which they have been engendering to give this some kind of massive importance way beyond even what the nationals who are returning believe. But, Sir, the Government is first of all continuing programmes that have been in existence. Secondly, a Facilitation Unit was established in Jamaica in 1993. You cannot recall and they certainly had no Resolution in the Parliament to congratulate themselves. The Trinidadians had a Facilitation Unit. They had no Resolution to congratulate themselves. But trust this administration especially as it is manifested through the distinguished and Honourable Member for the City and Minister of Foreign Affairs. Much ado about nothing! That is her way, Sir. That is the Honourable Member's way. My regret is by so doing inadvertently or otherwise they may have created precisely the kind of difficulties which through their efforts they were seeking

to avoid. Precisely the kind of "ask them" syndrome which anyone who is familiar with the methodologies of integrating populations or people of different cultures would recognize that the least amount of public indication that you were doing something different for one group as opposed to the other would work to the good for both groups. Mr. Speaker, I shall address that later because the last thing the returning nationals wish is that when they get to Barbados they find a fence of anger, rejection and jealousy. They do not wish to find that. They wish to come back smoothly into their society. They wish to believe that this is their Barbados as it is my Barbados as it is your Barbados. They do not wish any special dispensation for them so that they are to be identified as the "returning nationals". Mr. Speaker, only a person who has lived outside of Barbados for a long time can understand what difficulty the Government may inadvertently be putting the people who are returning in, merely because the Government has an agenda which the Government must fulfil and which some clever person has suggested to them, not that they should set up a Facilitation Unit, but that when they set it up they should try and get as much mileage out of it as possible.

Mr. Speaker, I will offer an amendment because as any Honourable Member will know that we on this side have fought so valiantly over the last 30 years for the people inside and outside of Barbados that we could hardly be heard to be rejecting a Resolution welcoming the establishment of a Facilitation Unit. So that the paragraph dealing with the congratulations of the Government, Sir, I will be seeking to have removed. This is my amendment, Sir. Delete the words: "Be it resolved that Parliament congratulates the Government on the creation of the Charter and the establishment of the Facilitation Unit for Returning Nationals".

We cannot congratulate the Government for following other people and for continuing the work that it should do. 3.00 p.m.

Lest there be any doubt, before I go any further, Sir, as to what I am saying, recently all of us in this Chamber received a letter from a returning national. He has been described in many ways, it is not necessary for me to describe him, but there is a letter which came here from a returning national. I do not intend to make it a document of the House, Sir.

Aside.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: One day they are going to make you Speaker and you will be able to decide who can do what. Until then you and I will both obey the rules in the same way.

I have received a letter from a returning national addressed to me at 10 Stanmore Crescent. It is a private letter, Sir, but it was addressed to me, and it asked us to support the Resolution for the returning nationals and it said in part:

> "You would be aware that over the past 18 years, 1978, some overseas nationals have been articulating the concerns of Caribbean nationals living abroad, in particular of Barbadians living in England. Following the general elections in January 1991 overseas nationals also expressed concern of the Barbados economy and Barbadians in England extended a helping hand. As a result, in December 1991 and January 1992 the BOCA held a series of public meetings in London where it was agreed that a fact finding team would visit Barbados to investigate and determine what would be required for the Organisation to effectively contribute to the stabilisation of the Barbados economy.
>
> The delegation arrived in Barbados in May 1992 and held discussions with Government officials, Opposition parties, private sector and non-governmental organisations. Public meetings were also held. The team concluded its findings after a three-week stay before going on to New York to have further discussions with nationals there.
>
> Resulting from the findings which also took into consideration the recommendations of the West India Commission, report time for action May 1992, on July 1, 1993 the CARICOM Resettlement Programme was launched in London. The objective of the Programme is to develop a process which would enable nationals to repatriate funds and skills to the region.
>
> Following our talks with Government..."

I am reading the letter still, Sir.

"...a Consulate Section..."

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order.

Mr. SPEAKER: Are you reading the letter or extracts from the letter?

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Extracts from the letter. The Honourable Member is on a point of order.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: I hope that this document is going to be made available at the Table.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: I give the Honourable Member the assurance that I will let her have the document for her perusal.

Aside.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: "...The objective of the Programme is to develop a process which would enable nationals to repatriate funds and skills to the region. Following our talks with Government, a Consulate Section was established within the Ministry for Foreign Affairs and in June 1994 talks continued with the Permanent Secretary and the Consulate Section."

Another section of the letter says, Sir:

"Our recommendation to Government was that a delegation should visit Jamaica to review that country's Facilitation Unit which was established in 1993."

It then went on to say, Sir:

"Following the September 6, 1994 general elections consultation continued with Government through the Consulate Section on a strategy for developing its facilities to cater for overseas nationals."

Now, Sir, that is a private citizen, who is a returned national, who wrote me that letter. He said in his letter that he sent a copy to every other Honourable Member in here. I do not believe that in making a presentation to this Honourable House we ought to have an incomplete picture. If the Government is going to give the impression that this is something *sui generis* which was hatched in the mind, the very fertile brain of the Honourable Member for the City...

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. I was careful in my introduction to say there was nothing new about this idea, except that it had been brought to fruition.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: As I was saying, Sir, if the people are allowed to get the impression that this was a matter hatched in the fertile brain of the distinguished Honourable Member for the City, that would be a travesty, because the whole question...

Aside.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Sir, I am being heckled, persons wishing to know what I mean by "fertile brain". I do not believe we have the time to go into that kind of discussion.

Mr. SPEAKER: You are not referring to the Speaker's brain, I hope.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Mr. Speaker, one of the things of which I have absolutely no doubt is the fertility of the Speaker's brain. As I said, Sir, it would be a travesty, because the whole question of protection of Barbadian nationals was the guiding force, the guiding principle of the Democratic Labour Party Government when it sought independence and when it established overseas Missions. Your Honour might recall, because Your Honour was fairly young at the time, the question which was raised often in this country as to whether Barbados would be able to afford Missions overseas as to why Barbados should have Missions overseas. What was the point of this little 2 x 3 country setting up offices overseas to put people in to have parties all year, all month, all day long? You will recall, Sir, that especially in the first ten years of the establishment of overseas Missions certain people in Barbados raised fundamental questions about the capacity and ability of Barbados to fund Missions overseas. You will also recall, Your Honour, that the Government of the day resolutely stuck to the task of providing inspiration, if nothing else, for those nationals who had to battle with discrimination, had to battle with the worst kinds of conditions, with all kinds of insults in London, New York, Boston and everywhere they were in a minority. The Government of the day stuck resolutely to its responsibility as it perceived it and, Mr. Speaker, our Constitution reflected the attitude of the Government.

It must be remembered that Barbados became independent after, for example, Trinidad and Tobago. It will be remembered that the Government of Trinidad and Tobago made it abundantly clear by its constitutional instruments that to become a citizen of somewhere else was to abandon citizenship in Trinidad and Tobago. That was the Constitution. But from the very beginning those who were responsible for charting the course which we have been steadily pursuing over the last 30 years were able to recognise that independence would mean nothing to Barbados if it could not serve as a standard, a bulwark, as a light, a beacon for those people who were born in this country and who have lived most of their lives outside of Barbados.

Mr. Speaker, during the course of this debate if I become a little emotional I seek your forgiveness up front, because these are matters that affect me personally and deeply.

3.10 p.m.

Mr. Speaker, I recall one of the late great Barbadians who was honoured by the Barbados Workers' Union recently, a man called Mr. Reggie Pierrepointe. When I went to New York in 1962, when I got my job at the United Nations, one of the first people I met was a

man called Reggie Pierrepointe who then introduced me to a Mr. Dudley Barrow and to a Mr. Hope Stevens and one other person whose name is eluding me now but who ran a shoe shop at 125th Street in Harlem.

I recall Mr. Pierrepointe saying to me that he would never set foot on Barbados soil again until Barbados became an independent country. This was 1962, Sir. In 1966, when the delegation came back through New York after having negotiated and arrived at a date for independence I recall we had a small gathering in the same 125th Street in Harlem. I remember old, grisly men crying tears of joy and Reggie Pierrepointe saying, "Now we can go back to a land that is ours."

Mr. Speaker, one of the things about...

Asides.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Mr. Speaker, fortunately there are persons still alive in Barbados today who were there who would be able to confirm it. There are persons within the hearing of my voice, because it is being broadcast, who can confirm this to be true and what is more, Mr. Speaker, if the Honourable Member for St. Michael West Central wishes I will show him where Pierrepointe has actually written it I will show him. Anyone who is not illiterate and who has spent some time reading the documents of Freedom Ways – Freedom Ways is a document that has been put out over the years – will find the same information.

Sir, there is a man in this country called – I call his name without any intention of saying anything bad about him, Sir, who was an ambassador to the United Nations – Waldo Waldron Ramsay, who can confirm what I have just said. I am saying this because it is important if we are going to discuss matters relating to nationals who live overseas to give a full picture and that full picture must include some of these. These are the kinds of people who had in fact moved from Barbados in the 40s when life in this country was brutish and short.

In the 50s, Sir, when after adult suffrage in 1951 the people had every reason to believe, that a Daniel having come to Judgement and Moses having arisen, that they were going to get to see the Promised Land and before long they were discovering that salt had a sugar taste and it was necessary for us... They were sucking salt. The Honourable Member for St. Andrew is saying he does not know about sucking salt. He has sucked salt in his life but he didn't know he was sucking salt.

Mr. Speaker, those were the persons who left Barbados and they were followed by droves of Barbadians who felt that leaving Barbados must necessarily be better than what they had in Barbados at the time.

The Honourable Member when she introduced this Resolution gave the impression that the Barbados Labour Party had made provision for these people to go to seek their fortunes in far off lands. My recollection is slightly different. Mine is that the late Wynter Crawford had tremendous difficulty and indeed suffered attacks from all quarters because he dared to suggest emigration as a means of economic development. The late Wynter Crawford, if credit is going to be given, would have to take the credit for having the courage and the vision, for it was nothing short of vision. I hear Honourbale Members on the Other Side from their seats saying Brazil. One of the things about people of vision is that many times very often what they have to say and what they have to do cannot be understood by ordinary mortals. Crawford might have said Brazil. Others before him said Panama, but the principle which he espoused was the fundamental one of recognising that Barbados would only grow and develop if some of its able-bodied sons could find their way outside of Barbados into more virgin territory with the possibility of fruits.

Honourable Members are saying that he said Brazil, but just recently the Prime Minister sat down with other Heads of Government in Barbados and decided that the people of Barbados should go to Guyana. There is not much difference.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. No such decision was made. I was there and an invitation was made by the President of Guyana to all CARICOM nationals to come to Guyana. The Prime Minister of Barbados did not make any decision where Barbadians should go.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: I withdraw "decision". This word "decision" has meanings which you and I understand but there was no formal decision. I withdraw "decision" so that the Honourable Members can be comfortable. He was there when the President of Guyana invited people to come to Guyana to live. That is not the first time that we have had that as a suggestion and I was not even being pejorative when I said that but now the reaction of the Honourable Member might be suggesting that there is something inherently wrong with the President of Guyana inviting people to go to Guyana to live. I do not think he was wanting them to come as indentured servants. So I don't see that that would be a problem. I think that President Jagan was genuinely suggesting that his interior could use some of the vaunted skills of young Barbadians who are looking for somewhere to go and somewhere to grow.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, those who went to London especially had a hard time. They arrived in London, some of them with nylon shirts. They had no coats and they

had West Indians who had been there before them who were prepared to exploit them and did. Mr. Speaker, one of the despicable aspects of life of Barbadians overseas is that other Barbadians who lived overseas exploited them when they first arrived. The returning nationals could tell you stories better than any of us can.

Mr. Speaker, I could speak to these matters with impunity because I have lived them. I have a brother...

Aside.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: It is a long time since anybody like that could put me off. I have a brother who was one of those nationals who went during that time. He is back. He is a returned national. His wife is a returned national. They worked in the places that sold tea. Fortunately, when my brother went to London he had a skill so he worked with Burtons and he left Burtons because it was not paying him as much as those who were working in other fields. Anybody who is anybody in Barbados knows somebody who went to London during that time because all you had to do was to raise the money and get on the Franca C, or so they thought.

When they arrived in London, that is, the returning nationals... Let us tell our people here the story. Don't let us put on frills. Let us tell our people the real story about the nationals and our people here will automatically sympathise with them. There is not a household in Barbados that has not benefited from some national that went somewhere. So there is no question of our having to prepare like a bride adorned for her husband for these people. These are not different from other Barbadians. The point must be made that the only difference between the Honourable Member for the City and the Honourable Member for St. Michael West is that the ones who are returning now is that we returned earlier and that we may have been luckier.

Mr. Speaker, had I been born 20 years earlier it is unlikely that I would be in this debate at the moment. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased and proud to be here and I am grateful to my late parents that one of us was able to escape the poverty. You see, Sir, I don't have a problem with these matters because inside of my soul these matters reside and regurgitate on a daily basis. Returning nationals will understand because I have had returning nationals come back to me. I have been one and we will continue to have returning nationals. My own child has returned to her country. I have a child who has returned to Boston. She was born in the United States. So she has returned. She is a returning national but every Christmas she comes back to Barbados because she feels this is her place. So she owns two places in her head but in real terms it is only because of an accident of birth that she is permitted the privilege of coming to Barbados and having freedom.

I say that, Sir, and you might say what is the Honourable Member leading to. The fact is that the Honourable Member for the City and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs were in such a hurry to rush this into the public relations vortex that they have not even recognised that the citizens from Barbados who became American citizens after 1966 do not qualify according to the definition of the charter. I invite the Honourable Attorney General to read the definition and he will see that they do not qualify, and the Customs Comptroller, when the Customs Comptroller is doing his job, there is no one who knows the law like him and his people.

So that the Attorney General will understand that I am not being funny. The Definition on page 4: Provisions for Returning Nationals

"(a) Definition of a Returning National

A Returning National is:

1. A Barbadian citizen by birth, descent, registration, or naturalisation who is returning to Barbados to resettle after a period of ten (10) years abroad.

2. An adult Barbadian/citizen by descent who has never lived in Barbados.

3. An alien spouse of a Barbadian national accompanying him/her to Barbados."

Now, Sir, you will be aware that a person who renounces... First of all, since 1868 the United States has insisted on expatriation and anyone who seeks to become an American citizen must necessarily renounce the citizenship of whichever country he or she is leaving.

So if you have become an American citizen by naturalisation you have to renounce your Barbadian citizenship. The Barbadians who had been to the United States before 1966 were deemed to be citizens of the United Kingdom and colonies by Barbados when it was framing its Constitution. Now since the British passed legislation requiring that anybody who gives up British citizenship must do so before a British Authority, when we started the Consulate in New York we interpreted that to mean that even though they had renounced before an American Authority they had not in fact renounced their citizenship because they had not done it in the terms of the British 1948 Act. They therefore qualified for a Barbados passport without more, as we understood the law, and as it was accepted when we made the recommendation.

Those who renounced after 1966 renounced Barbadian citizenship and Commonwealth citizenship. So they

have no Barbadian citizenship. As a matter of fact, the dilemma with which we were faced after I pointed out that those who had gone to the U.K. or anywhere else by virtue of the decision to have dual nationality in Barbados had an advantage over those who had gone to the United States, we solved that problem, if you would recall, Mr. Speaker, by administrative decree which said that all Barbadians once they were born in Barbados cannot lose their privileges and their rights. They were not able to convey citizenship back to them. In other words, administratively it is agreed that if they come back to Barbados and they were born in Barbados then they will have all the rights and privileges of citizens. That was an administrative decision. It was never put in law and one would have hoped that if a charter were to be prepared and created that at least that point would have been taken.

That notwithstanding, Sir, the definition as it now exists, and I know someone will get up and tell me that it doesn't matter, but we are saying it is a Charter. We are promulgating it and parading it and therefore it really ought to have taken account of that particular issue. Those who are citizens in the United States, not permanent residents, are not entitled without more to the benefits in here. Not according to my understanding. I have no doubt that it was the intention of the Government to grant all those who believe they are Barbadian citizens the rights but they are going to have to do it properly.

The other part I will come to. I really do not like doing this, Sir, but the Minister...

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: On a point of order. I want to clarify whether there is anything that can change citizenship of a country by birth. This speaks of citizenship by birth, descent, registration, naturalisation.
3.30 p.m.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: On a point of order, Sir. I want to clarify for him whether there is anything that can change citizenship of a country by birth. This speaks of by birth, descent, registration, naturalisation.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Yes, the answer to the question is yes. If a citizen by birth renounces his citizenship, that is expatriation and that citizen has therefore renounced the citizenship.

In fact, between 1952 and 1965 – the Attorney General might not have refreshed his mind recently in this area – this was the law in the United States. It was only when the U.S. Supreme Court determined that a U.S. citizen could not lose citizenship if that citizen was born, not naturalised, not by any other means but born in the United States.

The Honourable Member knows that if what he was asking me was airtight, that the man who was hanged as Lord Haw Haw could not have been hanged; or was hanged only because he was Lord Haw Haw. We do not need to spend time on that but I will discuss it with the Attorney General.

Asides.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: I am not going to spend any time discussing the laws with the Attorney General because you will not permit it anyhow, Sir.

This says here definition of a returning national. The only point that I am making is that they do not fall into this.

Asides.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: I am now being told, Sir, that this is not law. This was the beginning of my point. What are we doing here? We are here on a public relations exercise because the Attorney General is saying, from his seat, it is not law. I agree.

So why are we in Parliament broadcasting a Resolution, and having a long debate? Why are we here? All the Honourable Members will get up and make speeches...

Asides.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, I will give you a little television time. You have three more minutes.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Sir, I take the point but I am not going to raise an argument, but the matter was not settled beforehand.

Asides.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: I will take the television time. I am not going to finish speaking but I will let the television go off.

Asides.

Mr. SPEAKER: Three minutes television time, but you can continue.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Mr. Speaker, in that three minutes I am not going to try to do anything that would cause any problems. In those three minutes, Sir, let me demonstrate that the Honourable Member did not know of what she spoke.

The Honourable Member said words to the effect that the Prime Minister and the Government had shown a great deal of political will and perseverance, the Government took the opportunity to say we should facilitate the Comptroller of Customs. She said a greater number came from London and she went on but she made a point, Sir, which suggested that her Government had done something marvellous.

I have here, Sir, the Minutes of a meeting of the Cabinet held on Thursday, April 21, 1994 in the conference room. I am not going to read the Minutes, but in those Minutes there is a decision. This is the decision:

> "Policy relating to waiver of import duties and consumption tax in respect of vehicles imported by returning nationals. The Cabinet rescinded its earlier decision taken on May 2, 1992, note 93/10/MFP/53, and agreed that a waiver of the import duty and consumption tax in respect of vehicles imported by returning nationals should be granted to applicants who have been living overseas for a minimum of 10 years."

Mr. Speaker, when the Government came into office, the Government by a memorandum dated May 4, 1995, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs to the Comptroller of Customs...

Asides.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: ...The Government of the Barbados Labour Party on May 4, 1995. The Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs, to the Comptroller of Customs:

> "Policy with respect of motor vehicles being imported by returning nationals.
>
> I have been directed to inform you that effective immediately the Minister of Finance and Economic Affairs has adjusted the captioned policy as follows:
>
> (a) Returning nationals importing motor vehicles of 1600 cc or less will pay 50% of the import duty and consumption tax.
>
> (b) Those importing motor vehicles above 1600 cc will pay 50% of the import duty, consumption tax, surcharge and stamp duty.
>
> Please note that returning nationals are Barbadians by birth or descent, returning to settle in Barbados after living abroad 10 years or more."

So they came in and found a policy. They changed the policy. Then, after about a year they bring back the same policy, put it in a booklet and get up and say that it is a new policy.

Let the returning nationals understand that the free duty on motor cars was a Democratic Labour Party policy made on April 21, 1994.

Mr. SPEAKER: That is the end of the Honourable Member's television time, please.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: I wish I had known beforehand, Sir, with due respect. I am not complaining. I just wish I had known beforehand, before three minutes, that my television time would have been the same as the Honourable Member. I regret that I would suffer the consequences of the Honourable Member having nothing to say.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: On a point of order. There is a well-established agreement between the Leader of the Opposition, yourself and myself that in the event of televised debates for first speakers there would be equal time. It is not my fault if the Honourable Member for St. Michael West does not mind his own business.

Mr. SPEAKER: Could you proceed, please?

Mr. B. M. TAITT: I am not complaining. Since the Honourable Member said that you cannot see...

Mr. SPEAKER: Would you proceed, please?

Mr. B. M. TAITT: I am proceeding, Sir. Since the Honourable Member said in her debate that you could not see, but returning nationals somehow, ephemerally, could hear, I would speak to them through you, Sir.

The Honourable Member left the impression again, Sir, that these policies, these attitudes are something that had just begun. The newspapers said...

Asides.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: These are mine that I took home with me, Sir. These did not drop off a truck. These are my papers.

This is a report of a visit of the Minister of Foreign Affairs, the Honourable Branford Taitt, whoever he is, to the Barbados High Commission in London on October 26 to November 1, 1993.

> "The report of the Minister's visit to the Mission from October 26 to November 1, 1993 is herewith forwarded.

The Minister of Foreign Affairs, the Honourable Branford Taitt, paid a working visit to the Barbados High Commission in London from October 26 to November 1, 1993. The Minister addressed nationals at a reception held at the Mission on October 29. The Minister also toured the Mission and the BTA premises and inspected Iverta, the official residence."

I am not going to read all of this, I am going to read the relevant parts.

"During the visit the Minister held discussions with the High Commissioner and staff over a wide range of issues relating to the operations of the Mission. The following is a summary of the conclusions reached during the visit."

I am not going to read all, Sir, I am going to read the ones that I think are relevant.

"Normally the post of Commercial Officer in the High Commission should be at the level of Counsellor. Wherever possible the Commercial Officer should be integrally involved in the Mission's activities."

Sir, in recent times you have been hearing some phrase "The country team approach," as though it is something that dropped out of heaven. "The country team approach" was there from day one when we opened offices. As a matter of fact, Mr. Speaker, let me go on. This is the key:

"The Mission's main purpose is to protect and serve Barbados' nationals in the United Kingdom."

Let me repeat that Sir.

"The Mission's main purpose is to protect and serve Barbados' nationals in the United Kingdom, and to this end one main emphasis of the Mission is to be placed on Consular matters with all officers sharing consular duties equally, as necessary, the other is the economic development of Barbados."

3.40 p.m.

Mr. Speaker, that had always been the guiding principle on which I operated in any aspect relating to overseas whether as Consul General, whether as Minister of Tourism, or whether as Minister of Foreign Affairs. There is not one in or outside the public service who has ever had to have a discussion with me or become aware of my *modus operandi* who did not hear that being repeated over and over again.

There is another one, Sir, because the Honourable Member talked about skills as if it is something that had just happened. Listen to the other decision:

"A register of Barbadian nationals is to be prepared through the amalgamation of information from existing sources such as the mailing list for the newsletter and other sources of information such as the United Kingdom census."

You hear where the idea came from, Sir? That is 1993, the Minister of Foreign Affairs giving instructions to the people in London how they are to run the Mission because that is how I ran the Consulate when I became Consul General and before that when I was a U.S. representative for Barbados of the Barbados Development Board and then the IDC.

Aside.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: I did everything. The truth is that at one time I was a one-man band in New York and I had a full orchestra too.

Mr. Speaker, I have more. This is the other decision, Sir, because the last time I was on my feet in a Foreign Affairs discussion the Honourable Member raised some questions. I want to put this in the record too with the other decision. Listen to this, Sir:

"Nothing should be done in relation to the sale of the properties owned by the Barbados Government in London and arrangements for effective property management are to be put in place."

Mr. Speaker, they had some people in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs that always wanted to sell the properties. One of the things that happens to a Minister when you first go a Ministry, if you are not careful, all the policies they could not get past the outgoing Minister they drive them up in the face of the incoming Minister and if you are not careful, you will implement them first and then discover later that you should not have listened so carefully to everything you heard. That is one of the reasons why the question of where the Ambassador to the United Nations lives is still an issue. Long after we have been discussing it in this House Your Honour will remember, it is still an issue and the Ambassador to the United Nations is still living in a hotel at U.S. $7 500 a month, and two staff members are still being paid on a monthly basis with nothing to do, becoming very bored and seeking to see if they can get early retirement.

Mr. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member, I would not have to remind you...

Mr. B. M. TAITT: The returning nationals with respect, Sir...

Mr. SPEAKER: Well, you will have to connect it in some way, please.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: The Ambassador to the United Nations, because Barbados is a small country, has to do some consular work as well. The Ambassador and his staff in the U.N., because it was part of the country's concept from day one, they were told that everybody was part of the Mission of Barbados. As a matter of fact, Mr. Speaker, at one time we had what can only be called a hybrid again because somebody listened to two people and we created a monster called the Barbados Mission at New York where we sought to amalgamate both Mission and Consulate into one office with a Permanent Secretary and a Deputy Permanent Secretary. We tried to duplicate the bureaucracy in Barbados in New York City. It did not last very long, Sir, because it was stupid to begin with, and it died a natural death. In fact, it may have been stillborn, what with a couple of saboteurs who decided that it was not worthwhile going anywhere. The Honourable Oliver Jackman will be able to speak to this much more lucidly than I could, Sir.

Mr. Speaker, I said that it was my custom to deal with the question of Barbadians overseas. I am going to put into the record a letter which I wrote when I became Minister of Tourism in 1986 to every single Barbadian outside of Barbados, not some, Sir, every single Barbadian living outside of Barbados. It was based on the principle that we had two basic things to do outside of Barbados.

This is a letter, Sir, in November 1986:

"Dear fellow Barbadians:

When I assumed responsibility for the Ministry of Tourism and Industry, one of the things I resolved to do was to enlist the support of every single Barbadian living outside of Barbados in a unique programme to enhance the benefits of tourism to Barbados and Barbadians. As you may know, our fortunes in the tourism industry have tended to fall during the past few years. Further, whenever this occurs, the effect is felt throughout every sector of the economy for it is now well accepted that tourism is the most important industry in our country. It is therefore a distinct pleasure for me to write this short note of appreciation to you.

