
THE House of Assembly Debates

(OFFICIAL REPORT)

FIRST SESSION 1994 – 99

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

Tuesday, February 6, 1996

Pursuant to the adjournment, the House of Assembly met at **11.15** am. on Tuesday, February 6, **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.

Dr. R. L. CHELTENHAM, Q.C., M.A., **M.Sc.** (Econ.)

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

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

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

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

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

Mr. D. CARTER

Hon. R. N. 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. MO'TITLEY, **LL.B.** (Minister of Education, Youth Affairs and Culture)

Prayers were led by Rev. Lawrence Small.

MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of Tuesday, January 30, 1996 and Friday, February 2, 1996.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I beg to move that the **Minutes** of the Proceedings of the Honourable the House of Assembly for its meetings of the 30th day of January, 1996 and the 2nd day of February, 1996, which Minutes have been circulated, be taken as read.

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

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

ORDERS OF **THE** DAY

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS

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

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

The question was put and resolved in the affirmative, without division and Mr. SPEAKER suspended those Standing Orders accordingly.

Mr. SPEAKER: Government Business is now the Order of the Day. Order No. 1.

✱

A RESOLUTION WELCOMING THE **WHITE** PAPER
ON EDUCATION REFORM IN BARBADOS
AND ENDORSING THE REFORMS
AND **POLICIES** PROPOSED
IN **THE** PAPER

Order No. 1 was called - To move the passing of a Resolution welcoming the White Paper on Education Reform in Barbados and Endorsing the Reforms and Policies Proposed in the Paper.

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

Hon. Miss M. A. **MOTTLEY**: **Thank** you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, Sir, I rise today to participate in a debate which **seeks** to look at Government's proposals in respect of education as we enter the **twenty-first** century.

These proposals have been the subject of much discussion both before preparation and subsequent to the drafting of that document. Indeed, Sir, before the document was drafted, along with members of the Ministry, I travelled up and down the country meeting virtually the majority of the 3 000 teachers in this country, soliciting their opinions on the sector, their feelings as to what was wrong, what needed to be righted. We met, extensively, prior to the drafting of the document with other members of the education fraternity particularly the stakeholders, the two unions, the Barbados Secondary Teachers' Union, and the Barbados Union of Teachers, the Conference of Primary School Heads, the Barbados Association of Principals of Public Secondary Schools and we met, **internally**, with our own officers having a retreat not only for those officers but indeed the departments totally within the Ministry of Education.

That process resulted in a view that if we were to deal, effectively, with the changes that had to be made in

the system we should **seek** to do so by outlining in a single document all of the things or a large part of the things which we felt, as a Government, needed to be addressed in order effectively to move forward this country. I say **so**, Sir, in **the** context of an educational **system** that has **served** us reasonably well through the years. The **history** of education in Barbados has been one that really has benefitted in certain aspects **from** a legacy of a strong physical **infrastructural** network and, more importantly, a recognition that language is a primary instrument of empire but equally so, education is an instrument of language. It is from that statement that I would wish to move today in the discussion of this White Paper.

The histories of civilizations in **the** world clearly recognize the importance of language in **terms** of being able to advance beliefs and philosophies and **they** **understood** that education was, in fact, **the** primary tool of that language. We believe that, if the Caribbean region is to reach its full potential as we move into the twenty-first century, the educational sector perhaps more than any other single **sector** has the capacity to lay the foundation **for** that nation building which is necessary to move **us** into a **primary** position on the global stage.

When we **look** at the fact **that** the Caribbean has benefitted from a reasonably high level of **educational** infrastructure, that perhaps has contributed more than any single factor to our having a high level of intellectual resources given the size of our population. In **those** circumstances, if we are to maximize **on** other developments that have taken place as the twentieth century closes, those developments such as technology which has now, for example, made the question of **size** and geography irrelevant because, to a large extent, we can participate in what has become the new **industrial** revolution of the twentieth century, that of the **power** of knowledge and information determining whether wealth can be created **and** sustained. If we can participate fully in that process **given** the base which we have **had** over the years, I believe that we **can** position this region as one of the premier regions on the global market stage and **ensure** that **the** **quality** of life of our people which, at the **end** of the **day**, is **what** all of this is about can become central to **whatever** we plan and, implement in the educational **sector** in this country.