I wish to thank you for any effort you may have made in the past to promote our country. At the same time if it has not occurred to you to do so, I now want to urge you to recognise the important role you can play as an unofficial ambassador for Barbados whether at your office, in church, at the supermarket or elsewhere. Wherever two or three of your friends are gathered together, a quiet word to them to consider the delights of an experience in Barbados can go a long way toward achieving our objective to increase the number of visitors to Barbados."

Aside.

Mr. SPEAKER: Please. The Honourable Member, please. I had instructed some time ago, I believe it was at twenty-five minutes to four, that your television time had come to an end. I am instructing now. Mr. Roberts, could you ensure that the rules are observed for me, please?

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Can I continue now, Sir?

Mr. SPEAKER: Please, please.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: I understand, Mr. Speaker. I do not feel aggrieved. I promise you, Sir.

Mr. SPEAKER: Proceed, please.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Let me back up a little bit.

"It is therefore a distinct pleasure for me to write this short note of appreciation to you."

Remember, Sir, I am writing to the Barbadians overseas, every single one of them. And I went on:

"I wish to thank you for any effort you may have made in the past to promote our country. At the same time, if it has not occurred to you to do so, I now want to urge you to recognise the important role you can play as an unofficial ambassador for Barbados whether at your office, in church, at the supermarket, or elsewhere. Wherever two or three of your friends are gathered together, a quiet word to them to consider the delights of an experience in Barbados can go a long way toward achieving our objective to increase the number of visitors to Barbados.

I have asked Clennell Bynoe . . . "

He would be the one in Canada. In New York the name they used was whoever was in the Tourism Office in New York, and in London the name used would have been whoever was there.

"I have asked Clennell Bynoe and his staff at the Board's Toronto Office to take special care to assist any enquiries which you might make and to provide any information and all assistance which you may seek.

I shall thereto hope that you will find this as exciting a prospect as I consider it to be. I know that with your help it will be a most successful programme.

May I take this opportunity to wish you and your family well and to thank you once again for your assistance.

Sincerely,

Branford M. Taitt,
Minister"

Mr. Speaker, the rest is history.

Aside.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: When you are good these things happen to you.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. I want it in the record. How long after that did you survive as Minister of Tourism?

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Sir, I survived longer than the Honourable Member survived as Chairman of a certain corporation after a certain time, Sir. The Honourable Member does not wish to engage me in that sort of discussion.

The fact is that from 1986 it was the Barbadians living overseas that saved tourism.
3.50 p.m.

That tour, I went to Canada, the United States and London. We had a large Board and we deployed them and this letter was sent after my visit and I begged the Barbadians living overseas to participate with us as unofficial ambassadors and from that day to the present or at least until they appointed the big 3, tourism went up, up, up and away.

Now, Sir, I lay no claim to the credit except that I want to show that we always understood that the Barbadian overseas is an important part of our existence, that they are part of the diaspora and that...

Aside.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: I know when I am doing well. When even the Honourable Member for St. George South starts getting in the act, I know, Sir, that I am doing well. He is a very kind man. He wants me to know that I should not stop speaking in a hurry he says.

What disturbs me about this whole thing, Sir, is that I never thought and I have always said that we must not have a divide in the discussion of our foreign affairs. We must not present to the rest of the world any kind of division between one part and the other in the area of our foreign affairs and as that relates to our nationals overseas I will challenge anyone, anywhere, who could come forward, just a single person, and indicate that at any time during, certainly my stewardship, in any one of the entities that they found any partisanship. There is no Honourable Member who would be able to say with impunity that they found, certainly in terms of my own policies, any partisanship and I do not like when it appears that what we are heading for is partisanship.

If the Barbados Labour Party wishes to open their office in London and have a branch in London that is perfectly okay. I have no difficulty, Sir. I do not wish to believe that this document here, Sir, is the reason, the full and complete reason for the establishment of all of this hoopla. This document here, Sir, says, and I can make this a document of the House, Sir, if you wish. "The Barbados Labour Party under the distinguished patronage of the Right Honourable Owen Arthur, M.P., Prime Minister of Barbados, invites you to the formal launch of its U.K. branch on Saturday September 21, 1996 at Brixton Recreational Centre, Station Road, Brixton, London, SW9. The Prime Minister will give a short address at 11:30 p.m. Appearing direct from Barbados will be Serenader, twice calypso monarch of Barbados. Tickets £10 in advance." But note this, Sir, none of the people whose names appear from whom to get the tickets, has put any last names. They are not taking any chances. Only first names.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Mr. Speaker, Sir, on a point of order. In all of the years that the Late Errol Barrow was a Prime Minister in Barbados he never addressed a function of Barbadians abroad, always a DLP group. The first time in the United States of America that a Prime Minister in office addressed a gathering or went to a function with Barbadians of all political stripes was when Prime Minister Owen Arthur did so last year.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Mr. Speaker, Sir, that is patently untrue.

Mr. SPEAKER: Let us proceed. Order please. Order please. Order please.

Loud asides.

Mr. SPEAKER rises to his feet.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order, please! Would the Honourable Member take her seat, please?

Loud asides.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order, please! Order! Honourable Member, have you concluded?

Mr. B. M. TAITT: No Sir.

Mr. SPEAKER: Continue please.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Mr. Speaker, Sir, the Honourable Member for the City, if she were a fledgling Parliamentarian I might be generous and allow the remark to go but the late Errol Barrow is not here to defend himself. The last time she tangled with him what he said to her I cannot even repeat now, even though it is in Hansard. But, Sir, the Honourable Member just said that Errol Barrow as Prime Minister never addressed Barbadians. I say of my own knowledge that is patently untrue.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: On a point of order, Sir.

Certain remarks made by the Honourable Member for St. Michael West were ordered to be expunged from the record by Mr. SPEAKER.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I never said that the late Errol Barrow failed to address Barbadians. I said that he never addressed Barbadians of all political stripes together at a function, always only addressed at a DLP function. That is a historic fact.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Members, please. The Honourable Member for St. John, please. Before you proceed with the debate addressing the substance of the Resolution...

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Mr. Speaker, this is about returning nationals. She is a returning national. Mr. Speaker, I was Consul General of Barbados, the first one. I was responsible for compiling the list of Barbadians in the United States. I am stating categorically, beyond any doubt, that at no time in the preparation of those lists was any consideration of party political affiliation made. I am saying that Errol Barrow addressed on many occasions groups in the United States and therefore the Honourable Member has no right to put in the record something that is patently untrue. Mr. Speaker, I think it is a travesty on the memory of that great distinguished Prime Minister to try to leave the kind of silly, puerile information which could only have come from someone who is suffering ...

Asides.

Mr. SPEAKER: Please let us proceed.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I want to turn to the Charter. I have already addressed the issue of the definition of a returning national. I want to deal with the concession on household and personal effects because again the impression has been given that this is something new. There are aspects of it which are expansions of what existed before.

Mr. SPEAKER: Please let us hear the Honourable Member.
4.00 p.m.

"Household and personal effects, Sir, adequate to furnish a family residence will be allowed in free of all duties and taxes." Mr. Speaker, it has always been the policy of both Governments before now that a person who is returning to settle in Barbados has been able to bring his household effects into Barbados free of duty. This is what...

Aside.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Well, you never settled.

Mr. SPEAKER: Please, please.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Sir, let me revise that. It has always been a policy under the Democratic Labour Party. I am safe to speak for him. Now, Sir, the importation of motor vehicles. Sir, it is true that the importation of motor vehicles has an enhancement in that it is 2 vehicles per family. I hope that the Government will be aware that the Government of Trinidad and Tobago might be able to assist the Government of Barbados in identifying some of the difficulties which loom.

Mr. Speaker, one of the things that the booklet does not address is the returning nationals who are being imposed on Barbados by the United States Government. Those too are returning nationals. We have some boss criminals that are being deported from the United States, some who would have left their country at age 2 or 3 months and they are being deported from the United States to Barbados. The question is: Are they not returning nationals? Will the Facilitation Unit be assigned to assist these persons who have committed no crime in Barbados but who are being deported to Barbados? I read in the newspaper of a person who said that he had no living relative in Barbados. He went to Canada when he was 2 years and he is now 26. He has been found guilty of some crime.

Aside.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: You wanted it to be a little thing about returning cars. You want to discuss it.

Mr. SPEAKER: Please, let us proceed orderly.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: This is a Facilitation Unit for Returning Nationals. I am asking the Minister

what provision is being made for the integration of those persons who are imposed on the people of Barbados by the United States Government. I am saying that if they learned their crime in the United States that it is morally corrupt for the United States Government after having them for 24 years where they could learn all the crime they can on the streets of New York and other cities, then the United States right wingers pass legislation and induce Immigration judges to make decisions that when these persons come out of prison, not if they commit a crime when they come out of prison but as soon as they come out of prison, that they are being met at the gate and steered into Barbados and other Caribbean countries. That is immoral, Sir. It is legally correct. I wish to know what the Minister and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs will be doing to facilitate the reintegration of those persons whom we must receive into the society. It is a serious matter. The Attorney General no doubt as Minister responsible for Legal Affairs will have a different perspective on the issue and will be called upon in some instances to find additional and new resources. Because when a person has learnt his crime in the streets of New York, he is in the Olympic class when it comes to crime. He is not like the petty criminals around here. He is in the Olympic class and he needs a different breed of consideration. I say this without fear of contradiction and the U.S. has made it a point that the numbers will increase and this policy is going to be intensified. As the xenophobia in the United States becomes higher and stronger, this is going to become more intensified. I would like to hear from the Minister when she responds what is the provision being made for that kind of returning national. For there shall not be returning nationals "A" and returning nationals "B". All are returning nationals and presumably will benefit from these particular set of conditions. Do you know what is very fascinating? It is entirely possible that a man who was in prison for 10 years in the USA whose parents were Barbadian and he went up to the United States and he is deported, when he arrives here according to this booklet, there is nothing to prevent him from sending for his car and if he has a family or when he makes a family he should have his 2 cars according to this booklet. It may seem trite to some people but it is a serious issue.

There is another thing that the Minister will have to tell us. She must know as all of us know that by the year 2011 the elderly population in Barbados would have moved to about 10 per cent of the population and by the year 2030 it will have doubled. It will be something like 20 to 30 per cent of the population will be over 65. Now with all due respects to my friends who are returning nationals, there is not one of them who is not hovering around retirement age and many of them are going to be part of the elderly in a relatively short time. When the Minister was talking about returning nationals and the skills, she left the impression at least with me that we were going to be getting these young energetic people who will be coming back to add to the skills bank. I do not doubt that all of those who come back will in fact have skills and can apply them but they also will form part of the population to whom we will have to cater. They have become accustomed to a certain standard of care and they will demand it as they should, but the Government has to make provision not only to facilitate their return on the first occasion but to facilitate their reintegration. I hope that returning nationals will not find it necessary in order to get their benefits to go back and forth between Barbados and England.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, let me tell you what the Democratic Labour Party was able to do for returning nationals in the context of real genuine resources. The Honourable Member for St. Michael South and I found ourselves as representatives with persons returning from the United Kingdom in particular whose Social Security once they had left the United Kingdom was not indexed as it would have been if they had remained in the United Kingdom. They found that the law in Barbados did not permit them to benefit from the Social Security arrangements in Barbados because they had been out of the country for 12 years or more. After our consultation at the level of representing people, the Honourable Member who was then responsible for National Insurance in short order was able to bring to bear the necessary decision and subsequent Resolution which resulted in a treaty between the British Government and the Barbados Government which now allows all persons who come from the United Kingdom to continue to receive their benefits as if they had remained in the United Kingdom.
4.10 p.m.

We went further and included a health component and we had that as a codicil to the treaty which was signed between the British Government and Barbados. I say that, Sir, to demonstrate that at every point along the way the Government under the Democratic Labour Party has had the returning nationals in its contemplation, and any attempt by anyone to leave the impression that it is something new and different which accrues only to the fertile mind and fertile brain of an individual or group of individuals in a particular area would be a manifestation of something that is patently untrue.

Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the Democratic Labour Party we have already been indicating to the returning nationals that we welcome them home, but I would like to say a word to the returning nationals. They, too, have some responsibility when they return to Barbados; and they must take this opportunity as a watershed to examine what they can do to assist in their smooth reintegration as they come into Barbados. As I have said to them outside of Barbados, whenever I meet with nationals, I can speak because I

have had the experience of being a returned national. They, too, must come with an attitude that they wish to be reintegrated because some returning nationals have come home to Barbados unmindful of the fact that Barbados was growing while they were growing in London as well or Timbuktu or wherever they were.

Aside.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: What is the matter with this person? Mr. Speaker, the television is not on, Sir, and the Honourable Member knows that I could spend 5 minutes on her, if necessary.

Mr. SPEAKER: I think you need to rephrase that.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Mr. Speaker, I am always guided by you in these matters, Sir. The point I am making is that this is a two-way street. It is a street that will require understanding on both sides. I recall very early when the nationals started returning to the health services that they had tremendous difficulty, long before my time, integrating into the health services because their style of nursing, their training, was in many ways different from what they found in the old Barbados General Hospital or the Queen Elizabeth Hospital; and there used to be a lot of friction and tension between returning nationals who went to work professionally in the health services. Over time, that has given way to a much smoother and understanding relationship.

Mr. Speaker, I am satisfied that those persons who go out from Barbados and do well and come back, even before they came back, make a significant contribution to the growth and development of Barbados. During the times of economic stress, both in the 60s and more recently in the 80s and 90s, it was the remittances from overseas, especially in the 90s, that kept Barbados afloat. Foreign exchange earnings in Barbados were buoyed by the remittances which came, especially from those nationals who were getting the golden handshake from various jobs in the United Kingdom and who chose to use Barclays as their banker.

Mr. Speaker, it therefore behooves us to wish to welcome them home and to say thank you for what they have done in the past but, at the same time, we wish to say to them, I certainly wish to say to them as a friend, that when they come they must come with their hands outstretched as well. I believe that together the Barbadians from overseas and the Barbadians at home can continue to make this the best place in the world for any human to live. I am grateful to Your Honour.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: Mr. Speaker, I presume that the CBC has once again resumed coverage of the debate before I begin.

Mr. SPEAKER: They are getting the cameras for you. Proceed!

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: Mr. Speaker, as I listened to this debate, as I indicated to the Honourable Member for the City just before lunch, I don't see any reason why we should get past half an hour. Indeed, listening to her she actually said everything she had to say in 10 minutes. You know, Sir, there is a form of punishment, not in the Standing Orders of this Honourable House but it is perhaps the severest form of punishment. That is to listen to a Minister of the Crown struggling to get through a 30 or 40 minute speech after she has said everything she has said in the first 10 minutes.

Sir, what does bother me is the purpose of the debate in the first instance because there is nothing of substance in here that is not already provided for in the legislation provided by this Parliament and in the powers granted to the Minister of Finance under various statutes. Absolutely nothing contained in this legislation. So I can only conclude that this is a major propaganda exercise. There is nothing wrong with that, except that the propaganda exercise would better be directed towards those who would be the main beneficiaries of this particular regime which is being discussed now, based overseas, rather than Barbadians in Barbados.

When we look at the substantive resolution, Sir, it starts off with the amazing discovery that;

> "Whereas the Government of Barbados recognises Barbadian nationals overseas as an integral part of Barbados..."

That is supposed to be as profound a discovery as the discovery of the possibility of life on Mars two days ago. Could you imagine this? Could you imagine that the Government of Barbados now recognises that nationals overseas are an integral part of Barbados' assets and resources and recognises the invaluable contribution they have made to the development of this nation. Everybody knows that if you were to look at the balance of payments records of Barbados in the 50s, 60s and the 70s, what is listed as the invisibles in that period, there are largely repatriations to Barbados from Barbadians living overseas, the money that they sent back to Barbados. Everybody knows that this is an important part of the economic growth and economic stability and the stability of the balance of payments of Barbados for a very prolonged period.

It goes on:

> "Whereas over the years a number of Barbadians have been returning to Barbados to resettle..."

Now, Sir, ever since I was a boy, a long time ago, Barbadians were returning to Barbados to settle. I distinctly remember people coming from Panama, people coming back from Cuba, people coming back from the United States, all over the place, way back in the 1930s and 40s to settle in Barbados; and this is now another new discovery. Every single thing the Barbados Labour Party does is like a new act of creation. This has been a process going on for 100 years in this country.

And then, Sir:

"Recognising that every effort should be made to facilitate the resettlement and re-integration into the national society..."

As though Barbadians need to be re-integrated into Barbados. I think it is a bit of an insult to Barbadians living overseas for so many years.

Has created a Charter. Listen to the word

"a Charter for Returning and Overseas Nationals."

You know, Sir, I believe that the last time we got this kind of ridiculous posturing in a Parliament was sometime in the 1830s in the age of what they called Chartism where various manifesto promises found themselves before the Westminster Parliament under the heading Charter and since the 1830s. I believe that this is the first time that this kind of nonsense has surfaced in a Westminster style Parliament since the 1830s. A charter, Sir, you talk about when you charter a university, when you are establishing a county, when you are establishing local government, when the sovereign or legislator is doing something of major importance like the Charter of the U.N., like the Magna Carta. That is a charter.

Now, Sir, if we are going to start, every Minister, with some manifesto promise is going to start coming in here with charters. Do you know one charter we need, Sir? It is a charter for 30 000 jobs. That would be an important charter because it would be the first time since slavery that we have full employment in Barbados. That is a charter that would be worth the definition of a charter as a major factor in Barbadian life.

Are we going to get a charter for departing nationals too? Are we going to get a charter for the inclusion of chicken soup in school meals? Are we going to get a charter for catching rats to reduce the incidence of leptospirosis in Barbados? Are we going to do it? Are we going to have a charter to correct what has taken place and the publicity given in the *Daily Mail* and the *Daily Mirror?* Are we going to have a charter to demonstrate how you can put dumps in national parks? I am saying it is ridiculous. It is the kind of language that belittles the title charter and in a sense demeans what would normally take place in a parliament of this nature when it is addressing in a Parliament matters relating to charters.

The second point I want to mention is this matter of this Facilitation Unit. I object to it, Sir. Do you know when the exact words, "facilitation units" were first established? They were first established in countries making arrangements to bring back refugees. The term "facilitation unit". The first time it was used by any country for the kind of purpose that it is being used now was in fact by Jamaica. This is a copy-cat exercise to what took place in Jamaica but the situation is not the same.

The Barbadian experience and the Jamaican experience are fundamentally different in many ways. There are inherent dangers when you start copying legislation and all kinds of administrative arrangements from one jurisdiction to another. I am going to explain why.

The Jamaicans living overseas were faced with a problem where their country's economy was virtually in chaos for 20 years and there was total disruption of confidence in the economy. There was also another important problem very relevant to them and that is the very serious harassment individuals had over a 20-year period in bringing hard currency in and out of Jamaica. That ranged from confiscation to fines and even to jail sentences, people taking their own money out of Jamaica, residents who had gone home and even when they got back to the airport their money left over in their pockets, many of them were sent to jail, jail in Jamaica under that regime in the 70s and the early 80s.

There was a major crisis of confidence when the Jamaican Government then decided that they wanted to encourage nationals to come home. In point of fact, they had to go to their legislature to pass laws in order to signal to Jamaicans living overseas that things had changed. That is only the beginning of a process. That is a process that is going to take probably 100 years before the average Jamaican feels the same kind of confidence in bringing his money to Jamaica as Barbadians would have in bringing their money to Barbados, because of that terrible experience which they had in the 70s and the 80s. That is why you had the legislation in Jamaica and that is why you had the facilitation unit.

In addition to that, Jamaicans returning home have a very beneficial exchange rate. I think it is something like $30 to $1. It fluctuates from day to day. I don't check it every day but it was in the region of JAM$30 to US$1.

The second big advantage they had is that the local interest rates on the Jamaica dollar, at one stage

the prevailing rates, were in the region of over 40 percent so that Jamaican residents could actually bring part of their money into Jamaica, convert it into Jamaican dollars, earn interest rates at 30 or 40 percent on their money and with the new dispensation in respect to foreign exchange in Jamaica they can even repatriate that money along with the interest earned out of Jamaica. Now these are the situations that existed.

Another very important situation. There are many, many, very wealthy Jamaicans in Canada, in the United States and the United Kingdom, people with vast sums of money available for investment purposes. I heard the Minister and we have to face reality talking about this vast sums of money that Barbadians have overseas to invest and this kind of thing. Now I am a returned resident, not by virtue of any dispensation by the Barbados Labour Party in a charter. I am a returned national because I was born and bred in this country and there is a Constitution which guarantees me that position for evermore. Unless I choose to relinquish it nobody can deprive me of that right. The point I am trying to make is this. I believe that I know a substantial number of people in the United Kingdom in particular, in the North Eastern United States, in Canada and I do not know of all these Barbadians that the Honourable Member is talking about with this vast amount of wealth, this large amount of money to invest. It has certainly not been my experience.

A few weeks ago I specifically spoke to several people who have lived in North America and who have worked in consular offices and embassies abroad, and I asked them if they can count on the fingers of their hands in any one of those areas people whom they would consider to be people with substantial resources. They could not remember them. They could not count them.
4.30 p.m.

Sir, the laws that were passed in Jamaica on the Facilitation Unit dealt with a completely different set of circumstances. All we need in Barbados is a streamlining of what has gone on all along. I think that there is no question that there was too much harassment at the Customs. If this particular Charter is put into law, because if the Attorney General said that it is not law, I could only assume it is not law, and I can presume that there will be some appropriate Order coming before Parliament...

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: On a point of order. The point that I was making was that the Charter on the second page says:

> "The information in this booklet is intended as a guide for overseas Barbadians wishing to return home. The Returning Nationals Information Booklet is not a substitute for relevant and current legislation."

I was at pains and tried to point out that the definition of Returning Nationals is a working guide for persons who have to make use of this booklet. It is not intended to be a legal definition.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: Thank you very much. I hope that you will give a legal definition of a Charter too. Then we can have an end to this kind of thing coming to Parliament under the guise of Charters.

The point I am making is that everything inside here could have been done under an appropriate Schedule of one kind or another under existing legislation, and the whole thing could have gone through very easy. As a matter of fact, the Minister of Finance could have dealt with 90% of the stuff or more.

Now, Sir, imagine having a Charter. The United States Constitution is a Charter. We have a Charter and part of this Charter here is talking about – I think I saw that somewhere – rugs, mirrors, fans, hair dryers, clothes irons, as part of the first Charter passed by the Barbados Parliament in all these hundreds of years. I mean this thing is really a bit of a joke.

Basically, what you want to do is to make life as easy as possible for returning residents. The legislation is all there and there is no need for all this political propaganda attached to it. The major problem which returning residents had, basically, related to motor cars and the taxes that they had to pay on motor cars, and secondly, I think, sometimes unnecessary, harassment by Customs. These are things that could be sorted out within the Ministry of Finance, and where it could not be sorted out by the Ministry of Finance, then it easily could have been done by the appropriate Orders laid in Parliament.

Now I believe, Sir, that having examined the kind of disabilities which Jamaicans face, and which require legislation to begin the process of correcting that, let us look and see what kind of disabilities, in fact, returning residents face here in Barbados.

I think the pension and social security arrangements have been a problem for many years and they have been largely sorted out. The second problem is that most of the returning residents that I meet complain bitterly about the cost of living, but I presume that there is not much that can be done about that. Barbadians who have become American citizens who return to Barbados used to have a problem in relation to whether they could vote in Barbados without losing their citizenship.

I believe that there was an amendment to some Statute in the United States some years ago which clarified that particular matter. Apparently many of those

Barbadians in that situation still believe that they cannot vote in Barbados and that they would be putting their citizenship or their social security at risk. My understanding, through the American Embassy, is either that by an amendment to the Statute or by an interpretation of the existing Statute, that is not the case. They can vote freely in Barbados.

Another problem that one sees from day-to-day is that many returning residents are finding that they are walking away from free medical services in the United Kingdom, Canada, United States, under the various programmes and when they come to Barbados they are facing the cost of health care in this country. This is particularly so, since in recent times many residents of Barbados are called upon to pay for all the services that they receive at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital.

As a result, many of those returning nationals now keep one foot in each camp. Many of them keep one foot in each camp because they try to maintain a position where they can go back once a year, or whatever, and get their medical care and enough drugs to cover them for a year on the system, and at the same time benefit as much as they can from Barbados.

That is not a problem in many cases; because in truth and in fact just as when the nationals left Barbados and went abroad they never left Barbados completely, similarly, those returning, the majority of them, 99% of them, would never return completely either. Many of them have children overseas, they have friends overseas, they have relationships that they built over 30/40 years, and they would always be in that situation.

I think that it is important to recognise that you are even getting a reverse situation now where there are Barbadians who, for example, have sought and have obtained Canadian citizenship and American citizenship – I do not know about the United Kingdom – in order to benefit from the facilities that they make available to people in their later years and especially in Canada, where almost every courtesy is extended to people over 66, or something like that, not only in terms of health care, but there are other areas.

Then there is the whole area of taxation on pensions. You note that every year there is an exodus of many persons who retired from the United States to get to the States to declare their income tax in the States, because the tax rate is lower. The tax rate is lower in Canada, the tax rate is lower in the United Kingdom. So if we want to encourage these people to bring more money into Barbados, invest more in Barbados, we would have to address the question of the level of taxation on pensions.

Certainly I took the step years ago to remove taxation from pensions. I am just trying to be very positive in my suggestions. I have been very critical and I am trying to be positive now. If it is going to be strengthened, then you have to look at the relative tax rates and the relative tax advantages for people who are retiring here to bring their money into Barbados. Are they only going to bring what they need to live on and leave the rest behind, or are they going to make the total commitment?

Many people will not be able to make that total commitment, because they have obligations in Britain to their children and grandchildren and so on, but we would like them to be able to contribute as much as they can to the Barbados economy in terms of investing in Barbados and bringing as much financial resources as they can with them.

The other disability that I hear them complaining about is the lack of facilities generally in Barbados for persons with handicaps. Many of these persons returning home are in their 60s, 70s and beyond. Many of them have had strokes and so on, many have had some kind of physical handicap and they cannot get around and do normal banking, their normal business in town. I think these are things that we need to address if we are really going to go beyond the level of propaganda, instead of coming in here propagandizing what is your duty, what you should have been doing and asking us to support you in bringing all these little bits of concessions together in a particular framework which one could easily do.
4.40 p.m.

Instead of that, you come with this whole business about a Charter, and a Facilitation Unit, and this is the first time this has been done, and all this kind of nonsense, which nobody with any degree of honesty or integrity would wish to be part of that kind of propaganda exercise.

The next thing I want to bring to your attention is that many have complained to me about the problems they have had with misuse of their money by members of the legal profession, friends, relatives and real estate agents in Barbados.

Aside.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: I have not heard any complaints about doctors. I can only tell the House, I speak the truth only in this House. I can only say what I heard.

Now, I believe that if there is one positive role which a Facilitation Unit, for want of a happier term, can do is to invite those people who are making contact in these areas where they have been stung before to let them know that if they wish to, then they could probably inform the Unit that they are entering into these arrangements or

something like that. You cannot enforce it but at least let them know that there is a public agency available which can help protect them.

The next thing, Sir, again we hear about the mobilisation of all these resources. It is like *deja vu*. I remember in the 1970s I heard this same debate, this massive amount of money sitting down with Barbadian nationals overseas that we have to mobilise and indeed we have to open a bank in the United Kingdom to tap that source of funds. A bank was open and never got past the savings of a piggy bank. Not only was it a piggy bank, but it was one that became a major embarrassment not only to nationals living in the United Kingdom, but also to the Government of Barbados when the Bank of England in 1986 made certain representations to the Government of Barbados about that particular operation in the United Kingdom.

Sir, the evidence you have does not suggest that there is that volume of liquid cash that is going to be available to Barbados for the reasons I have said because many of these persons are persons who really have done a good job in raising their families who would have had some savings, who would have a home and whose assets basically would arise from the sale of their homes, their pensions and their savings. That is the situation you will have and also they will be faced with a dual obligation, obligations that remain in the United Kingdom and those obligations which they will have in returning to Barbados.

Mr. Speaker, I sincerely hope that I have tried to bring some sense of proportion and some sense of reality to the situation as exists and the potential in relation to this situation. Surely everybody in Barbados welcomes returning residents. I would like to see a special tax regime available to all pensioners, including returning residents. I would like to see as an important development, villages, the retirement village concept of townhouses and condominiums. Maybe in a situation where you can have 50 or 60 of those with adequate facilities for leisure, entertainment and things like this is the kind of situation that will create the ideal investment situation for many persons returning home who wish the shelter of a community. They will probably sell their homes in England and be able to purchase a new home in Barbados. You will have a community of, say, 50, 60 homes in different parts of Barbados.

Aside.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: Some have already built their homes but I am thinking of the future.

Mr. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member has one minute to conclude.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: I wish to make it clear that I said that you are not talking about people with vast amounts of wealth. That is what I am saying.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. I never used those words. I said that there are Barbadians abroad who wish to invest in Barbados. It is Members on the Other Side who are trying to put words in my mouth. I never talked about vast amounts of money. The Honourable Member's problem is that he is now approbating and reprobating at the same time. He is saying they do not have any money and now he is telling them where they must invest their money.

Mr. SPEAKER: You have made your point of order, please.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: My minute is gone. I am going to request that minute back because I am conceding nothing to her, especially as she has behaved in that manner.

I would like to see the creation in Barbados of retirement villages with all the kinds of facilities that I spoke about so that it would make it very easy for persons living overseas to make that transfer back to Barbados when they have sold their homes, generated a significant amount of liquidity, they will have a ready investment, they are not prey to any real estate agents, contractors, builders, and this kind of thing. I think this could make a big difference. As a matter of fact, I would think that a clever investor would take the cue from what I have just said because I know there is a significant market out there for that kind of development in Barbados.

Thank you.

Mr. L. R. TULL: Mr. Speaker, if I were a returning national, or one who has already returned, and I heard the debate of the two Honourable Members who spoke on the Other Side, I would feel extremely depressed, Sir. I might even feel insulted. I would be very offended.

We have Barbadian nationals who have come from the United Kingdom mainly and who have sat down with the people in Government in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and with their own hands, their own intellect and, their own creativity. They have worked out a programme they consider in their best interest and they have to sit down, both in the Public Gallery and in homes all across Barbados, and hear all the insulting language that has been thrown on their efforts...

Mr. B. M. TAITT: On a point of order, Sir. The Honourable Member has said that he heard the two Members on this side speak. I spoke and he is saying

that we used insulting language. Mr. Speaker, I maintain that is unparliamentary and the Honourable Member should withdraw it.

Mr. L. R. TULL: Mr. Speaker, I know the rules as well as anybody, Sir. You cannot use insulting language to a member of the House but this language was used in reference to Barbadian nationals, very insulting language, Sir.

The last Honourable Member who spoke talks about a charter and talked about a charter for rats. The analogy that he uses for a document...

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: On a point of order, Sir. I was speaking about the denigration of this Parliament by the use of the word "Charter" and I asked whether you are going to next use the word "Charter" for the catching of rats.

Mr. L. R. TULL: The Honourable Member makes the very point I am making about him. It is disgusting, Mr. Speaker, that a Charter for Returning Nationals of Barbados should be mouthed in the same way as a charter for catching rats. What is a charter? If you look at the Oxford Dictionary, Sir, you will find that a charter is a written document delivered by the legislature, especially in relation to privileges and rights that are granted. That is what a charter is.

We are before this legislature with a written document dealing with rights and privileges being granted to returning nationals and we have to listen to all kinds of language being used in relation to it.
4.50 p.m.

But even if, Mr. Speaker, Charter were not the right word, which in fact it is, what does it matter, Sir? What's in a name? A rose by any other name is just as sweet, and all we are going to get in here is a lot of nit-picking over a name, and particularly when the word "charter" accorded the definition in the Oxford Dictionary matches 100% what is before Parliament today.

The Honourable Member on that side today is downplaying the efficacy of really what is in the document. A lot of splitting of hairs and petty fogging and grumbling *minutiae*, rather than dealing with the substance of what is in this document. This document gives Barbadians who have lived overseas for many years and who are relocating to Barbados opportunities that they have never had before. Really when I came in here, Sir, I had no intention of speaking on this matter because it is a document that speaks for itself and I wonder what all the debate was necessary for anyway. This document speaks eloquently of the concern of the Barbados Labour Party Government about the conditions and the plight of Barbadians who have lived overseas and want to come back home.

At one time, Sir, when I was Minister of Foreign Affairs, I had travelled to the United Kingdom and I sat down with Barbadian nationals and heard the complaints and heard their plaintive cries to the Government of Barbados to do something about this because quite often when they came back to Barbados and brought their motor cars, furniture and so on they were asked to pay all of their savings that they brought back from the United Kingdom to the Comptroller of Customs. We have persons in here who suffered, Sir. Mr. Speaker, Sir, everybody is getting up and testifying like they are a cottage religious meeting. I can testify too, Sir. I came back as a returning national. I lived overseas more than 10 years. Unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, Sir, when I came back I had the same one suitcase that I had left with so I really did not need any duties or any rate, Sir, because I came back with one suitcase that I had left with. I say this in this context, Sir. Although there are a number who came back with one suitcase they were able to make significant contributions to the development of this society. This is a message that I want to make to returning nationals because it has to go both ways. It can't go just one way. When they come back the compassion on the one hand and the concern on the other hand of this administration for their welfare must meet reciprocal reaction on their part that they have a responsibility in coming back to give of what they have acquired in all their years overseas and give of their talents, their knowledge, their expertise, whatever for the building of this community in Barbados.

I want to make it absolutely clear, Sir, that I am not going to get into this debate for what appears to be very strong political reasons. The Members on the Other Side who have spoken did not seem to know what side to come down on. They did not know whether to criticise or to approve, so that they were speaking out of both sides of their mouths at the same time.

They are hurting, Sir. Any time I get heckled, Sir, I know they are hurting. We are hearing on the one hand, Mr. Speaker, what is so special about these people who are coming back home. I do not want to misinterpret anything they are saying, Sir. They are just Bajans like anybody else. In fact one Honourable Member said that they do not even need to be reintegrated into the society, as if somebody who is living outside the society for 40 years does not need to be reintegrated. The fact that you are a Barbadian but you are living away for 40 years there is no need to reintegrate. That is what they are saying. But they by meeting with the people in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and sitting down and working out their own programme have told the world that they are interested in a constructive way of having themselves reintegrated in the society and I hear a lot of Rasta talk from the

Honourable Member for St. Michael West. I and I. He spent a whole hour, Sir, talking about what he did as Consul General and what he started and what letter he wrote and who he met and what he did and he did not spend a single moment, Mr. Speaker, Sir, talking about what these very persons who are the subject of this debate have done for Barbados. He did not have any time for them, Sir. He was so wrapped up in his egotistical meanderings that he could not find time to say a word in favour of these Barbadians who, as he said, left Barbados in very difficult times. We know that people who left in the 1950s and 1960s left in very difficult economic times and sought to improve their lot and their fortune overseas and they have done a lot for this country, Sir.

The Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central who spoke last, although he did not exactly want to say, he admits, Sir, that the remittances from Barbadians living overseas, not only the United Kingdom but from the United States. I came up as a boy, Sir, and realise that a number of Barbadians were going on a labour scheme in the United States and making money to send back to Barbados to look after their families. This is an old thing, Sir. But they on that side are being a little mean because it did not happen to them. That is all it is about. This thing has been talked about for a long time. Both political parties, over the years, have had their nationals of Barbados overseas repeat the complaints and what they would want and so on.

Only last September, Sir, I was in London and my visit to London coincided with that of the Prime Minister and there was a meeting at, I believe it was Hackney Town Hall where there were about four or five hundred Barbadians and is my wont, Sir, I stayed in the shadows and studied the faces and listened to the intensity with which Barbadians put their case. There was one particular woman who spoke with the utmost volubility. She was impressive and I saw whatever may have been the situation prior to that, Sir. The Honourable Member gets up and reads a lot of documents of what are irrelevant to what is happening today, about what happened in 1994, 1992 and 1991 and so on. What happened at that meeting in the Town Hall in London that night was a revelation because I saw these people pour out and as the Honourable Deputy Prime Minister said, this is not a DLP meeting in London nor called under the aegis of any political party, it was a meeting in which the Prime Minister decided that he wanted to talk to all Barbadians who could crowd into that Town Hall. I heard him give a commitment that night to the Barbadians in that Town Hall that this kind of action would come. I must tell you, Sir, because I like to be brutally honest about these things. When he made the commitment, I thought that perhaps he had over committed himself. I am not very good at the figures so I do not know what it cost in terms of the revenue to Barbados. I do not know. I am now being advised that it is a million dollars. If it is a million dollars, it is trifling or peanuts compared to the contribution that these persons have made to Barbados over the years. To tell you the truth, I am disappointed with the Members of the Other Side who have spoken. I thought they could have brought a more enlightened approach to a new policy in which all right thinking persons would agree on. I thought so. Therefore, I hear all of this talk and I feel so sad about it. I hear what the missions and consulates were set up to do 30 years ago. The Mission Statement has not changed in 30 years. The Mission Statement of the Government of Barbados for its overseas offices has not changed in over 30 years. So it is not a question of what the words say. It is the question of translating the words into effective action on behalf of Barbadians and in this particular case on behalf of Barbadians who live overseas.

5.00 p.m.

We have again, Sir, if I may throw this in the question of "Charter" and all of that. The Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central who has now skipped the House talked about the first two paragraphs in the Preamble: "Whereas the Government of Barbados recognizes Barbadian nationals overseas as an integral part of Barbados' assets and resources and recognizes the invaluable contributions overseas which nationals have made to the development of the nation..." He should realize this but he says so what, as if he has now discovered it. We are stating a fact. One only needs to look at the Preamble to the Constitution of Barbados. If the Honourable Member had to speak, he would perhaps make the same point if he is going to be consistent. But, of course, he is not known for consistency. This is the Constitution of Barbados and I quote:

> "Whereas the love of free institutions and of independence that have always strongly characterized the inhabitants of Barbados."

Now by parity of reasoning, Sir, the Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central would say that this is a lot of foolishness, that the Government of Barbados and the people of Barbados recognize for the first time, discovered for the first time according to him that people in Barbados love their free institutions and feel strongly about their independence. It goes on, Sir, but I will not take up the less than half an hour that I require on this occasion to deal with the emptiness of that kind of submission on a matter that is of transcendental importance to tens of thousands of Barbadians who have made a contribution and who deserve of any caring Government and any legislator who is worth his salt some recognition and some tangible repayment for all that they have done for this country. The Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central again, as is his want, builds something of this nature

around dollars and cents. Surely the Unit that has been set up for returning nationals has a lot to do with the question of money and how much money the Government will take from them when they come home and so on, but it has a deeper significance and meaning than just the question of money. It has to do with the synthesis of a group of Barbadians who have not been living home as those who have been living home for a long time. It deals with the question of the getting together and working into a harmonious whole, a whole strategy for the development of this community of Barbados and of the individuals who live in it whether those who were living here for a long time or those who have just come back.

Sir, I cannot understand. As I said, I really did not think that my voice was necessary in something as straightforward and as laudable as this. But I am offended like the returning nationals at the tone and the context of the words used by Members of the Opposition so far in this debate. But they can put things right because a number of them have not spoken yet and they can pull back from that dangerous position that they have so far taken. I for one will not rub it in if they did. I will applaud them on their maturity if they can fall back from their offensive position so far taken in this debate.

Now I want to make very quickly 2 or 3 quick points and one relates to the question of the provision of skills in the community. Barbados as the Honourable Member for the City of Bridgetown has said is seeking through advertisements overseas for a number of skilled Barbadians in areas like computer experts and programmers and so on to come home to all of these top level fields and obviously we are talking about young people with highly developed skills to come and work in Barbados. We have to separate them from the retirees. A number of Barbadians who have gone...

Aside.

Mr. L. R. TULL: Well, I am being told that I am a retiree. I have a lot of awful words to tell those who think that I am. But, Sir, in respect of the retirees, we do not expect that they are coming back into the work force and I believe they constitute perhaps the majority of those who are returning particularly from the United Kingdom. But they have their own contribution that they can make because we hear that we need a lot of help in building our communities. We have problems with the ageing and from the young people who are left at home when their parents go to work. We hear of young people who are disillusioned, who are cast away and who seem to be on the sidelines in respect of what is happening in the main stream of Barbados. These persons from their experience abroad can be forces for good in working with the community workers and others to bring back a certain measure of social health in the villages and communities across Barbados.

I want, Mr. Speaker, to deal with another aspect of this whole matter. I have heard particularly from the present Governor-General on many occasions that there is concentrated in this small island the greatest of skills and talents of any place on earth of equivalent size and I agree with him. We have enormous talent and capability in this country. The legislature in Barbados is as strong in intellectual intent, experience and ability of any Parliament anywhere in the world. That is my view, Sir.
5.10 p.m.

Sometimes people are allowed to be perverse, not perverted, Sir, perverse, but because people are perverse does not necessarily mean that they do not have good intellects and I saw some of that perverseness today; but I don't despair. We have in this country, Sir, remarkable talent and ability in any area of national life.

I want to caution returning nationals not to come back to Barbados with a feeling that they are coming back to the backwards. I say this for very good reason because I have exposure to them. I work with them as a lawyer. None of them have complained to me as yet or complained for me yet that I know of. I haven't heard anybody.

Aside.

Mr. L. R. TULL: Mr. Speaker, Sir, Honourable Member for St. Lucy can feel assured that I do not have to advertise. The cup is full and overflowing.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, I want in this context to say that we, in Barbados, have done well. I have seen the newsletter from the Honourable Member for St. Michael South's constituents, the most recent one, and the editorial front page headlines are focussed on the position of Barbados in the UN Human Development Index and it establishes that for the last 5 – 6 years Barbados has been top among developing countries in the area of quality of life criteria. I want to say, Mr. Speaker, Sir, that any developing country that has reached the rank of Barbados in the context of human development is a desirable place in which to live and move and have one's being. There are people from all over the world, from North America, from Europe, the so-called first world countries who come to Barbados and rave over the quality of life in this country and would want to live in this country.

We have something good here and I want returning nationals to Barbados to realise that they are coming

back to Eden and that we do not need all of the distractions of big cities in here to make living in this country good. Therefore, as the beneficiaries of something good they left and something good they have returned to, we expect, Sir that they will, despite what the Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central says, reintegrate into one of the most vibrant and prosperous cultures anywhere in the world.

We here in Barbados are part of the Caribbean archipelago and in this archipelago there is a mosaic of all the cultures of all the continents of the world. We have in Barbados the best of the cultures to the east and the west and the north and the south. We have a good land, Sir. We want our elder citizens who have lived in all the difficulties, in all the tribulations and deprivations that they have had to put up with in the United Kingdom and other parts of the world, things that we have heard from the Other Side. At one time, Sir, I was living in the United Kingdom in those days and I, too, had to go and look for some place to live and saw the signs which said No Dogs, No Children, No Pakis and No Blacks. I am familiar with that, Sir.

I know what our nationals overseas have undergone. Sir, we welcome them back. We want them to be assured that the Government of this country, the Barbados Labour Party Government, and myself, who speak for the people of St. George South, welcome them with open arms and we will do and continue to do whatever we can to come up with creative programmes and concessions and privileges to make their return to Barbados as happy and comfortable as possible.

I support this Resolution and, as I said, I like to be totally honest in these things, I do in fact have some reservations about some parts of it but my reservations are not sufficiently strong either to make me talk against these persons and bad mouth them nor not to support the Resolution that shows the heart and the caring nature of this present Administration. I am grateful to you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. W. C. C. CALLENDER: Mr. Speaker, I rise to support this Resolution. Sir, when I heard the contribution of the spokesmen of the Opposition I started to feel a little sad. I was wondering whether this was the same Resolution I was seeing before me.

Sir, I have a special feeling in my heart for the returning nationals of Barbados, the men, for example, whom I see who have returned to Barbados around the cricket grounds in Christ Church East giving encouragement to the youngsters there, the gentlemen I see down by the shop in Thornbury Hill and the goodly folks from Chancery Lane, Gibbons and Ealing Park. I identify with these returning nationals of Barbados, Sir, because I come in contact with them and I also think of people who are going through struggles in big countries.

We know the struggles in North America. We know of their struggles in Europe. People who left to find a better way of life. Some of them have gone on to excel and we heard a lot about them. For example, Congresswoman Shirley Chisholm also came from the goodly area of Christ Church East. We have heard about medical practitioners such as Dr. Greaves from St. Lucy. These are people who have excelled and we know that wherever Barbadians go they try very hard and they excel.

Sir, we know too that they have been able to surmount many difficulties. We know for example, Sir, that they have had to face much racism in many of the countries. Many of us speak as if this racism existed only back in the 60s and 70s but this racism still continues and the nationals still continue to fight. Sir, I do not know if many of our Honourable Members remember the case as late as in 1991 in the London underground where 20 West Indians, including Barbadians, were given lower pay than the white persons at a similar level of work. These 20 persons brought a case against the London Underground and won the case in 1993 and they were compensated. That is the biggest race case in the United Kingdom and the judgment was delivered just in 1993.

The chief spokesman of that group, the Transport Workers' Legal Action Committee, is a gentleman Anthony Garner who happened to be the President of the National Resettlement Committee, the Committee that is working with the Government to ensure that there is integration between the returning nationals and the nationals. This gentleman was the spokesman in this biggest race case.
5.20 p.m.

Sir, during the discussions in London the first black parliamentarian in the United Kingdom, Dian Abbott, had this to say. We are not talking, Sir, about the 1970s. We are not talking about the 1990s, Sir. We are talking about the year 1993. She had this to say after the Second World War. Black people came to Britain and helped to build up many sectors of the public sector, public transport and the National Health Services.

What we are finding, going on into 1990s, is that many of the black people who went into the public sector and worked their way up to managerial positions are finding themselves organised out of jobs and demoted with younger white people with similar qualification being promoted above them.

In a way, what British society is saying is that after the Second World War when the economy was booming they did not want to do shift work or hard dirty work. They were glad of your labour, but now that times are hard they want to demote you and undermine your contribution.

We are speaking about the 1990s. These are our people living overseas and this is the treatment that they are getting after they have made their contribution. Sir, it is therefore in this context that it grieves me to hear the kind of contribution I have heard today coming from the Opposition benches. When we are looking at our people, wherever they may be, they are our people. They are Barbadians and I would never expect to see that kind of tone, that kind of language, the kind of language in which one could speak about rats, nonsense and propaganda, and which one would speak of deportees. Sir, the language is out of sorts. It reminds me of a speech given in a certain place, at a certain time, which was incongruous with the crowd, and with the incongruous kind of occasion that it was, when one was talking about drifting sands and houses and all those things. A similar type of speech, Sir, when you are saying the wrong thing, in the wrong place, to the wrong people, at the wrong time. Sir, I was a grieved man.

I believe that the honourable gentlemen have time to reprieve themselves, because all Barbadians have heard them. The returning nationals have heard them, and if it is reported it will be known about all across the world. I do not believe, Sir, that these honourable gentlemen had intended it that way, but if they do not, they still have a chance to redeem themselves. I would hope that they would seek an opportunity to do that because that is a grievous wound to the great nationals of this country. That is a grievous wound, Sir.

I therefore would not want it to be said that the Honourable Chamber of the House of Assembly of Barbados would want to reflect that kind of position, whether it came from that side or from this side. I believe that the honourable gentlemen will, in due time, redeem themselves.

Sir, I am happy to be associated with this Charter for returning and overseas nationals. In 1996 what this says is that we have come to the realisation that this country with over 250 000 residents cannot stand alone. We need to network in an age of globalization, Sir. We have to network with our brothers wherever they may be.

We had people, Sir, I believe in days gone by, who were talking about going back to Africa. Now we are talking about people coming back to Barbados. We can identify with coming back to Barbados.

Asides.

Mr. W. C. C. CALLENDER: There was even a song about going back to Barbados, Sir.

If we had to look at our people wherever they were, we are looking at those who left Barbados and we are also including their children. The children of Barbadians are Barbadians. We should also have access to their skills, to the resources that are available from these people. So, Sir, what this Charter is saying is that we are into an age where we are going to utilise the full potential of our people. If Europeans can do it, we can do it, Sir.

Sir, I would just like, for the refreshment of Members, to repeat what are the objectives of this Charter, because I believe some of our Honourable Members have forgotten and oversighted what are the objectives of this Charter. So for their benefit I would just want to place in perspective what these objectives are. It says here, Sir:

> "(a) To create the appropriate conditions which would facilitate returning nationals in reintegrating into the society as easily as possible."

That is the first objective and just let me pause for another minute, Sir.

Whenever there is change there is stress. Obviously for those who are returning there would be stressful conditions. Therefore it is incumbent upon us to reorient them, to reintegrate them into Barbadian society. That is why this Facilitation Unit is so appropriate. That is why it is so appropriate, so that these people will be assisted in reorienting themselves, in reintegrating themselves because they come with different cultures, because some have lived there for many years, some have been born there and it is important that we reorient them or orient them, in some cases, for those who are children of Barbadians who live overseas, into Barbadian culture since they are our kith and kin. This is important.

We have to begin at home, Sir, and especially in an age when all the big countries are fending for themselves, we have to fend for ourselves. We have to gather to ourselves. As the Bible will tell you, in modern language "all the chicks let them come to roost." We have to get everybody to come together who belong to us.

Sir, the second objective, is to:

> "(b) increase the potential human and other resources available to the country, directly through the returning nationals themselves, and indirectly through the creation of a more conducive environment for services and investment by nationals remaining abroad."

Sir, this will be a mechanism so that we actively seek to get investment from our nationals abroad. Is this something to be spurned? Sir, it provides a focus. What we are talking, Sir, is a focus.

"(c) to facilitate the development of a retirement industry in Barbados."

Sir, this is 1996. A lot of the people who would have gone to London Transport, who would have worked in the health services, for example, in the U.K., a lot of the people would have gone other places are now at the point where they are retiring. They want to return to beautiful Barbados. This therefore means that the Facilitation Unit is very timely because they are coming back in their numbers, and when they come back in their retirement they can utilise their skills in a number of community areas.
5.30 p.m.

This again, Sir, is very relevant because we are at a time when there is change, when the youth need support, when support systems are tending to fall apart and our returning nationals can assist us in this regard. I know for a fact, Sir, that some of them are already integrating with the communities and assisting wherever possible in helping in our communities. What this Facilitation Unit does, Sir, is to provide the correct focus which this country needs at this time. Therefore, I do not go in for this idea and nit-picking about this piece being done before and that being done before. That is immaterial. We are dealing with a problem now and this Facilitation Unit addresses many problems that we have. That is what the crux of the matter is, Sir.

Sir, the Charter goes on to say:–

"The Facilitation Unit for Returning Nationals – FURN, as it is called will:

(a) create and offer an attractive package of concessions – (such as we have heard about).

(b) provide comprehensive and accurate information to returning nationals at both overseas and local locations."

Information, Sir. We are in an information age. We use the Internet for all kinds of things so that the Internet now can even be used to facilitate our getting this kind of information that is so vital at this point in time.

It goes on:

"(c) to liaise with the relevant agencies, governmental and private sector, on matters relating to returning nationals.

(d) to develop programmes of investment opportunities.

(e) To maintain a skills bank both in Barbados and overseas.

(f) To develop and maintain a 'technical assistance' programme.

(g) To maintain contact with Barbadian organisations abroad."

This is what FURN will do. Is this anything that somebody should be complaining about, Sir?