It is a funny thing that with the introduction of **all** of the **processes** that seek to assimilate knowledge **and** information we, in this country, have not yet taken **steps** **to** be able to benefit fully **from** it. If we look **back** at **our** history in education, we **can** **see** that although **there** was an excellent **infrastructural** capacity on the **ground**. In fact, at the **turn** of the twentieth century **Barbados** had over 169 primary schools **run** by the Anglican Church, the Moravian Church, the Wesleyan Church and there were also private schools and, at the same time, a number of **secondary**

schools which were limited in their intake of the population which are not included in that number. If we look at that fact, we would realize, however, that the emphases that have been made in the delivery of education have, to a large extent, related to the developmental goals of this country.

In the late 19th century and early 20th century where the demands of growth were largely still at variance there was absolutely no reason for governments then to vary their limited involvement in education because the point must be restated that, to a large extent, it was the church that was the primary mover in education in those days. Government, in fact, only gave its first grant some time towards the latter half of the nineteenth century, a grant of a mere £750.

But if we look at what they sought to achieve, they were essentially preparing persons for existence in a society and an economy that was largely agricultural and built on trades whether it was the blacksmith's trade, carpenters, or whatever. In the early fifties, and late sixties when we **started** to see the model for development shift to encompass other areas of activity in the economy, we saw an expansion, at the same time, of the available places in government secondary schools so as to be able to prepare a population that was capable of meeting the needs of a **sector**, whether it was the industrial sector through manufacturing or an emerging tourism sector.

11.25 a.m.

The main criterion then in terms of human resources was to have a person who could learn and take instructions well, where there was no necessity for critical thinking, where there was no need for people to be able to understand that they played an integral process in terms of the thought that they brought to the work that they were doing. Therefore the curriculum, the style of management and the development of schools, had largely since then proceeded on the basis of learning by rote. Indeed many of the examinations which tested students **proceeded** on that premise.

I believe, Sir, and this Government shares the view, that as we enter the 21st century where there is a premium attached to knowledge and information but there must be a shift in the emphasis in our educational sector to be able to do two things effectively:

1. To be able to produce a population that is capable of critical thought, that is capable of assimilating information and knowledge and using it towards the ends of development for the general welfare of the people of this country, but

2. To be able to assist in the development of character of children so as to produce those persons who are capable of being sensitive to the needs of their families, to their communities, to the moral values that have traditionally held this country, and indeed this region together and capable therefore of a sensitivity and a type of character that is worthy of being described as the best that this country has to offer.

Therefore education cannot be seen solely as an instrument of academic performance or the preparation of persons for jobs but indeed, Sir, of the preparation of persons for living and developing this country; indeed, Sir, for the development of economic, cultural and spiritual wealth in this country.

To that extent, Sir, we have brought together, in one document, many of the views which are premised out of a philosophy that I have just outlined, with the objectives which I would wish to read into the records of this Chamber, because I believe that these objectives clearly spell out this Government's intention as to where education must go as an instrument of nation building in this country.

Sir, on page 2 of the White Paper on Education which has already been laid as a document in this House, it clearly states that the Government's reform policy would therefore have, as its major objectives:

1. Preparing our citizens for the responsibility of nation building.
2. Revaluing the role of education in the sphere of national development.
3. Reinforcing the concept that learning is a continuous, lifelong process.
4. Developing a work force that is equipped to adapt to a rapidly changing environment and one that is readily retrainable.
5. Ensuring equity in the delivery of education and equality of opportunity in the access to education.
6. Enabling students to develop enquiring and creative minds.
7. Helping our population develop positive attitudes, values and beliefs to enhance the individual and his or her position in the family, community and the nation.
8. Revaluing the role of teachers.

9. Sensitising teachers to the importance of catering to the individual needs of students.
10. Fostering a greater partnership between the school, the home and the community, and
11. Strengthening the capacity of the Ministry of Education, Youth Affairs and Culture to plan, manage and evaluate the educational system more effectively.