Sir, let me address another matter. It has been said in this House that this is a public relations exercise. This is nothing to be apologetic about. This has to be a public relations exercise. It is something dealing with the creation of goodwill and anytime there is the creation of goodwill, anytime you are looking at mutual understanding, anytime you are talking about integrating your people wherever they are, it will call for a mutual understanding. It will call for the generation of goodwill and this is what public relations is about, so it should not only be a public relations exercise in Barbados. It should be a public relations exercise in the United Kingdom, Canada, U.S.A., Germany and throughout the Caribbean. This should be a total public relations exercise.

Look at the U.S.A. You could want any bigger public relations people than they are to the extent that they are going to show you Carl Lewis in a discussion when Ato Bolden is running a race? That is why they have become a great country. If you want this country to be in the backwoods you will nitpick at an exercise which is bringing goodwill to all Barbadians, an exercise which is bringing our people together, an exercise which signals that we are ready for globalisation, an exercise which signals that we are ready to go through an information network to build this country, an exercise which signals that we are going to harness all our skills, an exercise which signals that we have focus or not we are going to nitpick, a country divided with three parties and fighting over a charter which is designed to bring good for Barbados.

Sir, I also have to speak about the role this Unit can play. There was a programme called "I am Back in Barbados." I am going to start backwards and go back. I went to a function at Dover Convention Centre in 1992 and I remember a Minister of Tourism, not the one that spoke in the House today, Sir, I do not think he would have done that, berating, vilifying and downgrading a returning national at that time who simply asked him a question since he tried to see him and could not see him, and the meeting nearly broke up. That was a meeting designed

to generate a programme called "I Am Back in Barbados." That was the last time I saw behaviour similar to what I saw today, so I do not know if this is characteristic of certain people. I saw that with my two eyes and since then that programme "I Am Back in Barbados" was derailed because of that Minister's attitude. It is about time, Sir, that we get back to that programme.

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: On a point of order, Sir. I think the Honourable Member is misleading the House. I recall specifically the incident that occurred at the same meeting in 1992. The Member should be very fair and indicate that the person was seeking to raise a matter that was *sub judice* in a very offensive manner in the wrong forum and was dealt with appropriately by the Minister. It should not be said that there was any wicked or deliberate attempt by the Minister at the time to characterise any Barbadian, and for the Member to put it in the record is a deliberate attempt to mislead and create a false impression and to distort the record of this House.

Mr. W. C. C. CALLENDER: Mr. Speaker, I do not tell lies. I am therefore glad that the Honourable Member for St. Michael East has been able to prove the veracity of what I said. Whatever the reason was, the Honourable Member for St. Michael East has not said that the Minister did not berate the person, did not vilify the person, and that it led the meeting in disarray, and that the programme did not get on track after that. That is the crux of the matter. Whatever the circumstances, I was not privy to the information so I am not aware. I can only go on what I saw and I know the programme did not come off.

I am also equally aware, Sir, that a High Commissioner was approached about setting up a programme such as this one in the United Kingdom and this High Commissioner said: "It could not be done" and that was in 1992. He said it could not be done. That is what the High Commissioner representing the Government of Barbados said. This is also another fact. I am not dealing with the reasons. I am dealing with the facts, Sir.

I am therefore saying, Sir, that one would hope that the kind of demonstrations we have seen here today do not impact on good things when they are about to happen. Whenever there is a good thing happening in this country I want to be in the midst of it because I believe in the best for this country. I am saying again, Sir, that I would hope that information on this programme goes all around the world.

There is a booklet called "Barbados Returning Nationals Information." My information is that there are a number of these done but there should be more and more people asking for them. There should be more of these. Not only that, there should be more information. There should be more publicity. There should be more corporate relations on this good thing. This is a good thing and there should be more of it. There is nothing wrong in that, Sir. We cannot play politics with a good thing.

Sir, I am backing the Barbados programme. In essence, that programme was about getting Barbadians overseas to bring tourists whether they be other Barbadians, or whether it be their friends at work to Barbados. I am hoping that this programme can be put in place.

Sir, when I was in England some time earlier, I was also told that Barbadians overseas are looking for opportunities to sell our products. I am hoping that this Facilitation Unit will assist us in integrating with the Barbadians overseas and their integrating with us so that there would be more cooperation to assist tourism, to make investment opportunities more possible and that at the end of the day we would be able to see the development of Barbados emanating from focus being placed on the integration of Barbadians wherever they be.

Sir, I have pleasure in being associated with this Resolution. I hope that this Unit can in time be extended, more resources being placed at its disposal so that it can do the job it said will be done. I hope that this Unit will continue to cooperate with the Barbadian organisations locally and that it will continue to cooperate with the Barbadian organisations overseas.

Sir, I believe that once the execution of this programme continues apace, and once we all put our energies and our resources behind this programme, that it will do nothing but good for Barbados and that it will see an integration of the people of Barbados and that we will see ourselves as one people, one nation and that Barbadians overseas, whether they be born here or whether they be children of Barbadians that they will all be able to sing this song, a song I used to sing a lot one time. The song that says, This land is your land. "This land is our land." Welcome the morning sun. Welcome to Eden, beautiful Barbados.

5.40 p.m.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Mr. Speaker, when one listens to the other side one would not believe that we went through a debate a couple months ago dealing with national insurance when I made a case for the returning nationals to at least get $20. Because, Mr. Speaker, I had to remind this House that there were a lot of nationals who have returned to Barbados who sent back all of their money to Barbados, who provided jobs in Barbados for Barbadian citizens and they were begging the Government to acknowledge them. I said at that time, Sir, even $20.00 would have been a help to those people. As one listened to the other side today they would give the impression that all the

overseas nationals who have returned that they have looked after those people.

Sir, if I go into Broomfield tonight, there are people who would have sent back money to Barbados and who would be still asking me to ask the Government to look after them too, because they have contributed to the Treasury of Barbados. But that is not all, Sir. When I look at these proposals, Sir, and it is not only in Broomfield, Sir. We are speaking also about Mount View. We are also speaking of people in Pie Corner, Josey Hill and all through St. Lucy there are still people who have returned to Barbados, returned with their money and what is regrettable about this is that those people came back to Barbados and they did not ask the Government for any waiver of taxes, nothing like that. They came back to Barbados at their own free will and we did nothing for those people and that is regrettable.

Every year, Sir, we have Barbadians going to Canada and America, bringing back foreign exchange and begging Customs to ease them with a radio and we hear nothing about those people and now I hear the Honourable Member for St. George South telling me that they might change it. I will hold him to his words for that, Sir. Also the ones cutting canes and picking fruit. Mr. Speaker, they are returning nationals too. I do not see anything in here for those people.

Mr. Speaker, that is not all.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order, please. For the benefit of the Honourable Member for St. Lucy, Sir. I have gone to the trouble to provide booklets. It is all here. What he is describing does not fall within the definition of a returning national.

Mr. SPEAKER: Proceed orderly, please.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Mr. Speaker, a returning national is a returning national, no matter how they return. That is my interpretation. Furthermore, Mr. Speaker, this is serious business. What we want in Barbados, Sir, is investment so that the people in St. George South, those youngsters, could get some employment and what I see here, Sir, living room suite, dining room suite, kitchen, bathroom, television, satellite dish, all made overseas and nothing to employ my poor people in Barbados, foolishness, Mr. Speaker.

Let me tell you what we would expect, Mr. Speaker. What we would expect is a programme where we say to the returning nationals, if you bring your money back to Barbados you have a right to get a car duty free. Let me tell you why, Sir. If the car is purchased in Barbados you can guarantee a job for the people in St. Joseph. You can guarantee a job for the people in St. James South but if a car is purchased overseas the only people that you can help, Mr. Speaker, are the people overseas.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, I have no problem with this. I am clear about this. You remember the Japanese loans that I spoke about, Mr. Speaker? This Government has a policy of giving money to people overseas and I am totally against that. I am saying that they could have achieved the same thing, Mr. Speaker, by allowing these nice people, that I have already spoken for.

Aside.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Abuse? I have never been abusive to them. It is foolishness. It is not in their interest. Mr. Speaker, these nice people should be allowed to come back to Barbados and if they feel like buying a plane duty free they should have the right once it is manufactured in Barbados so that they can help to employ their cousins, their nieces and nephews. Give them the right to buy what they like that is manufactured in Barbados or being sold in Barbados.

Can you imagine you are telling returning nationals to buy furniture by people who cannot even make furniture. Can you imagine these returning nationals have a good opportunity to come back to Barbados, go down to Mr. Kirton and get some nice beautiful furniture and what we are saying to them, to take second hand furniture from people in England who cannot make furniture and not support our local Barbadians. I am saying, Mr. Speaker, that we should have a policy in place where those returning nationals, when they come to Barbados, could go and look for the best furniture and get them at a good price, no duty paid on them. That is what I call positive thinking, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Mr. Speaker, can you imagine this is supposed to be a proposal to ask people to bring money back to Barbados and there is no incentive in this document, Mr. Speaker, that would encourage anybody to take his money from England to bring back to Barbados.

What I am proposing, Sir, and I hope the Prime Minister is listening, that a special piece of paper be created where, when the returning nationals come back that they can get that investment at a better rate which is better than in the United Kingdom, the United States, wherever. Let me tell you why, Sir. I was in here early for your speech. Mr. Speaker, the returning nationals must know that we love them so much that when they get back to Barbados, that if England was paying 10% then we should be paying 12%, 13% or 14%. Do you know why, Sir?

At the end of the day Barbados would gain and the returning nationals would gain too. The boys on the block, Mr. Speaker, in Quarry Road, they would gain too, Mr. Speaker. But these proposals have nothing for the boys on the block, Sir.
5.50 p.m.

You are asking a returning national to come back to Barbados to build a big house, satellite dish, and air conditioning. He passes the boys on the block with his Mercedes and you know the first thing that is going to happen. Jealousy will be created. We cannot create any jealousy in Barbados, Mr. Speaker. We must create an atmosphere where the boys on the block feel they are all one with the returning nationals and when the returning nationals live in their lovely homes that they must feel that the boys on the block will guard their houses for them instead of being jealous.

Mr. Speaker, I am saying that those youngsters that you find in Fitts Village or Haynesville cannot gain anything by someone bringing back a Mercedes. She had better not let me talk to those guys in Haynesville because you know how it is with Haynesville. So you see, Mr. Speaker, we are at the crossroad today where I honestly believe that the Government meant to get something out of the proposal but it was badly drafted and presented to the Prime Minister. I know, Sir, being a CP boy that he would not accept these proposals as they are. He cannot because these proposals do not allow the guys in Mile and a Quarter or in Speightstown or Checker Hall or anywhere in Barbados to gain anything. They do not allow the returning nationals to gain anything anyhow because they always had a car and their furniture and I do not see how you can encourage somebody to buy second quality furniture when we have furniture makers in Barbados who can make the best furniture in the world. I cannot understand how we can get concessions for things like these.

Mr. Speaker, let me tell you something. There are a lot of poor people and there is a lot of money to come out of England. If we are asking people to come out of England, we must ask the people to bring the money out of England and not for them to come to Barbados and leave the money overseas. I am not going to fool anybody that this proposal does attract investment to Barbados and what we need at this point in time is the right climate to attract the investment by the returning nationals so that when they come back to Barbados they will bring back the necessary cash to invest in our banks or to invest in business.

I am saying that the Government is talking about selling the Hilton. Yes, I understand that they plan to sell the Hilton and the Hilton is a good investment. So sell it to the returning nationals. That is one sure way of bringing the money out of England. As it stands now, Sir, there is no work and let me tell you something. They can give them special incentives to buy the hotel at North Point and I will back them and I will help and negotiate on their behalf or if they want to go to the Naval Base and get a hotel down there, Sir, I will help them also. But do not fool these nice people that you are doing so much for them when at the end of the day all you are telling them is that you are giving them a car and furniture. Do not fool these people because I know people who came back to Barbados and had the right of a duty free car. I also know of people who returned and brought back furniture without paying duty, so it is nothing new. That is why, Sir, I had to tear this up because there is nothing new in this. I want something that is new and something that can help these people. This grandstanding and public relations programme to set up a branch in England, I am not party to that because not even my Party could do this to people. If the Democratic Labour Party had done this, I would have to criticize them too. You know that I am plain speaking. No grandstanding on the poor people's back and I am surprised at the Honourable Member for St. George South because I had expected him to speak after me and not before. Because had he spoken after me, he could not have made that speech and he would have had to support what I said instead of him cheering me on about the good society after he had made his speech he would then have to get up and support me. But, Mr. Speaker, I am saying to returning nationals that all of those who want to cheer this, cheer this. But I am telling you that 5 years after being in Barbados if what I said is not implemented, you will be packing up and leaving. I am saying that we do not want you to leave. If you come here with good intentions, bring everything. Bring your bank accounts to Barbados and we will find the right investment climate for it.

There is no sense anybody fooling anybody. We are talking dollars and cents for the returning nationals and we are talking dollars and cents for Barbadians. I am saying that once the investment is here the guys on the block have hope. If the investment is not here, there is no hope for the boys on the block. So I cannot understand how my friend from St. Philip North was able to get up and support this when this proposal which has the capacity to generate jobs if it is properly instituted for the people of St. Philip North. I know that your heart is with me, Sir, on this proposal because once I am talking jobs you want some for your constituents... I know that even though you cannot speak in this debate, Sir, that you would like to tag along with me on this one. So I am asking that the right investment climate be created so that the boys in St. Michael Central will get some of these jobs too. I will not leave you out. Your friends will leave you out, but do not worry because I will speak for you.

Mr. SPEAKER: Thank you.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: So I am asking the returning nationals to go back and put a fresh set

of proposals after they have heard a set of proposals that make sense because the ones I heard before, and I will be honest with you, reminded me as something hatched by the private sector in this country. Let me tell you something, Mr. Speaker. You do not understand sometimes how things operate. Our bright students are given jobs and the first thing they are given is a salary, then they are given a car or a car loan and then they are given a mortgage or a house. After they receive those things, they tell you that they cannot take risks. This is exactly what the private sector did to our bright students and the Government is now doing to the returning nationals – a pretty picture just to tie them. I am saying that in the same way we allow the bright students to go and set up their own business and they will create more employment for people, if we give these nice people the right incentives these people will employ every unemployed person in Barbados because they have the investment that they can bring to Barbados. But as it stands now they will not bring it because there is no need to bring it. The only thing they need to bring to Barbados right now as it stands from these proposals is a car and household fittings. Yes, Mr. Speaker, that is the only thing they need to do. As it stands now, they can leave their money in England and come back here and draw a cheque every month for what they need.

I cannot believe these proposals. I cannot even patch it back together because they are worthless. You see, Mr. Speaker, it is regrettable that in 1996 that we can have such flimsy proposals and you know what we need right now is investments. We do not need people with cars and furniture. So I do not know how you can try and fool people that you care so much about them and you want them to bring back cars and furniture. Tell them the truth. You want their money. That is the bottom line and you want the money to help create jobs for Barbadians and that is the truth, the honest truth and the only truth that I know and they know it too, Sir. They know that they will not be fooled by these proposals.

I am saying, Sir, that I have confidence in the Prime Minister that he will put the necessary instrument in place to make sure that the money will be removed from England and he will reverse the proposal of his Deputy and put his own proposals in place. I have confidence in the Prime Minister. I have confidence in him to reverse this and I know in the same way that I have done this, to this, that he has already burnt his. I am sure of that, Sir. I am sure that he has burnt his already because it is empty and it offers nothing to the returning nationals or to the people of Barbados. Do you doubt me? I am asking the Prime Minister to do this. I am giving the Prime Minister one second to produce his and, if he does not produce it, I am certain that it is in the garbage bin already.

You see, it has not been produced. It is in the garbage bin already.

6.00 p.m.

I am saying, Sir, that the Prime Minister cannot accept these proposals because they have no financial benefits to him or the country or the returning nationals. The private sector cannot accept these proposals because they have no benefit to them or their employees. The guys on the block cannot accept these proposals because they have no benefit to them. The returning nationals cannot accept these proposals because they have no benefit to them either. The 30 000 unemployed people cannot accept these proposals because they have no benefit to them and the young children in school who are coming out this year cannot accept these proposals because they have no benefit to them.

If I take these proposals into my constituency and ask them if these things were implemented, how many jobs would be created, do you know what they would tell me without even thinking – zero. That is a serious thing. If we are going to have a charter and it is supposed to be so great and grand we must be able to see something positive from it but the days of these negative things, how can you expect something positive from the youth, Sir, when we expect to produce these negative things. The young people are thinking and when you go in Quarry Road tonight as I know you are going and you ask them the question how many jobs will we get from this, I know you will get zero. I know you are going to come back to me and you are going to say that I was right. If the bank accounts came to Barbados and you ask these guys in Quarry Road what hope they have they will say we have a lot of hope because there is money in Barbados and there can be investment, but if you bring a Mercedes, I cannot see the investment. The only investment in there for a Mercedes as my father would tell you is a car wash. You are telling me that the only thing that we can offer Barbadians is a car wash job? Even now you can drive through the mechanical car wash. So you see, there is no hope for the youngsters.

I am saying that we must be realistic and we must acknowledge that sometimes we have good intentions but you do not gain what you set about to gain. You must admit that you have made an error and there is nothing wrong with my congratulating the Prime Minister for destroying the proposal of his Deputy. I would congratulate him 10 times for doing it because he has a right when he sees foolishness to tear it up like me. If he does not get up and denounce this proposal, well, then, I will have to withdraw my congratulations from him. I hope he doesn't disappoint me because as he know I will give him credit when it is due but if he does not denounce what has been done in here today I cannot give him the credit.

Sir, I am hoping that the proposals be looked at again. It is very disappointing that these honourable men and women have to spend so much money coming from London etc. to come to Barbados to hear a televised

debate and at the end of the day they cannot tell anybody that they stand to gain anything from these proposals. I must apologise for them, Sir, but I hope that the next time that they come back that the proposals will be revamped, re-presented and, of course, if the Dems had done this they would not even have had to fly from London. There would be no need because they would be solid proposals that from the time they got them in London they would be packing and everything would be in Barbados already, bank accounts, everything.

You see, the problem with some people is they want to paint a pretty picture and behind the picture there is an empty scene and that is exactly what we got from these proposals today, Sir. I am saying that I hope that the people in Eden Lodge will acknowledge that there is a better life and that the proposals presented in here today could not present a better life for them and that they will deal with those people who are cheering on and making people believe that they can get jobs out of a Mercedes or out of furniture or a satellite dish.

Mr. Speaker, I know you do not support that. I know the people in Barbados, the poor people who are looking to get those jobs, those poor people when they heard about so many people coming back started seeing it as if we were getting thousands of tourists coming to Barbados. But at the end of the day, no work. Do you understand how it feels to have a little hope and then when you really look through the proposals to see an empty promise. Do you imagine the type of pressure you will be under when you go in Quarry Road because all over the television you get the impression that this was the best idea that ever happened to Barbados and the 30 000-job problem was solved, but it is clear today further than the 30 000-jobs being sought that we might be having a climate in Barbados where the unemployment rate might be increased because 50 000 returning plus 30 000 is 80 000. Thank you very much, Sir.

Dr. R. L. CHELTENHAM: Mr. Speaker, you will forgive me if I give my contribution by reminding the House about what this debate is about. I think that we have wandered in so many directions and the debate has been characterised by so many excesses and in some respects unfortunate tone that I think it is necessary to remind the House and ourselves as to what this debate is all about.

Barbadian nationals who had to emigrate for the purposes of seeking employment in Canada, the United States and the United Kingdom to mention but a few countries have been returning over many years. That was at the level of a trickle. Within recent years, in the last 5 years or so, I think that trickle has become a flow to the extent that the Government has had to develop mechanisms for facilitating the re-entry of Barbadian nationals who have been abroad for many years into the society. That is not to say that over many years successive Governments have not been providing facilities of one sort or the other but this is the first time that the facilities have been brought together in one package. Old facilities have been enlarged. There are a few new ideas included, but this is the first time it is incorporated in one document whereby it is transparent.

It would be wrong to criticise it on the grounds that there is nothing new in it in terms of a facilitation unit established in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, that other countries have done that in the past. That is not a criticism of the initiative that is being taken. The point is that it is relevant, the ideas and the establishment of the unit, the facility in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs is necessary and useful and this is the first time that a Government has taken the initiative on the scale on which this has been taken.

In that context, I think the Government needs to be commended. I do not think that any reasonable person knowing what has happened in the past and knowing the demand on the Government for the facilitation of nationals who have been abroad to re-enter the society and to resettle would say that this is not a useful initiative. I think it is significant too that it has fallen to a Barbados Labour Party Administration to take this initiative because you will recall that about 40 years or so ago, in fact throughout the 1950s it was the Barbados Labour Administration, then populated by such distinguished persons as the late Sir Mencea Cox, that took very deliberate and conscious steps to export Barbadians for the purpose of finding employment opportunities particularly in Canada and the United Kingdom.

Many of those persons who went away some 40 years ago are now returning to Barbados, a Barbados that is a different Barbados from the one they left, and herein lies the rationale for providing assistance. Many people who have been away for 20-25 years tell you today that they cannot find their way because of the radical change in the Barbados road system. The road system has been significantly altered and expanded. It is not the same Barbados they left and it is necessary to walk them through the bureaucracy and make sure their entry is comfortable. 6.10 p.m.

But, Mr. Speaker, the Opposition in its attempt to belittle this initiative taken by the Government has spoken in contradictory terms about the role played by Barbadian nationals abroad over many years, and I think the point has got to be made without equivocation that Barbadians abroad have played a significant role in many respects, not only in relation to the remittances and the barrels and the boxes that they have sent back, particularly in the early years after they left, because as they established

families abroad those remittances tended to decrease. But they have not only played an important role – and that point has been made by several Honourable Members – in relation to remittances, but they also were great ambassadors and have been over many, many years for their country, not only by example in the community and at the work place, but they have also been part of the promotional network, the infrastructure of Barbados. I found that when I was Minister of Tourism, that many people who came to Barbados came because Barbadians abroad sold Barbados to them. They told them that Barbados was as fine a destination for purposes of relaxation and pleasure as they could get anywhere. So let us not be in any doubt that Barbadians abroad have played a very important part in the development of this country. What are they bringing back, Mr. Speaker? They are bringing back experience, money and skills and they are all necessary. I have no doubt that will help to enrich this community over time.

But I want to make an important point by way of caution and I think it also points to one of the limitations in the Charter, in the booklet. Call it a schedule, call it a charter, call it what you like, the focus today is on the substance of what is contained therein. It matters not what it is dubbed, what it is styled. Many are bringing back substantial sums of money. Many are selling their houses abroad for anything from £50 000 to £200 000 or £300 000. Many of them are coming with their gratuities and pensions and with some savings, but unless in the Facilitation Unit we have an advisory service as to how to put that money to productive use, we may run into a situation where in a few short years many of them would have been fleeced, found themselves encouraged to get into get-rich-quick schemes organised by doubtful characters, and to that extent it is necessary in my respectful submission, Mr. Speaker, that there be an advisory service somewhere within the structure of Government or in the Facilitation Unit itself whereby they can be advised as to what schemes they should avoid and some schemes in which they can invest. So I think that is one of the weaknesses of the Unit, as it has been described, that there will not be contained therein an advisory service with respect to how they should spend their money.

Mr. Speaker, there are other weaknesses of the Charter, and I believe that by the time we get to its publication in the second edition they can be improved. Other Members have touched on some of these points, but I think they are sufficiently important to be restated. The whole question of pension is an important one which should have been addressed here in a page or half a page. Fortunately at present there is a reciprocal arrangement between the United Kingdom and Barbados whereby if you have a pension in the United Kingdom it can easily be got here and if that pension is indexed abroad you will benefit from the indexation even though you live here. The point has to be made that reciprocal arrangement does not obtain in relation to Canada or the United States of America, and we are not only talking about nationals returning from the United Kingdom, but also from Canada and the United States of America.

The second thing here, and this could have been answered after posing the question: Can I qualify in Barbados for an old age pension? There are people who are returning who for one reason or another have not qualified for a pension abroad, some of them did not enjoy good health, did not work for any long period. They have come back here long before retirement age and yet they do not qualify for a non-contributory pension in Barbados. Many people are shocked when they get to the age of 65 to recognise that there is some form of discrimination, as it were, in effect between Barbadians who have been here all their lives and those who were born here, grew up here, went away and have returned after many years and yet do not qualify for old age pension, as we call it. They should not run up against those situations not knowing, and I think that aspect of the pension situation should also be addressed here.

There are other aspects, Mr. Speaker, which I want to allude to quite quickly. This has been touched upon indirectly by other speakers in the course of the afternoon. Many people who are returning are not well. Many of them are suffering from rare diseases and some are suffering from the well-known traditional diseases – diabetes, hypertension, and so on. What they are concerned about, and what is not spelt out in this Charter is what level of case is available to them here in Barbados, and at what cost. Many of them are shocked to find when they get here that there is some differential in the regulations between what Barbadians who have not gone anywhere, the price – or the lack of price, because many of them can get it free – at which they can get their health services and the price which returning nationals have to pay for those services.

I think we should not be silent on those matters, those matters should be dealt with very explicitly in the booklet so that the whole question of pensions, health care and many other matters ought to be addressed in the booklet on returning nationals.

Mr. Speaker, in recent times we have addressed the issue of the greying of the Barbadian population, the fact that on an increasing scale our population is becoming more and more an elderly population. The call has been made by many of us for a regime of incentives for those who wish to invest in facilities for the elderly. I am not satisfied that we are doing enough. I would have hoped that the matter would have been more generously addressed in the last Budget, but it needs to be. The Government facilities are bursting at the seams and there are not

enough of them to take care of the elderly that are for one reason or another disabled and need to be put in retirement homes.
6.20 p.m.

If we are therefore to encourage the private sector to get into that field on an increasing scale and to have facilities of a certain character and standard, it seems to me that the Government has to introduce a regime of incentives to take care of that. Or else we are going to be encouraging more and more Barbadians back here. Many of them are 60 years and beyond. They are near or into retirement and there will not be enough facilities to take care of them in their declining years. I think that is also an area that is outside of the Charter but an area that Government has to address with increasing urgency.

Mr. Speaker, I do not think that there is any need for us to use up the half hour allotted to us in this debate at this stage. Many of the points have been made that ought to be made. I think that the tone has been somewhat unfortunate, and in that regard I want to commend the speech made by the Honourable Member for St. George South. I thought that his intervention was timely and I commend him too for the substance of what he had to say. I think that he pulled back the debate and restored some proportionality, some form of balance to it. I think that was important.

There are many returning nationals or would-be returning nationals who are here with us who are in Barbados too at this time and who are hearing us and listening to this debate. I think that we should not give them a feeling of uncertainty as to whether in truth and in fact they will be welcome here.

They will be welcomed. They are fellow Barbadians who have had to make their living aboard, and it is a good thing that they went away because this society and the whole West Indian society would have burst at its seams if it was not the opportunity in the 1950s for 100 000 or more Jamaicans and 30 000 or more Barbadians to go to the United Kingdom at that time.

I well remember, Mr. Speaker, that every fortnight, or thereabout, large numbers from my district and the surrounding districts used to leave for the United Kingdom on the Surienta and the Franca "C."

Asides.

I think the Golfito was a little higher class. Civil servants, for example, in the higher reaches who were going on holidays abroad, long leave, would go by the Golfito. Those who were going to work, whether it be in the transport systems, in the hospitals, or the industry they went on the Franca "C" and the Surienta. The whole district went down to see them off at the Baggage Warehouse. They left in their hundreds every fortnight, and they made a significant contribution to their country and their families from abroad. It is important that we should let them know that we welcome their return. We are confident that they can enrich this society and will enrich it. As part of that welcome, I think it was significant that the Government took the initiative which they have taken today. It is an initiative which I think needs to be applauded, and I think those who have attempted to belittle it and to suggest that because the ideas in it are not all new that it ought to be condemned. I think that sort of criticism is totally misplaced.

I will just make one final point, Mr. Speaker. It has to do with the fact that somewhere along in the course of the debate one got the impression that there was concern as to whether the BLP had done certain things or the DLP. I would really hope that when we are dealing with our returning nationals we put that aside. I think we would lame their spirit as they return and we will diminish their contribution if we administer the Facilitation Unit or any aspect of this regime in terms of BLP or DLP.

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: Mr. Speaker, I would like to, out of an abundance of caution second the amendment to the Resolution. I take great pleasure in seconding because I find no comfort, Mr. Speaker, in seeking to join hands to congratulate a Government who primarily tends to focus on serious issues and tries to put their public relations spin to seek whatever advantage they can derive out of necessary situations of development for their own political gain.

Mr. Speaker, this issue is an issue that has come to a head as the result of several years of frustration of persons who found it necessary to travel abroad, as many Members have spoken here this evening have said, because the economic circumstances that prevailed in Barbados dictated that they had to leave these blessed shores and seek refuge in countries that were bitterly cold, and certainly in an environment where they were exposed to racial hatred to some extent, and conditions where many of them would have suffered long and hard but where opportunities were probably greater than they were in Barbados at the time.

We are dealing, Sir, with a large group of Barbadians who have laboured and suffered through the years and, as many Members have said, have made significant contributions to the development of this country and I personally have no difficulty with any kind of reward or accommodation that is granted to them if you are going to encourage them to return to Barbados. I have no difficulty with it whatsoever.

I was certainly very proud to have been part of a Cabinet that understood the time had come when it

was necessary to recognise that the generation gap had caught up with us, and that many persons were in fact thinking of getting out of that cold and returning to their sweet and blessed Barbados, having made a better life for themselves and they are now able to work their way back into the system.

The Cabinet, of which I was a part, Mr. Speaker, was the first Cabinet that took a decision to remove all of the duties and consumption taxes on new motor vehicles for non-nationals coming into Barbados and we adjusted it for those persons who had in fact been living overseas for a period in excess of 10 years.

This Democratic Labour Party recognised that the time had come and we did not question why it had not been done 15 or 20 years before, because it did not come to the fore. As I indicated, Mr. Speaker, this document here is a result of many years of frustration, and if it is one single thing that I would recognise and say, "Well okay that is fine," is that all of the facilities that are available to non-nationals, what they have to do when they return if they want to be facilitated is now condensed in a single booklet and that makes sense. It makes sense to put the information to guide people on what they have to do or what they do not have to do into one single booklet.

The contents of it and whether concessions were granted by the Barbados Labour Party or the Democratic Labour Party may not be relevant because we know that an opportunity could be sought by the present Government, based on their practice of indulging themselves in public relations exercises, to take advantage of the situation and say, "Look for the first time I am telling you that all of the Governments before have disrespected you all, and we have now suddenly come along. We are the Barbados Labour Party, the caring Government, and we have now put everything together. We have created a situation where we are going to demonstrate to all of you, in Canada, the States, Europe and all over, that we, finally, are the only ones that are going to recognise your efforts." That is unfortunate, and we are warning that it is dangerous to the development and it cannot achieve anything, and there must be no political games, and you must not attempt to exploit the hard work and the sacrifices and try to "piggy back" on the fact that people are now returning home after 30 years in the cold and in that wretched environment. We certainly must create a scenario for them to feel comfortable when they return here to Barbados.

So if the Government had put all of the "dos" or "don'ts" into a document, that is fine.
6.30 p.m.

I have no problem with that because it was never done before but it must not be used as a PR tool to suggest that this is some creativity of the Barbados Labour Party, because we know that is not true. We have to ask the question. That is the same decision I spoke about, Mr. Speaker, this Barbados Labour Party that would want to create an impression, this Barbados Labour Party that likes to create impressions and deal with public relations.

This is Crop Over and we know that they want to advise all the overseas nationals about Crop Over and take advantage of the people being here. Traditionally the Barbados Labour Party is so predictable. They had at Crop Over a T-shirt band after they said they wanted to have costumes instead of T-shirt bands. Up comes the Barbados Labour Party now in a T-shirt band after having said you must get costumes. They passed through the Stadium and this song Ragamuffin...

Aside.

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: I am making a point, Mr. Speaker. I was sitting in the company of potential returning nationals. They passed through the Stadium, Mr. Speaker. Ragamuffin was kicking, and they were jumping and going through. Mr. Speaker, do you know that immediately behind the Barbados Labour Party was a band called "Downsizing." The music changed to: "You promised me wuk, Gimme wuk" and they pointed to the Barbados Labour Party who was just going off the stage so the nationals turned to me and said: "But you mean when we come back here we have to run about behind the Government for work?" It was strange that the perception of people coming back to Barbados that, that is what we have to offer them when they return here on the ground.

Aside.

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: I am talking straight talk. Listen to me carefully. The environment that you bring people back into has to be an environment where those persons – the Honourable Member for St. Lucy made a very telling contribution, endorsed by the Honourable Member for St. Joseph where if at this time in our development we are seeking to bring nationals back home, they have a right to come back here on their own, but I think as a matter of policy that the Government should seek to encourage all those who have become very affluent to seek to come and contribute to our development especially that we are now independent and aid to these countries is going through the back door. Very few people are willing to prop up these small economies anymore.

I think it is the duty of all of our nationals whether they are in Barbados or whether they are in any part of this world to contribute to the development of our own country but the environment must be right in the country. We cannot base it on any false promises or any beliefs

that everything is fine and dandy in Barbados. Many of these persons whom we are attempting to attract back to Barbados are accustomed to all kinds of health facilities, as the Honourable Member for St. Joseph said. All of them are accustomed of going, if they have an emergency in their respective countries where they know they can be treated and have no problem.

Today, Mr. Speaker, you are inviting nationals to return to this country. I am talking about the environment and the climate you have available in Barbados to attract people to come back here where the Medical Aid Scheme in Barbados is completely frozen, and not one single Barbadian can go overseas to be treated by the Medical Aid Scheme. It has been completely shut down, after all the charade of sending home four people from the Hospital and we are encouraging nationals to come here to an environment where they are unsure if they got sick tomorrow or the next couple of days, or under this Barbados Labour Party they are at a health risk. If they have to get certain kinds of operations, that are not now available in this country...

These are very serious matters, Mr. Speaker, and, as I said, we in Barbados have to understand, as I said at the beginning, there is nothing at all wrong in seeking to ask non-nationals to return to this country but for us to give them the impression that for them to come back to Barbados everything is going to be fine and dandy, no problems. They can just simply walk back into this country, everything will be fine and dandy, I think, is to do a disservice to the non-nationals and to create the wrong impression. Let us level with them.

What, Mr. Speaker, I know is that they are uncomfortable. I know they are quarrelling over there with themselves and they have to quarrel with themselves because the public of Barbados know that I do not play games and I talk straight talk.

Mr. Speaker, this exercise today is one to counteract the impressive build up of following that the Democratic Labour Party has had and in particular in the U.K. and the U.S.A. markets where many of the non-nationals who have gone overseas respected the contribution that the Democratic Labour Party made to assist them in going out in the first instance, assisting them through the years where they have traditionally understood the policies of the Democratic Labour Party and their families here in Barbados have traditionally stuck behind the Democratic Labour Party. But this, Mr. Speaker, is an attempt to break the back of the hard core that exists in those economies with the Democratic Labour Party.

Mr. Speaker, I have been in England on more than one occasion. I am aware that there is an orchestrated attempt to attract people toward the Barbados Labour Party and they have been trying to identify an appropriate marketing tool which would suggest that all previous Governments were doing nothing in the interest of them and here comes the saviours of all of you and we have a marketing tool that we can now say, rally behind this because we represent what is right when this is basically a combination of the good work of the Democratic Labour Party which they put the icing on, if I can be just honest.

This is an exercise to attract support and in this day and age if it is an exercise that is not based on that, but is based on seeking to provide the kinds of incentives that will make people return to this country then I would be clear in my mind. But even in this there seems to me to be some confusion. It seems so to me, unless I do not really understand what they are saying.

On page 6, "Exceptions," it says, and this is the Minister of Finance who will have discretionary power:–

> "In exercising this power the Minister of Finance will have discretionary power to waive taxes and duties on personal and household effects including motor vehicles of nationals returning to Barbados under ten (10) years.
>
> In exercising this power the Minister of Finance will take into consideration the special circumstances of the national and/or the contribution the national can make to the development of Barbados."

I am wondering now, Sir, if it is automatic.

Aside.

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: I am being advised those are the ones under 10 years. The point I really want to make is that a serious attempt should be made to encourage and give all kinds of facilities. There is a Bill coming before Parliament, the Special Developments Bill which will give all kinds of concessions to potential investors. I believe, Mr. Speaker, that we should encourage the Barbadians who are living overseas to pool their resources whether they do it by way of mutual funds or whatever, where they can have a safe investment of their funds so that we can build up a significant cadre of funds that can then be invested to the interest of development.

This morning I was speaking to a young bright returning national who said to me that in the Midlands you must understand that in certain parts of England in particular, some of the large corporations like Vauxhall and Ford *et cetera* have laid off many workers from the Caribbean, some 30 000 to 40 000 workers. Many of them were working for 20, 25 and 30 years in the

motorcar industry. They were paid out large sums of money because they were severed. Many of them now are on the verge of retirement and have been severed. They have resources that are significant. Barbados needs investment. We have hundreds of young people on the streets. There is no development taking place in Barbados. Everything is almost at a standstill. Government Members are frustrated. No jobs are being created. Calypsonians are writing expressing the will of the people in this country. I am saying you have a great opportunity to encourage these Barbadians who have gone overseas and worked for 30 years. They have been severed. They find themselves in the cold. They find themselves frustrated. They want to get back to Barbados, which should be our paradise, but there should be some guarantee or some encouragement to give them all the concessions that they should have because they deserve it. They have made tremendous sacrifices over the years and I think that we should find a mechanism to let them feel comfortable that their investment is safe and they can feel proud that they are making a significant contribution to Barbados.
6.40 p.m.

So, Mr. Speaker, I would not like this debate at all to go the route where anybody could suggest that the Barbados Labour party or the Democratic Labour Party are to score any cheap political points. That must be removed and the public and the nationals who live overseas must see these exercises for what they are worth. The law is clear. The law entitles members to a, b, c, d, e , f, g, so there is no need to make the suggestion that all of a sudden you have now come along and you are the great saviour and this is yours. It is dishonest to suggest that you have now, for the first time, come and created something that people were not entitled to before. I have no problem with the exercise.

I have no problem with the competition in setting up a new body in England but you are going to have to put in 30 years of work. You are going to now have to start from scratch and put in 30 years of work for the outstanding work that was done by the Members of the Barbadian communities in the overseas markets in both the United Kingdom, in America and in Canada, and all of those people should be saluted. I do not want to call their names, Mr. Speaker, but we know who they are and they are solid, good Barbadians who have always looked after the welfare and the well being of this country even though they have lived in foreign environments.

Mr. Speaker, I want to be very clear in my mind. I believe that in all honesty that this is the right thing to do, to document what is available, what you have to do and what you do not have to do. But I believe there are fundamental things wrong in Barbados that must be put right. Mr. Speaker, it must be understood that this is a document that seeks to put everything in its right perspective. I have no problem with that. It must not be used to claim any credit as if this is your product. We have to make this very clear. I am not going to condemn this Charter but I certainly am not going to congratulate the Government which would create a false impression that they have today come in here and done some marvellous good that only they have done. That is not fair.

Mr. Speaker, I am suggesting, as I leave this debate, that we have to pay our respects to the overseas nationals. I want to make it very clear that all of the Members on this side salute and welcome all returning nationals to Barbados. Respective Governments of Barbados are quite prepared to welcome all of the nationals who are able to return on their own accord. There are however, Mr. Speaker, a number of persons who are overseas who would love to return to Barbados, who would love to come back here, but they do not have the wherewithal to return. Many of them are still stuck in overseas environments, many without food, many without money and totally frustrated. I once met, Mr. Speaker, and it hurt my heart, a Barbadian living under a freeway in Brooklyn and I went and I asked, why are you in this condition here? Why are you sleeping in the cold with just a piece of card? Why are you out here? He said, I would love to come back to Barbados but I cannot get back. I have no money. I have nothing. There are many, many Barbadians who would like to return home. This Government, if they are a caring Government, money cannot be a problem because when the Prime Minister spoke about the dump at Mangrove he indicated that money is no problem. It is a matter of setting your priorities so money is available and certainly when they introduced the salaries at the Tourist Board we were all totally convinced that they had got real money around. Money is never a problem. It is a problem because Barbadians today are in jeopardy of losing their lives because there is not enough money around to support the medical aid scheme but money is not a problem.

Hon. Miss H. E. THOMPSON: On a point of order, Sir. This is the second time in this debate that I have heard the Honourable Member for St. Michael East allude to the matter of the medical aid scheme. Mr. Speaker, there is no truth in the allegation that people are being denied aid under the medical aid scheme. Only today, Sir, before I came to Parliament I gave approval for persons who made application last week and week before. It is true that applications are being denied. Applications are being processed and we will have to come to Parliament at some point, Mr. Speaker, Sir, to top the medical aid scheme up as is customary but it is not true that people are being denied aid.

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: Mr. Speaker, I am somewhat surprised that in Barbados the Honourable Minister

would seek to give an explanation in here when a reputable newspaper journalist...

Mr. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member, we are not going to allow that.

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: Right here in Barbados, Mr. Speaker, there is published material that suggests that there is a serious problem at the hospital. The Broad Street Journal I am talking about. And there has been no rebuttal by the Ministry to suggest that there is anything wrong and if it is wrong I think that the Ministry has a right to come out and say that it is wrong.

Mr. SPEAKER: You have made your point. Could you proceed to address the Resolution, please. Do not let us go down that line.

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: Mr. Speaker, the point is that there is money around. There is no excuse for the non-creation of 30 000 jobs. There is no excuse for any lack of medical supplies or there is no excuse for any Barbadians to be denied proper health care in Barbados or to be at risk of not being able to be sent overseas for an emergency operation. There is no problem with money in this country and there must be no excuse for this Government to spend some time and research those Barbadians who want to return home.
6.50 p.m.

In the same way they were offered assistance to go even though it was in minor amounts in the fifties and the sixties, they must seek to spend some money to assist them to come back home. Many of them should be able to apply to this Charter for some funds. The funds are not a problem. They must apply to this Charter and get some assistance so that they can return to Barbados. Money is not a problem for this administration but all of that will expose, Mr. Speaker, that this is just simply an exercise to create goodwill on behalf of the Barbados Labour Party. I have no problem with them seeking whatever means they want to create goodwill, but certainly do not do it at the expense of returning nationals who are genuinely interested in getting back home and who should be encouraged to come back to Barbados to play a significant part in the development of this country as we go into the next millennium.

Mr. Speaker, with those few words, I would like to thank you.

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

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I rise in this debate to associate with the Resolution which seeks to congratulate the Government on the establishment of the Charter which establishes the Facilitation Unit for Returning Nationals. It is unfortunate, Mr. Speaker, that this debate has been marked by a level of contribution which preceded me immediately which sought to criticize the establishment of this Unit but indeed also the intentions of the Government in relation to seeking to accommodate Barbadians who wish to come home and wish to do so with all the best intentions in the world. Indeed, Sir, the debate has been now marred by levels of political gamesmanship and, if I were not in this Honourable Chamber, Sir, I would even venture to say that comments which sought to take mere rumor from published material in relation to the Medical Aid Scheme might well be unpatriotic or even treacherous given the fact that they were not made with the knowledge of the person who spoke...

Mr. B. M. TAITT: On a point of order, Sir. The Honourable Member, I submit, cannot use that technique of saying "if I were not in this Chamber, I would" and then proceed to say unparliamentary things that reflect on other Honourable Members. I think that kind of technique is not normally allowed in this House, Sir.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Sir, it is unfortunate because all of the years that I have grown up I have heard the Honourable Member for St. Michael West use that technique. Now if all of a sudden this is being used against him and he is no longer able to accept it, I accept the ruling of Your Honour. But suffice it to say, Sir, this is a serious debate about the capacity of a small country to be able to build itself and to put itself on a sustainable growth path by utilizing the resources of all of its people by making all of its people feel comfortable and welcome in circumstances where we believe that we can offer to them a better standard of living in many instances than that which they may even be encountering if only because the quality of life, be it from the weather right back through to the services available here, right back through the growth which the economy is enjoying at this point in time. These things offer an opportunity for Barbadians abroad to be able to say: "Yes, it is time for me to go back home to where I belong". But what is equally as important and much of the debate has focused on those persons who are at the age of retirement, and one of the things that is significant about this Charter is that it relates to persons who have spent more than 10 years abroad. Therefore, it sees within its focus not only persons who have retired but indeed, Sir, persons who are still in the prime of their life and who therefore are capable of coming back here bringing what experience they may have already garnished unto themselves and bringing it to build this country and to carry this country forward into the 21st century. I think that the significance of that 10-year deadline was to be able to encourage persons to understand that our focus in terms of building this society was to set a large and big tent.

We have many instances of many Barbadians who have gone abroad to study who having done their undergraduate and perhaps post-graduate qualifications entered into businesses or forms of employment, gained experience and who may now see the opportunity for them to be able to move back into the society with ease and without the level of bureaucratic humbugs that might otherwise have proceeded the establishment of this Facilitation Unit.

It is interesting, Sir, to have heard the last Member talk about initiatives taken. But if initiatives were taken and never communicated to the people who were to benefit from them, what use could they be to those people? If initiatives were taken that would allow persons to come back to this country, then those persons who had to make the decision to come back needed to have known about them. I say this, Sir, still not accepting the word of the Honourable Member for St. Michael East or the Honourable Member for St. Michael West.

Sir, I believe that it is important that a small developing country has liberal immigration policies insofar as its capacity to draw persons who have a similar sense of values, similar sense of desire for where they themselves and where they see the country going but who equally also have skills and expertise from which this country can benefit. Indeed, Sir, the recent amendment to the Immigration Act which allows for the freedom of movement of skilled workers within the CARICOM region is also motivated in part by similar philosophical reasoning that a country cannot pose itself out to those persons from the outside who have skills and who have something to offer. Equally, Sir, the question of investment is critical. Those persons who have spent many years outside of Barbados almost in every instance will be bringing back with them things which they have saved and which they have earned over the years in order to make their adjustment here comfortable.

I believe, Sir, that this economy will benefit significantly from their participation in respect of what they bring back to this country in relation to their investments and other savings. Indeed, Sir, one may even argue that the tourism industry will also benefit because a person who has spent in excess of 10 years and in many instances 30 and 40 years overseas will have established serious roots in those countries and will have persons coming here to visit them on a regular basis be it family or friends and that therefore creates another niche market within our tourism product and one which will allow us to extend outside of the Crop Over period in terms of returning Barbadians or their families.

I have heard the Honourable Member for St. Joseph raise the question of the appropriate need for policies which would allow for health institutions to be able to cater to a certain category of persons. Sir, that comment is valid across-the-board whether return nationals were coming or not and the mere fact that our population is ageing in the study of the National Insurance Scheme which was done recently shows that the demographics of the Barbadian population is changing will necessitate the introduction of those policies which will see a greater level of incentives being put in place to be able to facilitate more centers to care for the elderly, more acute care facilities and indeed more for those who may simply be recuperating after long or chronic illness. Therefore, I welcome his remarks and suffice it to say I think that those comments cannot be seen only in isolation in respect of the returning nationals but must be seen in relation to the needs of the entire population that lives in this country.

We also believe that the desk which has been established at the various Missions, be it in the United Kingdom, United States of America, Canada, Venezuela, Germany, that this desk in terms of the data bank of skills available on the outside will be of critical importance to Government's capacity to move forward. Indeed, Sir, very often in education we find that there are particular skills that we need and that we do not have available on the island and our capacity to source persons, particularly who are of Barbadian descent or Barbadian birth and therefore who will understand the cultural scenario in which they will operate, is critical. That data bank of skills does not necessarily mean that those persons will have to come back here and live but very often the consultant fees which are awarded to persons through funds that are got or received from international institutions may also now be channeled towards persons of Barbadian descent or birth who have the experience and expertise.

7.00 p.m.

It is important that we know about them, because if we do not know about them we simply cannot source them. So I look forward to being able to benefit from that data bank of skills. There are tremendous amounts of Barbadians who go overseas every year and study. In fact, one of the things that is significant is that if we look at the pattern of loans from the Student Revolving Loan Fund, we will see that almost as many Barbadians go away annually as do in fact go to the University of the West Indies to study and not all of them return immediately.

Sir, with those few words I simply would like to congratulate the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs, who took an approach in this matter that allowed for extensive consultation with the returning nationals who had already moved back to Barbados and who therefore was able, in spite of the comments of the Honourable Member for St. Michael East, to include in this booklet the things that were of concern to the people, the things that they wanted, and all of the talk and all of the political gamesmanship does not negate the fact that

the contents of this booklet reflect the concerns expressed by the Association, and I believe if I am correct, at a meeting at Dover held earlier this year where the Deputy Prime Minister spent in excess of three to four hours with persons, and the excellent work done by the officer in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Jeff Hunte, who was able then to follow up on those basic ideas, put them together and had the sense to know that it is no sense having policies in place without communicating them to the very people who it is intended should benefit from them. I therefore applaud the Deputy Prime Minister, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the staff therein for an excellent job. It is a project started and completed, it is a project in which we have already begun to see the benefits with over 100 nationals coming home already and claiming benefits under this policy and Charter which we are debating today. We expect, as I said, that those persons will not only be retirees but persons in the prime of their lives who are prepared to put their shoulders to the wheel and help to ensure that we can remain on a sustained and sustainable path of growth with the sole intention of making life better in this country for everyone.

Thank you, Sir.

SUSPENSION OF SITTING

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

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

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

RESUMPTION

Mr. SPEAKER: This sitting is resumed.

Hon. R. St. C. TOPPIN: Mr. Speaker, my intervention in this debate tonight will be fairly brief. I am really grateful to the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East who spoke before me and managed to bring the debate around after I think it went off track by some of the contributions made on the Other Side.

I wish to support this Resolution and congratulate the Minister for the creation of the Charter and the establishment of the Facilitation Unit for returning nationals. This question of accommodation of foreign nationals in my view is extremely important and it must not be treated lightly. Neither in my view must it be politicised in the way in which it was by some Members during this debate. The fact is that the last administration did do some things in this area. Perhaps I should say they did have some ideas in this area. They may not have moved as speedily or as systematically as they should have, but I will concede that they did have some ideas which they seemed never to get off the ground. We are now prepared to go further and simply recognise that overseas nationals are an integral part of Barbados' assets and that we need to enlist them if we are in fact to make serious strides in the development of our country.

I say, Mr. Speaker, that they are an integral part of our assets and it really pained me to hear Members on the Other Side in the context of this debate use words as disrespectful as "criminals" in the debate, or "rats" and "refugees", words that were used by certain Honourable Members on the Other Side. I feel they had no place whatsoever in a debate like this.

It must be understood that the origin of this Charter before us today is to be found in complaints and concerns that were raised by the foreign nationals themselves. They are the ones who identified actual and potential deterrents to returning and relocating in Barbados. For example, the Honourable Member for the City, the Honourable Minister, already cited that some of the concerns they raised were difficulties in obtaining detailed or accurate or timely information from Barbados' Missions abroad or from agencies in Barbados which set out the procedures and requirements for relocating in Barbados. They are the ones who raised the concerns about the frustration that they felt by the bureaucracy they were encountering and the slow pace at which they were being dealt with by various Government Departments. They are the ones who highlighted the indifference in former times of some Immigration, Customs and other Government officials. They are the ones who had to deal with the unclear and unreasonable regulations, especially in relation to the age limits on motor cars and the basis on which taxes and duties on motor vehicles were calculated, and when they were calculated the very high taxes they were being asked to pay for motor vehicles, in most cases twice the value of the car when they had purchased it. Of course, perhaps the most serious concern they had was the aura of unwantedness when they returned to Barbados.