Now, Sir, those are the basic objectives outlined by this document that is before this Chamber today.

We believe, Sir, that the plans outlined therein in that document seek to achieve these objectives over a period of time. Education reform has a long lead period and there is even perhaps, Sir, a longer time in terms of the measurement of the success of those objectives, but equally, Sir, in **determining** what are the most appropriate instruments to measure.

We, in Barbados, Sir, have, through Governments, met the challenge of quantitative access to the primary and secondary educational sectors in this country. We have been able to ensure that there are more than enough places available for all of the persons within this country who by law, under the Education Act, must attend school between the ages of 5 years old and 16 years old. Indeed, Sir, when we look at the fact that there is in fact a projected trend of a decline in population we, perhaps, are in the enviable position of having more places than we in fact do need at the primary sector and the possibility, Sir, when we look at the Government Public Secondary Schools and the Private Secondary Schools, that at the moment there is, too, excess capacity in the system with the combined use of those two areas.

Now, the question therefore begs itself, Sir, that having reached and attained that goal of quantitative access, a school place for each child, is that then sufficient to meet the developmental needs of this country, to meet the needs of education as a nation building tool? This Government, Sir, believes not. This Government believes, Sir, that we must deal with the questions of quality, we must deal with the question of the type of child that is coming out of the **school** system, not simply to get a job in the economy, but the type of child that will represent what we believe to be best about the Barbadian character, what we believe to be best about an individual in terms of **how** that individual can respond to the needs of the individual, to the family, to the community and indeed, Sir, to the country and the region.

In those circumstances, Sir, we believe that that foundation would lead to an attitudinal change that will see the attainment of what is this Government's vision for the

development of this country. By that, Sir, I mean specifically the role which this country can play, not only in terms of the development of our people, but the role that this country can play in the development of the civilization and the development of the global stage.

We believe, Sir, that we have to produce a more self-reliant Barbadian who is capable of understanding that he or she must meet the needs of development by providing for him or herself and their family and their community. We believe, Sir, that even when we look at recent developments in the last 20 years, those areas, for example, of the economy in which we have excelled, or in the areas of community participation or sports participation, or cultural participation, have all been areas in which those persons and those sectors have shown a level of self-reliance that is prepared to remove us psychologically from the clutches of dependency and aid. They have plagued our history whether it be in the times of slavery, Sir, or whether it be in the times of modern developing nations that have seen the Caribbean region being the subject of aid for development and have seen a negative attitude develop among many of our people that find it impossible to break the manacles and say that we can do it on our own because we have the confidence in ourselves, we have the ability to do it, and indeed, Sir, in those circumstances we know we can achieve.

When we look, Sir, at the informatics sector, when we look, Sir, at the offshore business sector, those sectors have grown in this country without having to rely on preferential quotas, without having to rely, Sir, on assistance from persons in whatever form, and it has been done on the basis of the character and hard work and intelligence of Barbadian people to a large extent, with our understanding that if we do not have all that is required, the global market economy has so developed that we can purchase the services while maintaining ownership and control of the process.

We believe, Sir, that this is the direction in which this country must go and continue to go if we are going to be able to reach that goal of being self-sufficient and then moving, Sir, to the next stage which is bringing along others. One of the fundamental things about being independent, Sir, is the capacity also to assist those who are not able to assist themselves.

I want to suggest to this Honourable Chamber today, Sir, that we have within the region the capacity to not only be the recipient of aid as has been our lot but we have the capacity to alter matters on the global stage. We, Sir, have had a history of competence in the educational sector and one of the most fundamental things I believe we must address is the capacity in which this Caribbean region

can assist the development of other regions in the world, for whom the goal of qualitative access is still an insurmountable goal, and for whom the goal of being able to sensitize children and prepare them for work or for character building is still an insurmountable goal. I want to suggest, Sir, that in those circumstances especially where the primary global concern of the cold war has been replaced by that of ethnic conflict, we in the Caribbean are best placed to tell the story and to be of assistance to people. I want to suggest, Sir, that we in the Caribbean also through, for example, the production of primary school text **books** will not only be able to tell our story but set the long-term goal of sensitizing and preparing peoples from elsewhere towards trade in goods and services with ourselves. Because at the end of the day, Sir, a person will trade with you if he knows about you. They will come as tourists if they know about us. They will deal in services with us if they know about us.