These concerns and problems were raised by the foreign nationals themselves and it was as a result of these problems and concerns that it became clearer that there was a need to establish a Facilitation Unit to address these problems. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs therefore had discussions and consultations with public and private sector interests and representatives of the returning nationals. Some Members will recall that as far back as 1992 a Mr. Alf Grazettes was in Barbados and he on that occasion actually had discussions with Government. He is the

Vice Chairman of the British-based Barbados Overseas Citizens' Association.
8.10 p.m.

He was in Barbados in 1992 highlighting these problems and having discussions with Government. It was only in 1995/96 that we were able to see in Barbados the establishment of the Facilitation Unit, although he was in Barbados from 1992.

So all the ideas that the last administration had, they did nothing, as the former speaker said, to communicate these ideas to the people who are to benefit, and did nothing to implement these decisions. That is why today the Barbados Labour Party can hold its head high and take substantial credit for the establishment of this Unit.

This was really long overdue, Mr. Speaker. I am happy to see that the Charter is before us and that the Unit has been set up because a small developing country like Barbados, or any developing country for that matter, can never ever have too many resources upon which to draw. It can never have too many resources upon which to draw. Barbados must also recognise that other CARICOM countries are also looking at setting up Facilitation Units. If we are not to find ourselves lagging behind in the process of development in this area, we had, as a responsible Government, to move post-haste on this issue and on this project. I, Mr. Speaker, sincerely hope and expect that this Charter and this Unit will bring great success to Barbados in the same way that it did for Jamaica.

Prior to setting up the Unit in Barbados, Mr. Jeffrey Hunte, who really deserves special mention in this debate, since he has worked extremely hard in getting the Charter established and the Unit set up, a Foreign Service Officer I, in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, visited the Returning Residents Facilitation Unit in Jamaica to get a first hand account of the ideas that led to the setting up of that Unit to observe the structure and to observe the function of it.

In 1993, in January, the Prime Minister of Jamaica went to Parliament and introduced their Charter, with the objective of assisting the foreign nationals to return and relocate in Jamaica. That was in January 1993. The facts will show that in 1994, one year later, some 2 359 people, foreign nationals of Jamaica, resettled in Jamaica. In the same 1994, that same group of foreign nationals contributed US$500 million to the Jamaican economy. So you can see that there are benefits, Mr. Speaker, to be derived from this industry, because it is an industry and there are benefits to be derived. That is why I say we cannot afford to trifle with it.

You have to see returning nationals as a source of investment and as a source of information. You have to see them as such. At the same time, of course, you must also guarantee them certain comforts on their return to Barbados and seek to integrate them fully into the society, to make them feel as comfortable as possible, in as short a time as possible. The benefits they are going to receive in terms of exemption from duties and taxes have already been outlined and they are very well deserved. As has been said, and correctly so, over the years they have made tremendous contributions to the Barbadian economy.

Even those who are not returning can also be made to feel a part of the local community by calling on them to assist in the transfer of technology either by way of short-term consultancies or having them use the modern communication facilities that exist overseas to work and operate from, to the benefit of Barbados.

With that in mind, the Missions of Barbados abroad, especially London and New York, are already working on setting up a skills bank. A number of very highly qualified people have already registered with those skills banks in those places.

Now, I want to say that in my constituency, St. Michael North, there are some people, returning nationals, who have already returned and benefitted from this Charter. They have benefitted and they have received the assistance of the Unit. They are extremely grateful and appreciative to the Government. In fact, one person in my constituency really took an extremist position when he said to me that as far as he was concerned this is the best thing that any Government has ever done at any time at all in the history for anybody at all in the world. That is what he said. It is a bit of an extremist position but that is what he actually said to me.

He has asked me to convey his gratitude to the Minister and to the Government as a whole, because he has benefitted tremendously. I am not going to delay the House any longer. I will really on his behalf say thanks to the Minister. I am grateful to you, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. R. N. GREENIDGE: Mr. Speaker, ever since I was at school I had the experience where a relative of mine returned to Barbados after spending some 15 years or so overseas, and was asked to pay duties and taxes on his personal effects. It was from that time that it struck me that it is inherently wrong that we have a system which is demanding that returning nationals pay taxes and duties on their personal effects when already they have paid

taxes and duties on those same personal effects when abroad. So, in truth and in fact, you are asking them to pay twice. This is something that always struck me as being wrong.

I approach this debate, therefore, Mr. Speaker, with that in mind. It is a way of saying that this particular debate, this particular organisation, the Facilitation Unit, will therefore not take a lot to persuade me that I should give it my support. I am fully in agreement and fully in support of the Resolution.

Very often, Mr. Speaker, returning nationals arrive here with their stoves, fridges and cars. Sometimes they have them in their possession for 2 or 3 years abroad. When there arrive here the condition of these items is so good that sometimes they are taken as practically new, and they are asked to pay sometimes fairly exorbitant duties and taxes on them. This is something, Mr. Speaker, of which I totally disapprove. It is almost like punishing you for keeping your things in good condition.

The result is then that you arrive, and very often you do not have the amount of money, the amount of duties, the amount of taxes that you are required to pay. I have known of instances where people have had to leave their personal effects because they did not have enough money. In fact, they said that it was even cheaper to get a new one than to pay the taxes and duties on the old one.

The Honourable Member for St. Lucy was making the point that they bring home their Mercedes, they bring home their furniture, and we should not allow them to do that, that they should bring their money only.

Mr. Speaker, what the Honourable Member for St. Lucy did not seem to realise is that very often when the returning nationals bring these Mercedes, or bring their furniture to Barbados, this is something to which they are attached. They have already owned these things anyhow. He is asking them to dispose of them. These are things to which people attach a lot of sentimental value. It means a lot to them to bring their same old Volkswagen or their same old Mercedes to Barbados, and this is something that he must not lose sight of.

I therefore welcome the returning nationals. They are quite a few living in the constituency of St. Philip North. I do not agree, Mr. Speaker, with the point made by the Honourable Member for St. Lucy, and I think that it was also made by the Honourable Member for St. Michael West, that these returning nationals can sometimes cause jealousy and so on within the communities.
8.20 p.m.

Mr. Speaker, what I see happening here is that returning nationals are changing the image of retired persons because they are not really coming home empty-handed. They are coming home with something. They are not coming either as a burden to the Government. They are changing the image of retired persons. In other words, what I am saying is that they will enjoy a standard of living to which Barbadians around them will aspire. It is not an empty-handed broken type of person coming home.

I must say at this point, Mr. Speaker, that I applaud in particular the ones who come from England because returning nationals from England seem to have had a bit more thrift to me, certainly, than the ones who come from the United States and Canada. The ones who come from England do come home and you can see that they have a will within them to save.

Now, we have to realise, Mr. Speaker too that these are people who took the Barbadian culture overseas, who always flew the Barbadian flag. They took their culture to England, Canada, the United States and they never actually lost their roots. Some of them even though they were overseas for 25 and 30 years when they return to Barbados you can hear in them the distinct Barbadian accent still remaining with them.

Mr. Speaker, I think this Facilitation Unit and what we are doing for them is a way of saying to our young people that this is the reward for the loyalty of those persons that we are awarding and commending them for the job which they have done and the commitment of the returning nationals. This, as most Members on this side would have said already, is an answer to their own cries. This is what they said they wanted. They sat with them and this is the document which was a result of the consultations.

As I said, they always remembered Barbados and now they are here they can easily see that what we are doing is a way of saying to the returning nationals that they are not a forgotten people. They have formed Barbadian groups throughout the world. They have formed Barbadian groups throughout the United States, throughout England, and, in fact, even throughout the Caribbean because I can safely say that I worked in places as remote as the Turks and Caicos Islands and you have a Barbadian group there. You have a Barbadian group as well in the Cayman Islands so wherever you go Barbadians tend to rally around each other and form these groups. I think it is a level of patriotism which must, therefore, be commended.

It means a lot, Mr. Speaker, not only to the returning nationals but it also means a lot to their families. The social and psychological implication does not really and truly finish right there. It is not limited to the nationals who return home. It also extends to their family. It makes them feel as though they themselves are Barbadians.

I must say, Mr. Speaker, that most of them are very happy indeed with what we have been doing with the Facilitation Unit. A lot of them, as has been said, return here with their skills. In fact, a lot of them have actually called and offered to be of assistance to the Child Care Board. They have offered to be of assistance to the National Assistance Board because they want to make a contribution when they return and they want to help. Therefore, this is something which we should encourage.

This, Mr. Speaker, is an expression of gratitude toward our citizens who have toiled overseas and who have repatriated large sums of money to assist their families and, of course, by extension, to assist our country. They were overseas in many cases, as I said, for 40 years, and sometimes in excess of 40 years.

I am not surprised, Mr. Speaker, that some Members of the Opposition have criticized the setting up of the Unit. I do believe that they agree with the whole idea of the Facilitation Unit but the nature of politics is such that if they say what they do, it would appear as though they are supporting what is coming from this side.

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: On a point of order, Sir. I do not think that any Members over here disagree with the setting up of the Unit. We just refuse to congratulate the Government. That is all.

Hon. R. N. GREENIDGE: Which is the point I was making, Mr. Speaker. I now understand that their position is that they do not disagree with it but the only thing is that they are not willing to congratulate this Government for it. In other words, they accept that what we are doing is good but they are not going to actually say "You all have done a good job."

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: On a point of order, Sir. I thought the point had been made very clear that the Unit is a culmination of work done by both administrations so there is no need to congratulate any one Government. If you want to take a position that you want to congratulate the Government period as a continuum, then it would make sense. We can amend the Resolution to congratulate both the Democratic Labour Party and the Barbados Labour Party and we would have no difficulty with that.

Hon. R. N. GREENIDGE: I know, Mr. Speaker, that they were very critical of the term "Charter." I know that they were also very critical of the term "Facilitation Unit." They were equally critical, Mr. Speaker, of the reason for the debate. They also criticized the whole purpose of the Unit. These are things they have already criticized in their speeches. I find it a bit difficult for them to be coming and saying they agree with it, but all that happens is they do not want to congratulate us.

Mr. Speaker, this is a party, the Opposition, that had little or no foresight in this particular matter. We have heard from the Honourable Member for St. Michael West that we have done nothing new, that Jamaica had a Facilitation Unit since 1993, that Trinidad had a Facilitation Unit since 1993 and I am asking them on that side, how come we did not have one in 1993 when they were in office? If they are saying they had all this vision about it and they can come and boast how Trinidad had one and Jamaica had one, how come we did not have one when they were in office in 1993? Barbados is the only one, apparently, which has been left out.

On top of all that, Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Member for St. Michael West went on to say that it is the duty of the Government to make life easy for the returning nationals and they were there and never made life easy for the returning nationals. Indeed, Mr. Speaker, the same point which was made by the Honourable Member for St. George South I had actually made a note on, a note which was saying basically that what the Honourable Member for St. Michael West did was to give us a CV where all he did was to recite – "I was Consul General. I was Minister. I wrote a letter. A letter was written to me by Mr. Pierrepointe and all this." Every thing was "I" and "I." Honestly, Mr. Speaker, I had made that note.

Mr. Speaker, I, however, would like to say that there should be an advisory service, as was indicated by the Honourable Member for St. Joseph, set up within the Facilitation Unit because I believe that the Facilitation Unit should not be simply concentrating on repatriation only but there should be a type of holistic approach to the whole thing of returning nationals. They would therefore need to be on top of a lot of situations. They need to have a lot of information at their fingertips because they are going to require this information time and time again. People are going to be asking them questions all the while on all aspects of their return, not just on repatriation.

People will want to know, Mr. Speaker, for instance, if they have to remain in Barbados 12 years before they get an old age pension. These are things which they will have to know within the Unit so that when they are asked these questions, they will be on top of the situation. They will want to know about the topping up of their pensions. If the pension they get from overseas is less than what they would get here, will that be topped up? These are the questions which people within the Unit itself will have to know. They may want to know details concerning certain immigration issues, whether or not it is an automatic thing for the wife of a Barbadian husband to get citizenship or the other way around.

8.30 p.m.

Whether these two things work together or whether one can get and the other one cannot, they have to get

on top of all these things. They will want to know, Mr. Speaker, when for instance, a Barbadian wife and a foreign husband purchase land together, whether they must pay the same property transfer tax or whether the husband, because his name is on the conveyance would have to pay the higher property transfer tax for someone who is not a Barbadian. These are things, I am saying, that the Advisory Council will have to be on top of and will have to know the answers to.

They may want, Mr. Speaker, even before they return to contact the unit to find out for instance a list of all the banks in Barbados because they might have heard that there was something in the past about one of these financial institutions in Barbados and they may want to know which bank they should or should not put their money in. The unit, Mr. Speaker, therefore has a lot of work to do and a lot of information to put together. The Honourable Member for St. Joseph also mentioned the whole thing of the doctors and hypertension and so on and other matters of health concerns. I am saying these are things that they will have to be on top of.

Mr. Speaker, I believe too that they should not be surprised if they are asked and I think that it is one of the areas that the booklet addressed – lawyers in terms of lawyers good and bad lawyers. People are going to ask so it is no use beating about the bush and saying that you should not have a list of bad lawyers. People are going to ask and therefore the unit has to anticipate those problems and try to find the answers. Mr. Speaker these are people who have not been in Barbados for 40 years and therefore they will not know what the social landscape of this country is after 40 years abroad. Remember, Mr. Speaker, it is not a repatriation unit, it is a full facilitation unit and I think that the booklet is emphasising things like the customs brokers and so on which is putting it in the realm of repatriation, but I am saying they need to get more information in terms of Barbadian life after they have settled in.

Mr. Speaker, even things like service organisations, you are going to get some people who are going to be coming back and who may be Rotarians and they will want to know if there is such an organisation here. They might be Lions and they might want to know if there is such an organisation here because they want their transition to be very, very smooth. The unit, Mr. Speaker, needs to go beyond concessions of personal effects and get into other areas. Therefore, Mr. Speaker, as I said at the very beginning it does not take a lot of persuasion for me to support this particular Resolution it is something in which my heart is. As I said earlier a relative of mine came back and a lot of people in St. Philip North are back here from overseas and I know their concerns. They have spoken to me, Mr. Speaker, and I know that they are extremely pleased with the whole idea of a facilitation unit. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: I hope not to be long, Mr. Speaker, Sir. It is always a pleasure to speak in a debate after my Parliamentary representative, the Honourable Member for St. Philip North. I think the last time I heard from him he was speaking from Atlanta and his comment then which remained on the record until he just spoke was that he had very grave concerns about foreign based Barbadian athletes. They are potential returning nationals, Sir, and I was surprised to hear the Minister of Sports get up and deliver such a detailed address without answering the other question that people may ask which is, what would his views now be about these foreign based athletes who are potential returning nationals. But in due course I assume he will answer that question and account for stance which he took in respect of a foreign based Barbadian, potential returning national, who fought valiantly on behalf of the people of Barbados at the Olympics but who at the appropriate time seemed to have been so quickly cut loose by the authorities in Barbados that one was wondering how other foreign based Barbadians would feel if they found themselves in a similar *contre temps*. But that is my representative, Sir, and I have to endure what the verdict of the people will be and I only ask myself, just as people ask questions, whether some of these contradictions will at some point be resolved.

This debate is not going to attract any spirited defense from the Democratic Labour Party of anything. The Government has acknowledged and has no choice but to acknowledge that the Democratic Labour Party was in the vanguard of the process of giving recognition to and developing a policy for returning nationals in this country. It was this administration that negotiated the Barbados/United Kingdom pension agreement which had worked such tremendous hardship for Barbadian nationals who returned to this country and were not receiving the in-depth cost of living increases on their pensions such that if they lived to the ripe old age of 80 or 90 the non-contributory pension in Barbados ended up being more than the pension they were receiving when they left London.

Now, I know of no Barbadian who could comfortably leave London, Manchester, Oldham, Leeds, or wherever, Kent, to return to Barbados knowing that in 20 years time, because they all look to me like they are in very good health, and I know they are in good health, and they have lived to a ripe old age, knowing that eventually the non-contributory pension in Barbados will be more than the pension which they were getting from London. That is something which we have to acknowledge was a dedicated effort by the Democratic Labour Party and there were other systematic steps that we took. As Minister of Finance I piloted a decision through the Cabinet that

returning nationals no longer had to bring back 3-year old vehicles. You could not expect a man who spent 40 years in England to be bringing back a 3-year old vehicle to Barbados after he has made a sacrifice? I am hearing a lot of *sotto voce* remarks. I would challenge anybody to stand up and contradict the record and I am going to read from two most important documents in this debate relative to what the Democratic Labour Party did and if somebody misled the Honourable Member for the City on this point there is somebody on that side who can assist her as they assisted me, by producing these documents for her benefit.

Mr. Speaker, Sir...

Aside.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: This is not plain paper though. This is a memorandum off a file from the Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Finance to the Comptroller of Customs, Ref. No. 5028/5/28 Vol. 1 dated 1994-05-19. People have sought to question in here whether the Cabinet took such a decision and whether it was communicated. There is only one way these decisions are communicated initially. The revenue section informs the Comptroller of Customs and this is a letter from Mrs. R. C. Cummins for the Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Finance saying as follows:

"Subject: Waiver of import duty and consumption tax on private motor vehicles imported by Barbadians who have returned home permanently."

8.40 p.m.

"I have been directed to inform you that Cabinet after considering Note 94/330/MOF49 has agreed that a waiver of the import duty and consumption tax in respect of vehicles," (Not 3-year old vehicles. It used to be 3 years old, but we changed it to vehicle and removed the import duty and consumption tax.) "imported by returning nationals should be granted to applicants who have been living overseas for a minimal period of 10 years.

(2) The previous condition that the applicant should also have forms of vehicles for 3 years to benefit from a full waiver has been rescinded."

If the Honourable Member wants to check the file, she can. But I will go further than that, Mr. Speaker, because I do not have to worry. The then High Commissioner, Mr. Austin Sealy, communicated this to Barbadians at a number of events including the very large and well patronized Margate Excursion...

Aside.

Mr. SPEAKER: Please, please.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: And it was also communicated as a result of discussions between the then Minister of Foreign Affairs and myself to all of the Missions.

Mr. Speaker, think about it. This is the 19th of May, 1994. The records of the Revenue Section will show because I was the Minister of Finance that I had approved a series of concessions during the period after 1994 in respect of returning nationals based on this policy. Now I congratulate the Government for putting out the policy in a more user friendly approach. If that is what the Minister wants congratulations for, I will congratulate her for that. But to give the impression that the decision was never taken or it was not communicated in that way does not make sense. The Democratic Labour Party has always been tardy in my view in public relations. We are always backward on that point. We believe that, if we make qualitative changes in peoples' lives that those qualitative changes when we have made them for some reason, that is the end of that. That has never been the Barbados Labour Party's approach. Even when they reversed our decision as they did on the 4th of May, 1995 and reimposed 50 per cent of the import duty and consumption tax, we did not even pick this up and walk all over Barbados and say that they had reversed it. I did not know. Do you know when I found out? Mr. Speaker, Sir, we had a debate in here in the Estimates and the Honourable Member for St. Peter raised the matter and his Parliamentary Secretary sent him some information which was not altogether correct and we dropped the matter. Then I asked a Parliamentary Question which to this day is still on the Order Paper of the House of Assembly. I do not remember the number of the Parliamentary Question, but like all other Parliamentary Questions it has remained unanswered. It is Parliamentary Question No. 15. The Government shows scant regard for Parliamentary Questions and I asked the Minister of Finance:

"Will the Minister of Finance and Economic Affairs state whether there has been a change in the policy of Government in relation to fiscal concessions for the importation of motor vehicles by returning nationals of Barbados since September 6th, 1994?

(2) If there has been such a change, will the Minister state the new policy and any reasons therefor?"

That is all we wanted. We wanted to know whether the policy had changed. So when now you boast about new vehicles and the removal of all of these imposts, that was not anything new to the Democratic Labour Party because we were well passed that point.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, there is nobody in this Chamber who can contradict the fact that we made concessions available to Barbadian nationals who were returning

and that we extended the array of those concessions and the qualification for those concessions over time.

Mr. Speaker, on the issue of protection of investments. The Democratic Labour Party made a significant effort from way back to seek to promote investment into Barbados by Barbadian nationals and on top of that to give them the level of comfort by seeking to establish institutions in Barbados and companion institutions in London, New York and so on which they will feel comfortable investing their money in. We have to be careful about that. I am certain that the Honourable Member for St. Peter and others over here may know that Jamaica had some financial institutions operating in capitals of the world which they purport to be regulated by the regulatory authorities in those capitals which are not in fact regulated by those regulatory authorities and they attract deposits at 10 per cent interest in advertising journals in Miami and all over, institutions that I know could not be regulated by the FED in the United States. We do not function that way and I think that this is the point that the Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central may be making that there is a qualitative difference in what the Barbados Government is doing now and what some other Governments had to do when they set up Facilitation Units in their country.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, from as far back as 1993, and I am surprised that the Honourable Member for St. George South did not speak about it but maybe he left Barbados without telling his colleagues, the Honourable Member travelled with myself and the then Honourable Member for Christ Church West Central to London at the invitation of BOCFA which is the youth arm of BOFFA to participate in the Errol Barrow Memorial debate with Dr. Hilary Beckles, Robert (Bobby) Morris and the Honourable Member for St. George South. He was in good company. The former Honourable Member for Christ Church West Central and myself left London and we went to Oldham and we addressed Barbadians there. Then we left Oldham and we went to Manchester and as a result of that several Barbadians invested in various kinds of projects in Barbados including one housing project which regrettably turned out to collapse eventually. But there were several investments that were undertaken. So that there was an actual effort supported by the Foreign Exchange Committee undertaken by Ministers of the Democratic Labour Party in promoting investments into Barbados.

But, Mr. Speaker, I want to pay a special tribute to the efforts of the persons who have assisted the Government in setting up the Facilitation Unit. Whenever we found a similar scenario in the off-shore sector, we set up a unit. These are normal occurrences in Government's operation. They are not big events that need any chest thumping by a Government. Promote your policies to the public. Do not promote them to us in here. The 8 people on this side do not need to know in public relations terms what units the Government establishes. We are happy you establish it. Get out there and let the unit do for Barbadian nationals what it should be doing. The people who use the word "Charter", and I do not mean the charter for change which the Barbados Labour Party was elected on because that is a different kind of charter. That was sunk, torpedoed or hijacked, take it from a term used by the Conservative Government under John Major's "Next Steps Programme". So you had a charter for London Transport. You had a charter for the various authorities. I suppose maybe local councils in which you set out your mission statement, you set out a user friendly scenario for the citizen but in addition to that you give time frames for actions to be dealt with. So for example if you called the Immigration Department now – (You know I always like to praise the Honourable Member for St. Thomas when he is doing the right things and not just talking.) – you can call the Immigration Department now and you can ask the Immigration Department how long it will take to renew a passport in Barbados. I must say that for them. In fact, nowadays they do not have no fast track and no special lines. They are very professional. Hopefully, they will stick to it. But they say 2 weeks and this is what you applied for and this is what you obtained. I will give you an example of another problem.

8.50 p.m.

The Revenue Section in the Ministry of Finance, as it is presently staffed and operates, and as it operated before when the Right Honourable Member for St. Peter was responsible and when I was responsible, invariably you could not get a matter through the Revenue Section in two weeks. It has always been an area of major delays. For the purposes of a facilitation unit and a charter, what I think needs to be done here is that time frames need to be given, that if you make an application to the Ministry of Finance for a waiver you will get a reply one way or the other, not just an acknowledgment, within two weeks and that you have a right of appeal within a specified time and the matter will be dealt with like that. That is what citizens in Barbados now are calling for. They are calling for responses to their actions, they are calling for information, they are calling for Government to respond to their needs, so I have no problem in saying that if the Association feels that a charter and a unit are going to achieve those objectives I hope it works.

There is nothing the Minister has said that the 85 persons who came to Barbados since the Charter have benefited people, in terms of the speed with which their transactions were dealt with, information provided, that did not happen before. Nothing! I have not heard anything. In other words, I have not heard that as a result of the Unit being set up you can get your goods through Customs within 48 hours so long as you present the following documents; that as long as you go to

the Ministry of Foreign Affairs within a week you can get the following things done. That is the kind of thing that in my view we need in Barbados in all Government Department, and we do not have it.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, returning nationals also have to be conscious of two important points, the fact that Barbados did facilitate their exit out of this country into other countries, we had a good reputation and successive Governments facilitated emigration programmes. That must be important, because if it is true that many of them are returning to Barbados better off than when they left, it means that those who provided that opportunity for them to leave also need to be congratulated. What I think you need to realise is that at the time when many of those Barbadians left they were not leaving, as many leave now, with University degrees or 'O' Levels, they were leaving with basic seventh standard and less education, went to other countries and became respected, diligent hard workers.

Aside.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: My father spent 40 years in London. It is not an easy environment in which to live. I left England in 1970, Mr. Speaker, at the age of eight, living first in Wandsworth, born in Alma Road, then we lived in Ravensbury Road, then we moved to Wimbledon. We do talk about racism in Barbados, a lot of it is latent, just as pervasive, but a five year old child who sees a rock come through the window with a piece of paper and a rubber band around it with "Go home wog" on it or something like that, there were a lot of brutal messages constantly being pumped into your mind. The British society was a very prejudiced society, not only against blacks, against the French, against the Indian, the Irish and so on, and I left Britain in that environment and did not return for 20 years. I could not stomach the thought of returning. I lived in Horsham, Sussex and – the Honourable Member for Christ Church East Central is smiling – saw a skinhead bounce a football off the head of my two year old sister, and you know how racially motivated the skinheads were in those days. You would wake up a morning and find your Vauxhall – I did not have a car, I was too young – but find the family car with four flat tyres because people resented that you moved into their area. I did not want to go back to that and therefore I congratulate those Barbadians who have lived in it. What I want for them though is that when they come back here to this country and when their children come back to this country that what is written at the back of this book: "This land is my land, This land is your land, This land is our land, Welcome the morning sun" means as much to them as it means to the people who presently live here. There are a lot of other people in Barbados that need a charter written for them.

I did not come into this House based on a vote from a returning national, I came in here based on a vote from the people of St. John. Every time the Barbados Labour Party is in office, Mr. Speaker, the people who live in St. John when they go for a job have to say they live in Bush Hall, St. George, St. Peter and make up all kinds of stories to get a job in their own country. They are worse off in this country than any returning national tonight as I speak to Barbadians. So those who in this country and the returning nationals outside of Barbados feel they are suffering from disabilities, I want to let them know that there are people in this country who because of their consistent political allegiance have spent large periods of their lives being unable to say where they come from. Do you think they can go into the Ministry of Health without saying they come from Fitts Village or Haynesville – and I come from Fitts Village, I lived for a long time in Fitts Village – they could not say they come from Church Village, Church View, not even Church Village, because that is a testy scenario now. They need a charter written for them too, a charter that says they will not be victimised in their own country. Young, black entrepreneurs in this country who when they go in the banks on Broad Street cannot get a sympathetic ear while we are making arrangements for everybody else in Barbados, the BDB is being closed down and other arrangements are excluding them, cannot say tonight "this land is your land, this land is our land, welcome the morning sun". They need a charter written for them. The people who are sleeping homeless on the street in the City of Barbados, they need a charter too. They may not have the ingenuity and the ability which the Barbadian returning nationals have to write their own charter, so it is for us to write it for them. In terms of priorities, this Government has to indicate where its priorities lie. It is not for me to indicate to them where their priority should lie, Mr. Speaker.

While returning nationals were outside of Barbados, Mr. Speaker, the persons who had the stewardship of this country under successive Governments were able to get the standard of living in this country sufficiently high, and I agree with what the Honourable Member for the City has said, that Barbadians want to return to Barbados. That is a factor which is very important and for which returning nationals need to be eternally grateful to those whom they left behind in this country and who had the enlightened political leadership to move this country forward in the post-Independence period. That is part of this debate, because it is true that there are many other returning nationals who do not wish to return to the places from which they originally come. Therefore, it is incumbent on us as Barbadians to keep in place the appropriate policies which will make Barbados a country which is desirable to return to. If there are too many disparities, if there is too much tension, if there are rising rates of crime, continuing statutory joblessness and if there are a whole range of problems affecting Barbados, then those Barbadians

who return with all the resources in the world will never be able to enjoy that wealth until those problems are dealt with. So while we are improving the lot of returning nationals, there are a large number of other people in this country who need a charter written for them. When the Government sets about writing charters, it has to include some of those other people in Barbados who have been entirely marginalised by the policies which obtain in this country.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, it is also critical in relation to this matter that Government seeks to ensure that there is a better understanding between attorneys-at-law in Barbados who are transacting business on behalf of Barbadian nationals living overseas and those Barbadian nationals overseas. That is very important, because the most pervasive complaint that one gets – and I have addressed Barbadians in London, at Hackney, at Copeland, in Margate on Sea, in Oldham, in Manchester, in Birmingham, and I am not talking about Democratic Labour Party branch meetings, even though when we hold them we have standing room only, whether it is London, New York, Toronto, wherever. That is well-known. I pay tribute to the people who fly the flag for the Democratic Labour Party in those capitals. When people get upset and annoyed when I leave Barbados to go and address Barbadians overseas, I know why they get annoyed, Mr. Speaker, because when they go up there they have to rely on our people to give them a crowd, and it is not rent-a-crowd, because we do not use public activities like that to raise money, we leave that to the more enlightened operatives in the Barbados Labour Party. I will get to that because I will talk in due course, not in this debate, about the use of the High Commissioner's residence in London for activities which I do not feel it should be used for, but I will deal with that in another debate in due course.

Now, Mr. Speaker, on the issue of the retirement village concept, the Democratic Labour Party National Assistance Board was undertaking a retirement village concept at Sargeant's Village in Christ Church and had even considered putting one next to Good Shepherd Church in an area of land which is owned by Government, where they would put 10 or 11 small units...

Mr. SPEAKER: Okay.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: ...for the purposes of allowing...

Mr. SPEAKER: Please, please.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: ...retired Barbadians in Barbados and those who return from overseas. Mr. Speaker, I think that is a very important and significant initiative which I would commend to the Barbados Labour Party as something which should be undertaken.

So, Mr. Speaker, Sir, if the Charter is giving rights to Barbadians, then I am saying we need some more charters to empower some other Barbadians in this society. This Government needs to say unequivocally to the people of Barbados whose interest it serves. It is quite right to serve the interest of returning nationals, but it has an equal and overriding responsibility to seek to serve the interest of other deprived, disadvantaged and dislocated groups in the Barbadian community. Imagine we do not even yet have in Barbados a jobs plan. There is nothing in Barbados we could say this is the job strategy of the Government which the private sector, the Government, the Trade Unions have committed themselves to. We still have a society in which the means of production, many contribute, the profits and resources benefit too few. Now it seems to me that unless you are going to tailor a jobs programme in Barbados which is going to commit those few who are benefiting to ensuring that a much larger number of people are finding employment and that strategies and investments are designed to create jobs in Barbados, then those returning nationals would be returning to a country that is full of hostility. So I am not attacking Government at all, I am attacking their philosophy which tells us that it can come in here and feel comfortable about telling us about a charter for returning nationals without even saying that in the next four weeks the following other charters will be brought before the House of Assembly and that we recognise that the returning nationals have a lot of talent and ability and could assist in writing their own charters, but for the people in Barbados who cannot write their own charter, we are putting in place programmes and policies for them. Mr. Speaker, this is where the political divide is in Barbados. It needs to be known to Barbadians as a whole that that is the nature of the divide.
9.05 p.m.

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

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Mr. Speaker, in wrapping up I want to make it clear that I congratulate the various associations. I think they have made a valiant effort. I hope that the Facilitation Unit will reach the objectives which the Minister has indicated are desirable for returning nationals in Barbados, but at the same time we do not need to congratulate the Government for anything. The Government is merely formalising what successive Governments in this country have been doing over decades, and they do not need any special congratulations for that. The people who need to be congratulated are the returning nationals for the effort they have made overseas, for the fact that they love this country, the fact that they want to return, and that they make more effort to integrate themselves into

Barbados, and I am certain that the people of Barbados will return that love to them.

I wish God's blessing on you. Wherever you may reside, rest assured the Democratic Labour Party maintain its interest and support for Barbadians living overseas. Whenever I have the opportunity or any of my colleagues, we will continue to work with Barbadians in London, New York, Toronto, in any parts of the Caribbean and South America because that in our view is where the message about what is happening in Barbados needs to be taken, so that other persons can spread the word about the developments which are taking place in our lifetime.

So with those few words, Sir, I will support the Resolution, as amended.

His Honour R. D. MARSHALL: Mr. Speaker, I rise to congratulate the Honourable Deputy Prime Minister for this Resolution on the creation of a Charter and the establishment of the Facilitation Unit for Returning Nationals.

Mr. Speaker, during the 1950s and 1960s Barbados saw a great number of its nationals migrating to places like the USA, Canada and, to a greater extent, to England. The reason for this was that because of the economic situation a lot of our people were seeking greener pastures. You, too, Sir, will remember that your mother-in law and father-in-law emigrated to England during those days.

Mr. Speaker, during that period the proverbial "navel string" of Barbados was attached to the "mother country," and that was pre-independence for Barbados. The responsibility of Barbados, to a great extent, still depended on England at that time. At that time Barbadians had the right, just like other West Indian colonies of England, to go and live and work in England. During that time, Sir, there was no Deep Water Harbour in Barbados and the numbers of people would go on the Moses, Sir, and meet the big ships outside on that long way to England.

Many recruiters came down from England to Barbados, Sir, and recruited people to go and work as nurses, the railway and the factories. A lot of other Barbadians went and joined the British Army.
9.10 p.m.

At that time in England there were people from different Caribbean countries being associated working with people like the Botania Bulk Company which employed a lot of Dominicans, Lyons Tea employed a lot of Jamaicans, Nestles was popular by recruiting people from Montserrat. Kodak and Cherry Blossom Shoe Polish Company were known names in those days. A lot of Barbadian people worked with the London Transport.

I am compelled to speak in this debate tonight, Sir, because the people who migrated to England in those days were not the "haves." They were children of the "have-nots." They were not people who could have steak for breakfast. They were poor people. They were people that their mothers and fathers who probably owned a little house or a piece of land went in those days into companies like Cottle Catford and borrowed money on their land and house to make sure their young daughter or son had an opportunity to go abroad and get a job and, at the same time, further their education.

Mr. Speaker, in those days in the 1950s it was about $300 to make that journey on that ship to England. It was a bit hard on those parents but they made their sacrifices by putting their properties on the line to make sure that they did the right thing for their children. These, as I said, were poor people.

Most of them left Barbados, Sir, with one suitcase. What we are proposing here tonight, I am proud to say that we are encouraging them to come back to Barbados, not with one suitcase, but with a container, or containers. We in the Barbados Labour Party were responsible for sending those people to England to give them a good living and we are now responsible for encouraging them back to come home and share in some of the prosperity of this country which they themselves helped to build.

These are people, Sir, that went over there and worked in the snow and the sleek, people that received insults from the white people in the country. One can remember the Adolf Hitler look-alike with his famous rivers of blood speech. I am speaking about Enoch Powell, Sir. Enoch Powell is a man that ran a campaign where he attacked the black people in the country and he made a plea that he would give them £50 to go back to the country which they came from. This is the kind of thing the black people in those days, these same returning nationals they were talking about, had to endure in those days.

When I get in here tonight, Sir, and I hear the Member for St. Michael South Central making an analogy when he was speaking about these nationals and using the term "rats," someone who would see himself as a leader of this country, and to get on national television and behave in that way about poor people, black people that left here, went overseas and worked hard to make a living...

Aside.

His Honour R. D. MARSHALL: I am speaking, as I said, about the Member for St. Michael South Central, who is not in his seat now.

Mr. Speaker, these people went to England, as I said, and they worked hard to increase their standard of

living. I know of a good gentleman who went in the 1950s and he worked hard and was able to accumulate money in order to own three properties in England. The first property he bought for £4 500 and today that property is worth well over £100 000. These people invested their money. They saved their money. They have invested their money in the companies. They have also invested their money in the Government premium bonds which gave them a good return.

A lot of people in England who left these shores are good upright citizens. We have people like Claude Ramsay who worked for Coles Printery in Barbados who only last year was honoured by the Queen. People like Stanton Durant who is a brother to the former Commissioner of Police, Orville Durant, who did hard work in England. He left Barbados as a young man, joined the priesthood and at this moment he is working with the Archbishop of Liverpool, David Shepherd.

Again, Sir, I want to mention things I heard coming from the Other Side that irked me. I heard the Member for St. Lucy talking about people and second quality furniture. I heard the Member for St. Michael West talking about what we are going to do about the criminals who come out of the jails in the United States and that they are returning nationals also. He cannot equate those with hardworking decent people that went to England and Canada.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: On a point of order, Sir. I sought to equate no one with anyone else. I sought to get the Government to make a qualitative, quantitative or other statement about how the Government intends to deal with a very serious problem that is imposed on the people of Barbados by so-called returning nationals by other Governments. I sought to equate neither one with the other. The two things were mutually separate. I wish to know, I wanted to know, and I still wish to know how the Government is dealing with this very serious problem? The Honourable Member cannot now seek to put the criminals with the returning nationals.

Thank you, Sir.

His Honour R. D. MARSHALL: As I said, Sir, the Member for St. Michael West wants to know what about these people that were in jails when they come back, if they are returning nationals too. That is what I said, Sir. That is what he said, so in my estimation he is equating them with the decent hardworking people who went and worked in the snow and helped build this country that sent back money to this country to educate their children and build homes for their mothers and grandmothers, their brothers and sisters, and gave them an education, feed and clothe them.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: On a point of order, Sir. I draw to your Honour's attention, Sir, the definition of returning nationals which exists at page 4 of the document. The Honourable Member is seeking to leave, it appears to me, in the minds of people that I was suggesting that the criminals that are being sent back from the United States and Canada are equated with those returning nationals who are coming from Britain. That would be tantamount to saying that they are equivalent to Members of Parliament from St. Michael West Central which I never said, Sir. I never said that the criminals that are coming from New York are equivalent to anybody, whether it was the Member for St. Michael West Central, the people from Britain, or the people from elsewhere.

His Honour R. D. MARSHALL: Mr. Speaker, the Member for St. Michael West wanted to know if these deportees would benefit from the same privileges as these decent hardworking people that went to England, Canada and the U.S.A. that are now returning to Barbados under this Facilitation Unit by the Barbados Labour Party.

Mr. Speaker, I just want to mention two other points. One, the Member for Christ Church South and myself are always agitating that some kind of retirement village be built in Barbados for these people who come home from overseas, who have worked overseas and are now returning home. Some of them do not own homes here but they want to come back and live. They have money and they are in a position where they are able to pay rent for some place to live where we can take care of them for the remainder of the duration of the time they have on this earth.

The second thing I want to mention, Sir, is the point made by the Member for St. Joseph when he spoke about health services in Barbados.
9.20 p.m.

I just want to mention that all Barbadian people are entitled to free health services in Barbados. I do recognise the fact that when people become of a certain age they are more prone to sickness and so on and the body deteriorates and so on but as I have said, we take care of our own.

I just want, Sir, to congratulate again this Government on this Resolution before the House and the good that we continue to do for the upliftment of Barbadian people. I thank you.

Mr. F. J. STUART: Mr. Speaker, the night is far spent and I should therefore be very brief. I should like to congratulate the Honourable Member for St. John and the Honourable Member for St. Michael West for two cogently delivered speeches in this debate. That of the Honourable Member for St. Michael West was delivered, I think with, lucid ease and was distinguished by its clarity of

thought and the cogency of the Honourable Member for St. John requires no further comment from me.

The question of returning nationals to Barbados appeals to me as the Member of Parliament for St. Philip South since a large number of returning nationals have been attracted to that constituency and reside there and own property there and as they come back they have been settling in the various parts of that constituency.

You cannot discuss the concept of returning nationals unless you focus on the fact that those nationals left Barbados in the first place and the nationals returning to Barbados now left Barbados from about the 1950s on. This House cannot credibly debate emigration from Barbados in the 1950s without according deferential and perhaps reverential and certain preferential mention to the name of the late Wynter Algernon Crawford who represented the parish of St. Philip in this House from the year 1940 to the year 1966 and whose advocacy of the cause of emigration as a solution to the unemployment problem in Barbados in the 1950s was consistent, it was insistent and was persistent.

The records will show that the late Wynter Algernon Crawford was stout in his advocacy of emigration to England and in fact the folk knowledge of Barbadians bears witness to a famous exchange between the late Wynter Crawford and the late Sir Grantley Adams in which Grantley Adams is supposed to have asked him in anger if he expects that every Tom, Dick and Harry can go to England. Crawford wittily responded, Tom gone already, it is Dick and Harry that I am concerned about now. That is all part of the folk knowledge of Barbados. So that Crawford's insistence and persistence on this issue of emigration were necessary because he was trying to wring concessions at that time from essentially resistant material and that essentially resistant material was the Barbados Labour Party Government at the time. Yes, eventually, Sir Grantley succumbed and yes, as a result of Crawford's advocacy the Barbados Labour Party sponsored Barbadians who were emigrating to the United Kingdom at that time. But let no one in this debate seek to play down the contribution of that late, great and distinguished Member of this House the late Wynter Algernon Crawford.

When historians come to write about his times the more objective and honest of them will have to concede that he was the most fertile politician of his generation and certainly one of the most fertile politicians this region has ever produced. So I do not accept the contention of the Honourable Member for the City that the Barbados Labour Party was any do gooder Government in the 1950s of its own free will. The fact has to be conceded that the late Wynter Algernon Crawford made a massive and substantial contribution to the emigration effort.

Now, having said that, Mr. Speaker, let us concede that the nationals whom we celebrate today made a substantial contribution to the development of Barbados. They went abroad in difficult times and they worked and as has been said in this debate, their remittances took a lot of pressure off Barbadian families and of course when the pressure was taken off Barbadian families, consequentially that took pressure off the Government of the day. I myself was a beneficiary of that experience and I know how large the postman loomed in the lives of families in those days as each looked out in the hope that the postman would bring something from somebody in England in particular in those days. The exchange rate at that time was $4.80 per pound sterling and that made a whole difference to the lives of many Barbadians at that time. Knowing that you had a relative abroad who could possibly send home a pound or two pounds for you from time to time was for the average Barbadian family like balm in Gilead.

It was an experience that inspired hope and as I said, my own personal experience reinforces my view that these nationals whom we celebrate today made a unique contribution to the development of this country. Of course as time went on they would send money back to Barbados to buy land and to build homes and of course in the house building process they contributed to job creation in Barbados as well. But the focus which I want to give to this debate does not centre on these issues of what concessions are being given to these nationals on their return. I think a deeper problem requires my attention at this time.

For some time now, Mr. Speaker, there has developed a latent tension between the nationals returning from abroad and the Barbadian population. As I drove to the House today on the call-in programme there was embittered debate on this question and the moderator was in fact at one stage asked to end the discussion altogether because of the bitterness it was generating between callers who were returning nationals and locals in Barbados. So there is a problem there that requires being addressed.

I sometimes get the impression that the fact that these nationals were out of Barbados for so long has left those Barbadians who did not leave Barbados with the impression that now they are returning they are sprites or hobgoblins of some kind who are sneaking into Barbados, Nicodemus like, under the cover of night for the purpose of haunting this nation's landscape. That is not a fair assessment of these hardworking Barbadians.
9.30 p.m.

These are well meaning and authentic citizens of Barbados who have contributed to that national development of which we so proudly boast and which we so quietly and unobtrusively enjoy. I think that a plea has to go out to our locals to face that reality that these

nationals are really our citizens and the fact that they are coming back in larger numbers now than previously does not make them an invading force and does not make them a source of terror for the local population. But I have a sense that the insecurities and the anger of our local population is not always unjustified. For returning nationals they are who let slip no opportunity to convey the impression that somehow by going abroad and spending 20 or 30 years, they come back to Barbados more civilized than the people whom they have left. Those of us who practice law know how often we hear that if this was being done in England it would have been finished already, or this could never happen in England. I have chastened one recently and reminded him that on the shelves of my office were law reports dating back to 1558 and coming right through to 1996, and that each report was about 500 pages or more and that in the body of those reports could be found every brand of rascality it is possible for any human being to perpetrate. So that they are not coming from a paradise back to a place that is uncivilized. In the United Kingdom, the standards of men and not of angels have to be applied as is the case in Barbados and the criticisms that are constantly made of the way our institutions work and the way they serve these nationals is also a source of concern.

The point has to be made, Mr. Speaker, that the British Government or the British people never intended societies like Barbados to be efficient in anything apart from sugar production. Therefore, it is vain to argue and to try to suggest that a society that is only 30 years old in terms of managing and looking after its own institutions should have the same experience and the same efficacy and efficiency as a society which is 930 years old if you date British recorded history from the year 1066 when William of Normandy, I believe, defeated Harold in the Battle of Hastings. They had nine hundred years advantage in terms of managing their own institutions and looking after themselves as against 30 years which represents the period of our independence from the same Britain. So they never expected us to be as efficient as they are and of course I am not trying to imply by so saying that we are nearly as inefficient as they suggest. I am just making the point that in terms of comparing the respected ages of our countries in managing institutions and using them to serve people that there is a difference between 930 years and 30 years and the same is true of those who come from Canada. The British North America Act of 1867 makes Canada 129 years as a nation looking after its own institutions and makes it really about 100 years older than we are in terms of managing institutions to serve people and to create a humane and just society. The United States of America is about 220 years as distinct from our 30 years.

So that in the same way that you do not expect the same level of maturity from a 10-year old child as you expect from a 50-year old adult, it is silly to expect the same level of sophistication from our society as you expect from Britain having regard to the fact that our impoverishment and our shortness of resources can be traced to the colonialism which locked off our necks for over 300 years at the hands of the same countries.

So that this tension that is beginning to define relations between the returning nationals and those who have been residing here in Barbados and have not left for any extended period has to be a cause for concern for the decision makers in Barbados. I think that appeals have to go out and machinery has to be put in place to humanize the relationship between those who are returning and those who have been here over the years and have never gone. So it is within that context, Mr. Speaker, that the Opposition accepts the establishment of this Facilitation Unit. The point has been made that there is nothing apocalyptic about it. All that has happened with the Unit is that a number of programmes have been pulled together and put in one document, or to use the very appropriate phrase of the Honourable Member for St. John – to make the whole process more user friendly. But this is nothing new that is happening but as the Honourable Member for St. Joseph has pointed out that the fact that it is not new is not a basis for condemning it. We think that it has its own contribution to make to the resettlement of those persons who are returning from abroad and we note it and we think that the Government has done the right thing. We withhold our congratulations from the Government because we think that to talk about congratulating the Government for something which is really a process of continuation of programmes that were already in place is really to be a little excessive.

Mr. Speaker, this debate has dragged on. We have heard all sorts of things in this debate. But I think that essential to all that we have been discussing is the fact that an investment that was made in the 1950s is today beginning to pay off and in a sense, pay off in a way for which we were not entirely prepared. There seems, as I said, to be a latent culture clash between those who are returning and those who are always here.
9.40 p.m.

While we focus on all the concessions, while we focus on stoves, bicycles, cars and so on, these are only means. The ends are the people themselves and we have to establish meaningful relations between those who are returning and those who have remained here or else the ones who are returning and who are benefitting from all these concessions will not have a chance to enjoy the things that they bring back because hostilities will rage and will make their lives very difficult.

As I said, I was taken aback by the embittered exchanges which I heard on the radio as I came to the House today. I think that it must give us cause and

must have us ask ourselves whether in focusing on all these concessions we are being as complete as we might be, having regard to the fact that there are all these other issues out there that need to be addressed.

I want to give my wholehearted support to the Honourable Member for St. John for the contribution which he made in respect of calling for a charter, not only for the parish of St. John, of course St. Philip needs one as well, and particularly St. Philip South. Things as simple as getting the homes of people repaired by the National Assistance Board are proving problematic in the constituency of St. Philip South.

There are other groups in this society who can benefit from a charter of some kind. We call on Government to broaden its focus and to include within the embrace of its generosity not only those persons who are returning nationals, who are returning enfranchised and more powerful than when they left, but to include those persons in this society for whom something as basic as a house spot, something as basic as a house is still a primary issue. As long as the Government understands this, it can keep down to a minimum the tensions which, if left unchecked, can erupt and cause unnecessary problems in this society.

Mr. Speaker, I cannot add much to what has been said by the spokesmen on this side. I think that the Leader of the Opposition and the Member for St. Michael West have adequately put the case for the Democratic Labour Party. The highly creative contribution made by the Member for St. Lucy and the fighting and intelligent contribution by the Member for St. Michael East all bear witness to the strength of feeling on this side, the clarity of thought and our commitment to ensuring that Barbados is a better place.

I am obliged to you, Sir.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Speaker, Sir, it is my judgement this evening that this House is engaged in the second stage of one of the great historical processes in our modern society. The first stage in this historical process, Sir, as has been observed, took place in the 1950s and 1960s when large waves of West Indian people migrated to England and elsewhere in search of opportunity, but always with the expectation and the hope that one day, like MacArthur, they would return to the Caribbean.

This point has come, Sir, when throughout the Caribbean those persons and their children now want to return. The challenge that faces us in this Parliament, Sir, and the challenge that has faced other Governments in the Caribbean is the challenge as to whether we will rise to the occasion and create an accommodating, welcoming and enabling environment within which those persons, can return to the Caribbean and live in peace and contribute further to the development of the Caribbean region.

Mr. Speaker, it has been well observed by many speakers in this debate that the contribution made by our nationals who migrated to other countries has made a profound impact on the development of the Caribbean people and the people of Barbados. There is hardly a household within the middle and lower income class of Barbadian society which has not been touched for the better by the remittances, on a steadfast basis, of our people who have lived in foreign lands.

The question has appropriately been asked in this debate, Sir, why is it that we need to create this accommodating environment? Why do we need to express it in a Charter? Why do we need to express it in the form of institutional arrangements that are clear, well defined, and progressively oriented?

The facts, Mr. Speaker, are that for a long period of time those Barbadians living abroad who have wanted to return to Barbados or who have returned to Barbados, found themselves at the mercy of and becoming the victims of a system which was not designed to facilitate their easy reintegration into the society. The problems faced historically by those Barbadians who have sought to come back to this country have been legendary.

Many of them were not provided with comprehensive and accurate information about basic aspects of life in Barbados, regulations and the like, Sir. Many of them sent back their money to Barbados to buy land and to acquire other assets, to find that their dreams of ownership in Barbados were snatched away by unscrupulous speculators and the like. Many of them were led to believe that the capital they were bringing back to this country would have been at their disposal for them to be able to create gainful employment for themselves, if necessary, only to have it snatched away at the Port.

Mr. Speaker, many of them also found that the society was not particularly interested in the skills they had, nor was the society particularly interested in seeking to utilise those skills in the further development of this society.

It is a matter of fact, Sir, that the reason why other Caribbean countries have had to create Facilitation Units, such as that which we are now proposing to create in Barbados, is that our returning nationals throughout the region and in Barbados have historically got a fairly raw deal from the societies that they have done so much to help to build. What we are embarked upon, therefore, Mr. Speaker, is a deliberate exercise to take all of the slipshod administration, to take all of the uncertainty, to take all

of the financial rape out of the process that used to attend the exercise by which returning nationals sought to reintegrate themselves into the Barbadian society.

The question, therefore, that has been posed by the Member for St. Michael West, Sir, is easily answered, that we are seeking to redress a mighty wrong, a mighty wrong that represented itself in the fact that there were Barbadians who wanted to be Barbadians, but were treated as non-Barbadians merely because it happened to be their fortune to live abroad and to contribute towards the building of this society.