11.35 a.m.

I, therefore, feel that there has to be a commitment in any part and parcel of this, in all of this to have a vision as to the role that we can play on the global stage. Equally, we must have a vision of ourselves nationally and as **individuals** that will say 'no' to the kind of nonsense we saw in the newspaper on Saturday, where we could see a man's hand lying on the ground and believe that that should be representative of the stock that we as a people must read in **our** daily newspapers. It is wrong for two reasons, not only because the newspapers published it, but also because of the type of person that has developed in our society that can in fact reach the point where they can cut off a man's hand in broad daylight and move. We hope, Sir, that through the process of implementation of many of these matters we can produce a citizen who is not capable of **doing** that kind of reprehensible act to another citizen of this country, who values himself or herself so much that their capacity to want to perform centres not around doing harm to another but wanting to produce; self-reliant and capable of moving on.

Sir, with all of that said, what therefore is the role of teaching everyone of us in being able to attain these objectives. I want to say at the outset, Sir, and to clarify a **number** of things that I have seen in the Press recently. This White Paper, Sir, represents for the historical perspective an amalgamation of many things - future policy primarily. But we took a decision early on in the Ministry and we discussed this with all of the educational stakeholders that there were two major policies that this Government early on took a decision to pursue, but that for the sake of completeness as a historical document we would include it in this document

Those two specific policies relate on the one hand to flexible transfer and partial zoning and on the other hand to the establishment of secondary schools with an alternative curriculum.

Sir, the implementation of those policies was not done in a vacuum. It included extensive consultation with the educational stakeholders. Indeed, Sir, only yesterday evening I received a letter from the Barbados Secondary Teachers' Union outlining their positions in respect of the White Paper and clearly reflecting on the fact that we took a decision that we would include in this historical document all that the Ministry is doing, so that anyone who wanted to see now what we were doing or in 15 or 20 years time what we were doing could do so by looking **at** a single document.

In those circumstances, Sir, I would wish just to say to those persons who felt and may have felt that Government has betrayed the faith of the public of Barbados, that we have been scrupulous in the process of consultation, we have been scrupulous in ensuring that the fullest possible discussion took place not only on those policies for future implementation but indeed, Sir, those which have been implemented in the course of the last year. We met with the stakeholders and we have in fact established a committee on partial zoning and flexible transfer comprising BUT, BSTU and the Conference of Primary School Heads. That committee, Sir, has been functioning so well that it even made representation on one or two things that we have taken on board. For example, they have indicated that logistically they believe that it would be too much for us to ask primary school children to sit the Common Entrance Exam in primary schools from **1996**. We have agreed as a Ministry to delay that process until 1997 to allow not only them but us to ensure that the logistics are perfect before we put them in that environment. So that is the type of consultation that has been taking place and the type of management stand that this Ministry has been engaging in respect of those **policies** may have already been agreed upon prior to the **publishing** of the White Paper but indeed being implemented in those circumstances.

Sir, I hope that I would have cleared the air on that issue and indeed, Sir, the **Opposition** was aware of that when I introduced the amendment to the Education Act in December of last year. I did in fact, Sir, refer to the fact that these policies were agreed to prior to the White Paper and I must commend the Opposition for agreeing to the introduction of those policies in those circumstances with the caveat that we will deal with the rest of the White Paper as a separate and distinct issue in this debate.

Now, Sir, as I said just now, what is the role of the various persons who must participate in bringing the attainment of these objectives that I have outlined earlier both in the White Paper as well as in this Government's vision for the people of this country. There are a number of categories of persons who can make that difference and who must believe that they can make that difference.