Sir, the House may want to sweep this under the carpet, but it has been one of the saddest episodes in the development of the Caribbean people. There has been a reluctance, and a general reluctance on the part of some, to want satisfactorily and happily to reintegrate our returning nationals into the Caribbean society. The Member for St. Philip South, Sir, has today brought it to the House's attention that even as I speak to this House there are some Barbadians still who entertain a sense of reluctance to want to treat our Barbadians who have lived abroad as *bone fide* Barbadians. That, Sir, is the strongest reason why we need an institution with a clearly defined charter that enjoys the full support of Government and all well thinking people in this country.

We have found, Sir, that left to chance, left to the whim and fancy of administration, left to the discretion of Ministers of Finance, the hand that has been dealt to returning nationals, Sir, has not always been a happy hand. 9.50 p.m.

We are seeking through this initiative, Sir, to establish a relationship, not of exploitation, but a relationship of benevolence to those who through dint of effort in foreign lands have helped to build this country. We are trying, Sir, to build a developmental relationship with our people abroad that is in many respects not dissimilar to that which Jews wherever they live have come to enjoy with Israel to the benefit of Israel and the Jewish people as a whole.

It behoves us not to scoff at the historic significance of what we are embarked upon because the people who left the Caribbean in the 1950s, the people who left Barbados in the 1950s, had one desire and one desire only, to go and work hard, despite tribulations, and one day return home and retire in the land of their birth. We are being challenged as a people with the question as to whether now that the time has come for them to return we can be an accommodating people. This Government, Sir, does not apologise for the action on which we are embarked.

We want also to say, Sir, that what is being cast as extraordinary concessions are merely simple ways of either making people's lives easier on the point of reintegration, or taking out a lot of the financial rape that has historically attended people who bring back their personal effects to this country.

Now, Sir, the business about duty free motorcars. I would like to see it more in terms of the Minister of Finance agreeing not to expose our nationals returning to Barbados to a form of double taxation. Most of them in the past who brought back their cars paid duties and taxes on their cars abroad and when they came back to Barbados were also required to pay additional duties and taxes on cars they had already paid taxes on. Many of them found that the little savings they had accumulated over an extended period in England had to be spent in meeting charges of duties and taxes on the car alone at the Port. Their dreams of retiring peacefully and happily in Barbados and perhaps sometimes even creating gainful employment were dashed in many instances by the high rates of duties and taxes payable on a motorcar alone.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I feel, and I express it to nationals abroad, that the amount of duties and taxes we collect as a Government on the motorcars brought back to Barbados by them is such a small part of our revenue that if we were to remove it entirely it would not break our Treasury, but it will make a fundamental difference in the lives of many people who, if they had no duties and taxes, could look forward to a better and more prosperous retirement in this country.

I would like all those within the sound of my voice not to become envious about what the Government is doing in relation to our returning nationals. We are relieving them of double taxation. That is all we are doing in many respects. I want to say, Sir, that it is also helping the Minister of Finance not to spend his valuable time having to agitate about what value he has to attach to a 3-year car, whether it is going to be £10 000 or £15 000, as has been the case in the past, or whether this person is entitled to bring back a car, or that person, but to free the Minister of Finance of those kinds of foolishness and let him spend his valuable time trying to ensure that the strong growth and robust performance of this Barbados economy is something that we sustain on an ongoing basis.

The point I am making, Sir, is that too much of the time of the Minister of Finance has in the past been taken up with trying to determine whether the valuation put on a car by a returning national was a true valuation and at the end of the day, for what? Our philosophy is that persons who live abroad contribute to the development of this country and should be allowed to bring back their personal effects into Barbados free of duty.

I say, Sir, that it is an absurdity in this day and age for us to treat a refrigerator as a personal effect but for us not to treat a motorcar as a personal effect. It is an

absurdity and the absurdity has been too long maintained for reasons that were themselves equally absurd. All we sought and succeeded in doing was to create work for a bureaucracy that could have been otherwise better and more profitably employed. A man could have brought back a refrigerator to Barbados duty free but he had to pay duty on a car. That is an absurdity. This Charter, Sir, is taking the absurdity and the nonsense out of the process that has attended the reintegration of the Barbadian people abroad into the Barbadian economy.

I want to say, Sir, that I truly hope the initial signs we are seeing that these returning nationals intend to help us to build a better and more prosperous Barbados will flower. Many of them are already creating employment. They are showing their public-spiritedness by becoming involved in welfare for the old people and help for the young. Many of them are using the revenue that would otherwise have been paid to the Minister of Finance to create jobs in this society. Many of them are exposing their skills and bringing technology and management expertise that are critical to the further development of this country.

I therefore want this House to see this exercise as developing a new relationship between the normal citizens of Barbados and those who happen to live abroad. I look to this exercise to help us to be able to have a bigger economy with bigger spending power and to have access to a wider range of skills and management expertise than are now available to Barbados.

I would truly wish to say, Mr. Speaker, I hope that a lot of the consulting work that has gone to foreign experts will now be able to go to Barbadians who have lived abroad and developed expertise because we now have access to a skills bank that can store the skills they have. This region and this country have depended too exclusively on foreign expertise without seeking to identify and tap the talent of our people. One of the exercises of this Unit will be to develop and maintain a skills bank so that we can know the skills that our people have to tap them for exercises that historically have been undertaken by foreign expertise.

I want also to say, Mr. Speaker, that it is the intention of Government to broaden this relationship. The Deputy Prime Minister has already spoken of the intention of Government to create special financial instruments through which our nationals abroad can invest in Barbados particularly in areas where there are high rates of return. I want to say to the House, because I am anxious for the Special Development Areas legislation, that I would like to see them investing in the redevelopment of Speightstown, Bridgetown, the Scotland District and all the areas where there is a tremendous rate of return to come.

I also believe the Facilitation Unit should seek to build a relationship with the Barbadian nationals who are living abroad and who may not be interested in coming home within the immediate future. There are many Caribbean economies and there are many economies in the wider world which have treated their nationals abroad as a market for the absorption of their goods and we have a historic opportunity through this unit to do likewise.

I therefore want to salute the Deputy Prime Minister and the staff of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. I want to salute in particular the new Director of this Unit who has invested his very psyche in its creation. I want to salute all the institutions representing Barbadians abroad who have worked with us to bring us to this point.

Now, Sir, there has been in this debate a large number of very unfortunate statements made by an embarrassed Opposition who truly should have grasped the opportunity in 1992 and 1993 to have brought this into existence. It is the Democratic Labour Party's fault that they did not move at the same pace as Jamaica and other Caribbean countries which saw the need for this years ago and brought it into existence. We are now being told, Sir, that there is some great philosophical divide and the people of Barbados are being now fed a steady diet that will cause us as a people to want to believe that miraculously people like myself do not like small black people in Barbados, and that those of us who you know you will not find in the newspapers leading up to elections, Sir, signing deals with K-Mart or picking grass with the white people down at Westmoreland Golf Course. I have collected all the newspapers because the time is going to come very shortly when they will be held up in this House to see who was defending whom leading up to the election campaign. But we are now being told that we need to create charters for our people and I want to say to the Member for St. John, Sir, because he raised the question of a charter for St. John, the people of St. John do not only need a charter, they obviously need a representative. It is a disgrace that in the year 1996 a Member for St. John who was a previous Minister of Finance, who succeeded a Prime Minister, who had been a Prime Minister for 15 years plus another year and a half, could come to this House to tell the people of Barbados that the people of St. John have by some stroke of historical development been disadvantaged by the people of this country. I can only say, Sir, if the people of St. John had been disadvantaged they have been disadvantaged by the people that they put in Parliament and I agree tonight and I call for a charter for St. John because the St. John Development Plan has failed and the charter now has to be developed, Sir, by a representative whose interest is not in the K-marts and the others whom the Member for St. John was traipsing all over the front pages with, leading up to the election campaign. The charter can only

be developed by a representative who has a genuine interest in the people of St. John.
10.00 p.m.

I want to say, Sir, that I will never ever leave a St. Peter development plan in my will for anybody to succeed to on my behalf and that while I have life and health and strength, Sir, I am going to make sure that the interest of the people of St. Peter are looked after. I do not want to hear from the Member for St. John who had the opportunity and did not do a single thing and for the Member for St. John to come now to ask for a Charter.

He spoke, Sir, about those persons who need charters written for them. I also feel that he should have told the House of those classes of Barbadians who do not need charters written for them and it would make interesting reading, Sir. The persons who do not need charters written for them would include friends of former Ministers of Finance who were allowed to bring their cars into Barbados duty free.

Aside.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: I am not calling any names, Sir, but the persons who do not need charters written for them, are friends of former Ministers of Finance, who were allowed to bring their cars into Barbados duty free when our returning nationals were being charged taxes at the port by that Minister of Finance. Those persons do not need charters written for them.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, other persons who do not need charters written for them, Sir, are foreign owned companies which were allowed to buy shares being sold by Government in Government companies in preference to Barbadian nationals and Barbadians living abroad. Those foreign companies do not need charters written for them. They have got the whole hog from the Democratic Labour Party. The people who do not need charters written for them, Mr. Speaker, are those enjoying the benefits of the infrastructure at the Port, duty free shopping, who are now raking in luxurious returns because of the action of a previous administration. They do not need charters written for them.

Mr. Speaker, the people who do not need charters written for them, Sir, are the large white Barbadian conglomerate firms that were allowed to buy hotels in Barbados being sold by the Government. Who need charters written for them are the small black people under this administration who can now buy a Sam Lord's Hotel with financial loans provided by the Barbados National Bank. If you ask me, Sir, to speak to a difference in philosophy between those on the Other Side and us, I will cite one fact and one fact alone and that is when they had a chance to sell a hotel owned by the Government it was bought by a large white conglomerate in Barbados. When Sam Lord's had to be purchased, Sir, the Barbados National Bank made sure that the loan was provided that a small black man could buy it. I do not want to hear the Democratic Labour Party now, Sir, tell me about philosophy and charters.

I am looking forward with a keenness, Mr. Speaker to the Special Development Zone debate on Tuesday because a lot will have to be spoken. This, Mr. Speaker, Sir, cannot wait and I only will tell the Member for St. John, Sir, that he should go back to the election campaign and check the front pages of newspapers and he will see all of the people with whom he was signing deals and who would have been inheritors of the benefits of a Democratic Labour Party victory.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, this exercise is part of an enlightened exercise by this administration to bring order to a situation of disorder, that there was a random approach to dealing with a great problem of civilization. Many people, Sir, look forward to the day to be able to go back to Africa but there is not a system that can reintegrate them back in the African society. Theirs will always be a dream. Many Barbadians look to the days to be reintegrated into the Barbadian society in an orderly happy fashion to live out the rest of their lives gainfully and in conditions of peace, quiet and happiness and this is what this matter before the House is about.

Sir, I remember and I do not like to get sentimental about these things. I remember going to London last year to speak to Barbadian Nationals and talking to them about what it is like living in England and the ambition to come back to Barbados. One person told me that I should read Psalm 137 to understand better that by the rivers of Babylon they sat down and yes they wept when they remembered Zion for they that carried them into captivity required of them a song. And they said, how could they sing the Lord's song in a strange land? This will make sure, Sir, that our people will never, ever again have to sing the Lord's song, Sir, in a strange land. I am obliged to you.
10.10 p.m.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We have had a very interesting debate all day. The Honourable Member and Prime Minister has waxed warm as he came into the debate late and the flagging troops on his side feel so invigorated by the fact that the Prime Minister has come once more to the rescue with a rousing speech. That one man band over there has finally once again brought the Barbados Labour Party back to life when it seemed on the brink of death. Oh dear! A Daniel has come to judgment. How often have we seen the spectacle, but the people who have been watching this debate from elsewhere would feel that enough time has elapsed and we should not

spend another half hour by responding to the Prime Minister's over spirited representation of his tired and dejected troops.

I wish however, Sir, to respond to a few things that were raised in the meantime. I was a little disappointed at the intervention of the Honourable Member for St. George South. Mr. Speaker, regarding the Honourable Member for St. George South, never have I seen a more educated and sophisticated individual deliver a defense that was not in keeping with his own spirit. I do not wish to be over dramatic. But all that the Honourable Member said and all that the Prime Minister has said and much of what the Honourable Member for St. Joseph has said finds no rebuttal on this side because they are not speaking to the issue which we raised. Take the Prime Minister for example. The Prime Minister spoke as if this was something that was beginning from scratch. The Prime Minister did not address the issue and did not tell us why and I listened and waited for him to tell us why did he rescind what he found. I would do anything to hear why after the Prime Minister came in and found that the duty on cars had been waived...

Aside.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Sorry, Sir. Let me rephrase it. They are shouting that is not so. Why if they found that the Cabinet had made the decision did they write the letter telling the people that they are now moved to 50 per cent? Why did they allow me to be embarrassed by telling people in Washington for example that the Government had made a decision that the duty would be waived only to have the people in Washington who were returning nationals who were going to bring their own cars in tell me that "you are wrong?"

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: On a point of order, Sir. The Member for St. Michael West is misleading the House. The Democratic Labour Party made a change in policy in 1994 to reduce the 10-year period to a 3-year period, but the stamp duty and surcharge would each be payable at the rate of 20 per cent. So that there was a 20 per cent stamp duty and a 20 per cent surcharge. Those were not removed neither were they intended to be removed by any Cabinet decision of the DLP and there is no returning national apart from one person who to the best of my knowledge was allowed to bring in any car into Barbados duty free. That is a fact.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Sir, there is some difficulty which I have to straighten out. I have here which I can pass to the Prime Minister. It is improper to make Cabinet Minutes a document of the House. I had it in the beginning and I am going to read it again. This is a Cabinet Paper – Minutes of the Cabinet Meeting held on Thursday, April 21, 1994 in the Conference Room, Government Headquarters, Bay Street at 9.30 a.m. On page 7 of that Cabinet Paper – Matters for Discussion Continued, Policy No. 7, Policy relating to the waiver of import and consumption tax in respect of vehicles imported by returning nationals.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: On a point of order, Sir. The Member does not understand what I am saying. The import duty and the consumption tax were removed but the surcharge and the stamp duties were retained – surcharge of 20 per cent and stamp duty of 20 per cent. So the import duty and the stamp duty were removed but the surcharge and the stamp duty were retained and we are now abolishing all.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: The point is that it must be known about the duty. I am reading what I am reading. The Cabinet rescinded its early decision because I heard the Prime Minister talk about 3 years. I heard the Deputy Prime Minister talk about 3 years. The Cabinet rescinded its early decision taken on May 2, 1992, Note No. 91310/MFE53 and agreed that a waiver of the import duty and consumption tax in respect of vehicles by returning nationals should be granted to applicants who have been living overseas for a minimal of 10 years. I pass this to the Prime Minister for his perusal because that is the exact Cabinet Paper.

Sir, what I do not understand...

Aside.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: That is not going to move me. Why did the Prime Minister have sent out on 1994/05/19 the communication which I said was Ref. 5028/5/281 Volume One: "I have been directed to inform you..."

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Speaker, if the Member will yield for a point of elucidation. The previous administration did in fact, Sir, remove import duties and consumption taxes but they retained the stamp duty and the surcharge. If the Member will recall in my first Budget presentation, I removed stamp duty and surcharges and what I did was substitute a 50 per cent import duty for the stamp duty and surcharges on vehicles over 1600 cc. I came and found stamp duty and surcharges imposed on all cars including cars of returning nationals. I abolished and surcharges on vehicles below a certain level including the vehicles of returning nationals and imposed a 50 per cent of the import duty. That is what has caused all of this confusion in the minds of the Democratic Labour Party.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Mr. Speaker, Sir, it is clear that there is a language and understood by Ministers of Finance in the Barbados Labour Party which is unknown to ordinary people like you and me. The Cabinet made a decision to waive everything. We are dealing with the debate that has happened here. You have given the impression and you said that we had the opportunity to do something and we did not do it. Up until the time we

made the decision, it was that a car had to be 3 years or more. That was the decision made in 1992. Prior to that, there was another decision. Does the Prime Minister and the Deputy Prime Minister agree that we made a decision to waive duty and consumption tax...

Aside.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Well, you did not even know.

Aside.

Mr. SPEAKER: Please, please. The Honourable Member please. Let us proceed orderly please.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: I am not going into any disorder. I listened to the Prime Minister and I said nothing.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: On a point of order, Sir. The Honourable Prime Minister is not only trying to mislead the House. He is misleading himself, Sir. There were 4 imposts that attached to the vehicles – import duty, consumption tax, stamp duty and surcharge. You waived two and left two. You cannot understand it.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: We are now abolishing the other two.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: You are now abolishing them but the letter that went out signed by Cummins put back on 50 per cent duty and the Prime Minister conveniently did not remember to include 50 per cent duty in his peroration just now. That is all. The point is that the Prime Minister does not remember that the letter of 4th May, 1995 put back on 50 per cent duty of the import duty and 50 per cent consumption tax. Mr. Speaker, if the Prime Minister is now waiving everything, I say hooray. But in May when he sent out the communication – perhaps he was not aware the communication had gone out. I think, Sir, that if the Prime Minister had not gone back out he would shout across and say that "I did not even know that foolish letter went out". In the system we have and in the same way that I was in a Cabinet which made a decision which assumed that we were waiving everything and he was in a Cabinet and had communication sent out. I will make this a document of the House, Sir.
10.20 p.m.

> "I have been directed to inform you that effective immediately the Minister of Finance and Economic Affairs has adjusted the caption policy as follows:... "

Let me tell you what the caption policy is, the policy with respect to motor vehicles being imported by returning nationals. That is the language that is used, as Your Honour knows, Sir. The Attorney General got up and said I am misleading myself! He is causing me stress, Sir, because he is now making me wonder if something is wrong with me. This is written in English. It says:

> "(a) returning nationals importing motor vehicles of 1600 cc. or less will pay..."

Now, you tell me, Sir, the Attorney General or anybody, tell me what that phrase means. "Will pay". Does that mean that you will not pay? The letter says "will pay", do not come in here now to try to give the impression that you are doing something. I am saying that in this letter of 4th May, if it is 1600 cc, which will include a Mercedes Benz, or less will pay 50% of the import duty and consumption tax.

> "(b) those imported motor vehicles above 1600 cc. will pay 50% of the import duty, consumption tax, surcharge and stamp duty."

Now, Sir, if the Honourable Member was going to relieve those people from singing the Lord's song in a strange land, that is the time when he would have done what he was doing on 4th May. He does not remember, Sir, because it is convenient not to remember that that same Psalm goes on to make another point.

I make this a document of the House so that the other people who read English would be able to see it. I make it a document of the House because it is important. I am continuing, Sir. The Honourable Member forgot that that Psalm goes on to say:

> "If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning. If I do not remember thee, let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth; if I prefer not Jerusalem above my chief joy."

That is Psalm 137, a very beautiful Psalm.

> "Remember, O LORD, the children of Edom in the day of Jerusalem; who said, Raze it, raze it, even to the foundation thereof."

And the Barbados Labour Party has a policy which says raze it, raze it to the foundation thereof, and that is the problem, Sir. They could not abide by the fact that the Democratic Labour Party had implemented a particular policy, so their policy was raze it, raze it, and then subsequently they implement the same policy but they embellish it and seek to take ownership of it. That is the only area in which we have a diversion. If the

Foreign Minister had come in and said: "We are continuing this policy and we have consolidated the decisions that have been made in the past, and we have increased them, because all of us believe that the nationals have made a contribution," we would have shouted hurray, we would have conceded that the Barbados Labour Party had continued the great work of the two parties. We would have concluded that those nationals who had gone overseas for 30 years and more and who had made substantial contributions, which have been acknowledged by all of us, deserve everything that was being done.

Not a single Honourable Member on this side, including the Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central, raised any questions about the efficacy or the desirability or the morality of any of the things that are being done in relation to giving the nationals concessions. The only question being raised, and my amendment raises the question of the Government's seeking to gain some kind of popularity, of the Government's using the opportunity of the returning nationals' desire and the returning nationals' input to help enhance their need to create a Barbados Labour Party branch in London. We feel that the nationals ought not to be used as fodder for this political marauding that is about to occur. We feel that the nationals deserve higher and better consideration than to be treated simply as pawns in the political manipulations which the Labour Party might from time to time attempt to do, and we feel as guardian angels on this side that we have a responsibility...

Aside.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: I withdraw "angels", Sir, it is causing the Attorney General much stress if we are described as angels. He knew why he did not speak in this debate, Sir, because he would not wish us to deal with him in a particular way, so I would withdraw "angels" if he does not want us to be described as angels. But we are the guardians against the onslaughts by the Barbados Labour Party.

In the final analysis, Mr. Speaker, the only issue, despite what the Prime Minister said, is the paragraph in which they sought to sneak some additional credit from doing their duty. Every man and woman is required to do his duty to God and the Queen.

Aside.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Without demur I can say I tried. Each time I have been given the watch I have tried to do my duty in spite of the difficulties and road blocks put in my way by various and sundry people. I was disappointed to hear some Honourable Members trying to put a divide between us on the question of the returning nationals, as if the returning nationals are people without the capacity to reason and understand, as if they have not supped with people on both sides from time to time, as if the returning nationals do not understand the politics that are being played. But what the Labour Party must try to understand is that the people who are returning nationals have a better appreciation and a higher understanding of the political game than they do, and at the end of the day the politics *per se* will not win out, because the nationals understand that they cannot be used as political footballs. That is all we were saying, that is all we are saying and that is why we over here are going to vote for the amendment.

I take the opportunity, Sir, to thank all those Honourable Members on this side who have spoken so well. It has been an eloquent afternoon, from the incisive and penetrative perceptions of the distinguished Member for St. Lucy who was able in his inimitable manner to cut to the quick and give the people of Barbados the courtesy of the Barbados Labour Party asking for a broadcast of this debate, the actual reality that the people of St. Lucy would see in this matter at the same time as rest of the people of Barbados.
10.30 p.m.

My friend, the distinguished Members for St. Michael East was able to demonstrate that the social system in Barbados is beginning to fray at the ends, and that it is necessary for the Government to take another look at some aspects of the social system. He managed to get the Minister of Health to respond in here to accusations made elsewhere. We hope that the Minister of Health will go public, further public, and articulate, in detail, responses to what has been a spirited argument put by a reputable publication in this country. It is important that ordinary people come to feel that they are not going to die merely because the Barbados Labour Party is in office.

I am grateful to my two colleagues. The Member for St. Philip South, as usual, was again able to put in perspective the real divide between the Barbados Labour Party and the Democratic Labour Party on these issues. As usual the Leader of the Opposition got the ire of the Prime Minister primarily because he was able to show the disparate perception of the Prime Minister in his need for those who have to sing the Lord's song in a strange land and those who are right in his own back yard, and who may not be beneficiaries of the largesse that is currently spreading around.

I was particularly pleased to hear the Prime Minister finally acknowledge that St. Peter will come first in all development projects. I have been saying it in here, Sir, and they have been raising questions. The Prime Minister has now stated categorically that...

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: On a point of order, Sir. Mr. Speaker, I want to restate what I have said, Sir. I have said, Sir, that it will never be my ambition, once there it is health and strength in me, to leave a St. Peter Development Plan in my Will to be executed by my successor. If that is interpreted by the Member for St. Michael West that I put St. Peter on the top of every development plan, Sir, he can make that interpretation but I never used those words, Mr. Speaker. I am clear as to what I said. I will never leave a St. Peter Development Plan in my Will to be executed by a successor, Sir. While I have life, health and strength in me, Sir, I will represent St. Peter to the best of my ability.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Sir, having walked the beautiful parish of St. Peter, Sir, I am always glad to hear that largesse is coming to St. Peter in whichever form it is coming. I will not begrudge them that they should get that largesse. What I do not wish him to do is to give the people of St. Peter colic. I do not wish him to give the people of St. Peter colic with an over abundance, neither that constituency nor St. Thomas. They must not get an over abundance of development projects to the point where they are suffering from colic, while St. Joseph and other Barbados Labour Party represented constituencies are going a begging. We accept...

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: On a point of order. Mr. Speaker, Sir, lest the Member for St. Michael West mislead the House, I want to give him the assurance that the Barbados Labour Party is looking after the St. Leonard's School in his constituency, which he as a Minister, failed to be able to achieve due to the dint of his own efforts.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: I hope you will be able to persuade the Minister of Education to allow the people who live in the constituency, near St. Leonard's, to be empowered to participate in the decision making about St. Leonard's, and that they will not find themselves as happened with the VAT, according to Gladstone Holder today, where it is said that it is a *fait accompli* and there is no need to discuss it with the people.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: I beg your pardon, Sir. On a point of order.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: I hope that the Honourable Member will speak to the Minister of Education. I have been trying to get the Minister of Education to agree to bring to the people of St. Leonard's the Plan which they had for the development of St. Leonard's, because I believe passionately that the people who live...

Asides.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, you are supposed to be winding up.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: I am winding up, Sir, but the Honourable Member...

Asides.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: I thought that since Your Honour had allowed the Prime Minister to...

Asides.

Mr. SPEAKER: I am asking you now to come back. It is a little late you know.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: I hope that the extension of the development will extend all the way up to Bank Hall, Sir.

Mr. SPEAKER: Thank you. I hope so too.

Asides.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Mr. Speaker, we on this side have reached the point where we fully understand that if you are in a Democratic Labour Party constituency...

Asides.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I hope that the Barbados Labour Party Government will, in fact, reach the point where they could extend due consideration to constituents in the Democratic Labour Party.

Mr. SPEAKER: Could you wind up, Sir?

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Yes, Sir.

Mr. Speaker, I really want to thank those Members who participated in the debate, and I hope that the Government will find on reconsideration that it is not necessary for then to congratulate themselves for doing what is essentially their duty, and continuing work that had been started a long time ago and which has come to a culmination and to fruition.

Mr. Speaker, I am grateful to Honourable Members.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Mr. Speaker, many years ago in a debate in this Honourable Chamber, when we were in Government and the Honourable Members on the Other Side were in Opposition, in other words in an earlier Barbados Labour Party administration, there was a debate about the Airport, the Grantley Adams International Airport, the construction of it had been brought to completion. In the debate Members on the Other Side

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