The Ministry has a role to play but the Ministry's role has fundamentally changed with the new challenges facing the educational sector. If we are to improve quality in the system, Sir, quality at the end of the day can only be guaranteed at the point of output there in the schools. Our role, Sir, can no longer be an all encompassing role that seeks to dictate and manage all of the **processes** in education but has now to be one where we act as a facilitator and indeed, Sir, as a regulator in the system. We no longer have to meet the challenges of building schools all over this country. We have now to meet the challenge of getting those persons and those factors that vary the capacity to improve quality to be able to function more effectively.

I want, therefore, to **say** that philosophically the role of the Ministry of Education has had to change and will continue to change because we accept that we are but one small cog in the wheel that can guarantee quality education in this country. In the circumstances, Sir, the truth is that it is the role of teachers and the role of curriculum and the role of a strong and accommodating plant in terms of physically pleasing that will have far more effect on whether a child will continue to score under 30 per cent in the Common Entrance or whether we as a country will continue to have **6** out of every 10 children leaving secondary school without proper certification.

We believe, Sir, that to that extent the role of the teacher forms the basis upon which qualitative improvements will move in education reform in this **country**. Therefore, teacher empowerment is critical to the process of improving quality because they are the ones who will make the difference in the classroom. They are the ones who will ensure that they are simply not just teaching a syllabus to complete the syllabus, but that knowledge and learning are actually taking place among children in this country. Now this is especially important, Sir, when we look also at how knowledge is acquired in the early years of one's life. Much of the knowledge that is acquired tends to be foundational. If you do not **learn** your alphabet, you cannot read. If you do not learn to add and multiply, you cannot do HCF and LCM in Class 4. What we have seen, unfortunately, with the development in this country of the need to sit an exam at a specific age, as required by law, is the pushing and promotion of children from class to class regardless of whether they have understood or mastered what is being taught to them. We believe that is fundamentally wrong. We believe that you cannot promote a child regardless of whether he or she has understood what is being taught, just because he or she must sit an exam at 11 to transfer to secondary school. You could as well be ushering them through a sewer at MTW, if that was your idea of providing education for children.

11.45 a.m.

The purpose of their being there is to learn. Therefore, we believe that in addition to making the law broad enough to allow for a range of ages for **transfer**, which will now enable teachers and principals to make sensible decisions about promotion based on **actual** understanding and mastery of what they are there to learn, we must also see a shift in ensuring that the teaching becomes child centred. The teacher has also to be capable of understanding what is the difficulty with the child at that point, what has caused the difficulty. If you do not know what has caused the difficulty, you cannot provide a solution. You cannot then see it in terms of getting through a syllabus for an entire class and, that being the measure of success for a teacher in respect of teaching a particular class. The measure of success has to be to carry each child to the maximum of his or her ability. Therefore when we say that each one matters, we do so from the philosophical perspective that unless you can identify the needs of that particular child in a classroom, and you can test to **see** where the difficulties lie, you will not be able to solve the problem.

This **carries** me naturally to another policy which this Government implemented in its very early days – which is also referred to in the White Paper for the sake of completeness – and that is the policy of diagnostic testing. We **took** a decision that there were at least **three areas** in which we had to develop Government's capacity to test **in** the schools to ease the job of teachers. We felt there had to be physical testing of persons for hearing, speech and sight impediment, and as trite as it may sound, Sir, the reality is that that testing which has been continuing has shown that on average **6** to 8% of children in primary schools have serious hearing or speech impediments.

Sir, there was one young girl in St. Peter who, if you spoke to her normally, could barely hear, but if you went up to her and made a noise she could pick up that range but she could not hear a normal situation, which meant that she could not hear in the classroom. Therefore, she could not learn in the classroom. In spite of that, she was being promoted from class to class because she had to sit an exam at 11. I want to suggest that if we were not able to implement that type of testing we would not have picked up what that child was going through. We now can cater to that child, we can ensure that child has the capacity to learn genuinely.

Another significant thing the testing has picked up is that there is a capacity in some children to develop so much wax in their ears that it actually impedes hearing. It may not sound too nice, Sir, but it is a reality in respect of many children in this country. In addition to the physical testing, we feel that we must also have the capacity to test for basic learning disabilities. I want to say, as you

well know, Mr. Speaker, given your strong tradition and competence in education, that we can never test for every single learning disability. They are myriad. What we can do is to seek to test for those which occur most commonly among our population and to that end the Ministry of Education established early in 1995 a Diagnostic and Remedial Policy Unit which saw teachers coming into that Unit and going back into the system testing those children primarily for reading difficulties and learning disabilities. Indeed, Sir, with the establishment of that Unit, **for** the very first time in our history we were able to take 1 050 children who had scored below 30% in the Common Entrance Exam and test them to see where their difficulties **and/or** disabilities lay. The significance of that is that if you simply allow those children to transfer from primary to secondary, having performed so poorly, without finding out what was causing them to perform poorly, then you have **failed** those children. We tested them during the course of the summer and the most amazing thing those tests revealed was that the majority of those children were at Class 1 and Class 2 levels, although they were in Class 4. In other words, Sir, they were promoted beyond their competence and ability.

We then met with the nine or ten public secondary schools that were going to be taking those **children** in and said to them that it was no sense putting those children to do work that a child who is scoring 60%, or even 50% or **70%**, would be doing in a normal first form curriculum. Those children now have to be taken and brought up to the level they should be in secondary school, they have to be brought up to the level they should have been before sitting the 11+. I am happy to say that with the co-operation of the Barbados Association of Principals of Public Secondary Schools (BAPPS) we were able to take the curriculum for those first formers, reduce it from the ten or so subjects they would have had to do and limit it to six subjects, with a **specific** requirement that there be at least ten periods per week each for mathematics and for English, while still exposing them to physical education, some form of industrial **arts** and, indeed, some form of social studies to broaden their perspective at the same time. But the critical thing is that unless you are capable of allowing them to become literate and numerate so that they can read and **count** they will never be able to assimilate information on their own.

11.55 a.m.

We believe, Sir, that we will have to continue this policy where we are capable of being flexible enough to have **curricula** that can meet the competencies and the abilities of children in the system. We also felt that we will have to extend this to the assisted private secondary schools which may feel that we have not come to them yet; but I only want to say to them that having started to put the systems in place in the public secondary schools this is

the **type** of technical assistance that we would wish to offer from the Ministry of Education so as to be able to cater to the needs of these children.

Sir, the testing therefore is continuing in the primary schools in respect of the most common learning disabilities. We believe that if we can get these results, work with the class teachers to see where we can bring and improve these children that we will go somewhere towards improving the type of child that moves from primary to secondary school. At the end of the day, Sir, we must have an all-encompassing goal as to what we are seeking to do. We believe that each child must leave primary school able to read, to count, to reason and able to feel a level of self-esteem; because if you don't feel good about yourself, you will not produce, to be able to deal with normal situations and indeed situations of conflict. Very often, Sir, a lot of people get themselves into trouble because they do not know how to deal with the problem by way of thought or expressing themselves and it is easier to pick up a Collins and lash somebody. In those circumstances, Sir, it has to be the goal that each child must be able to leave primary school able to read, to write, to count, to think critically, to have a level of self-esteem and to deal with normal situations and situations of conflict.

That means, therefore, Sir, that the programme at primary school whilst centred on English and Mathematics, **because** those are the engines and vehicles to assimilate knowledge – if you can be literate and numerate and think, there must still be a level of exposure to broader enrichment subjects – must not become the central focus, because through integrated curriculum planning you can read about social studies in English, you can deal with science in mathematics, you can teach children about geography in mathematics. Therefore, there has to be a greater level of planning as to the integration of **curricula**, because the most important thing is to teach them how to do for themselves rather than throwing knowledge at them and expecting that they will move through life with this stock of knowledge.

In those circumstances, Sir, I believe that the plans in this White Paper that deal with the establishment of the Curriculum Development Council to bring about the integration of curricula on a more planned and cohesive basis is the way to go. There was a Curriculum Development Committee that ceased to operate in the Ministry of Education for the last 8 or 9 years and we believe that the resumption of this Curriculum Development Council is critical if we are going to bring about that level of change in the system.

Indeed, Sir, there have been comments in the newspaper by someone, for example, who said that we haven't dealt with African history. Sir, it is not for the Minister or the Ministry to set out that. What we have done is to create the instrument by which all forms of

curriculum planning become capable, an instrument which fell into desuetude over the last 8-9 years. So that what we want to see at primary level is that level of integration in terms of planning the curriculum in such a way that it is recognised that it is more important to teach a man to fish than to give him a fish. What we are doing therefore is teaching them how to learn rather than just giving them a stock of knowledge that they need to move from primary to secondary.

We also feel, Sir, that the other critical thing that we must achieve at the primary level which is stated in this White Paper is the sensitising and the preparation of our children to assimilate cultures from other parts of the world but, more importantly, to develop the curiosity for the language. If we recognise that this economy continues to move in the direction of a knowledge based and skills intensive economy and if we recognise that more often than not a greater level of our trade will come from Central and Latin America – and indeed, the Ministry of International Business has been negotiating for bilateral investment and taxation treaties from those areas – then **as** a nation we must recognise that the development of a second language is **critical** to the development of our people.

Now we are not suggesting that the substance of that second language must be taught at primary level. What we are saying, and we have had a report looking at the **falling** levels of language teaching in this country because of interest among children, is that the curiosity and the desire to learn that second language must be honed at the primary level. In other words, the child must be exposed to a level of cultural knowledge about that particular region. The child must want to know more about why people behave in a certain way and why they sing and **talk** in a certain way so that by the time it reaches secondary school and you seek to teach the substance of the language, the grammar, it has already assimilated a little bit about the culture and history and how to say good morning and good bye and basic conversation. Therefore, there will be a desire on the part of that child to learn the language at the secondary level, fully recognising that, more and more, as the world becomes more of a global village, to refuse to give yourself the opportunity to speak a second language is to handicap yourself, is to put yourself in a situation where you are like a blind man.

I want to suggest therefore and to say to this Honourable Parliament that the Ministry of Education has in fact been negotiating with two countries in particular, Costa Rica and Mexico, as to the **level** of assistance that they can give us and the level of assistance we can give them in ensuring that our countries can benefit from the population learning a second language. In fact, the Rt. Honourable Prime Minister and myself met with the President of Mexico, having signed a technical and

scientific agreement of cooperation between Mexico and Barbados shortly before that meeting, and the President of Mexico, himself a former Minister of Education, insisted along with the Prime Minister of Barbados that we work towards the agreement for educational co-operation.

What we would like to see, Sir, is a situation develop where teachers from Barbados will go there and teachers from those countries will come here. It is not just about teaching a child how to say bon jour or buenos dias, but it is to give them a sense of appreciation for the culture and the history. We therefore believe that the persons who should be used in the primary schools to teach that second language should be persons for whom that second language is a first language.

12.05 p.m.

Now, I would wish, Sir, to deal more specifically with the question of flexible transfer and partial zoning. I am using this opportunity, although the legislation has been passed already, to be able to remove some of the difficulties and doubts that some people seem to be having and to assure the people of this country that we do not believe that we should implement major policy changes without bringing the people on board. To that extent, **Sir**, after the legislative amendments were made, the Ministry of Education sent to every single Class 4 parent and to every single Principal in the primary schools and to every single Class 4 teacher in the primary schools for the very first time again, a document clearly outlining the changes that had been made to the legislation and the administrative stipulations for the functioning of the policy.

I would want to say to you, Sir, that we have not **stop**ped there but we recognise that every parent who has a child in primary school, whether that child is in Class 1 or Class 4, would feel some sense of urgency to find out how this system will work. Those circulars to all the other parents of primary school children and to all of the other primary school teachers will be going out this month. We could not send out all at one time because of **the** difficulties and the pressure on the postal system, plus the fact that we would need the network of teachers to be able to send them out in a decentralized fashion. They will also be receiving that brochure which outlines the changes in flexible transfer and partial zoning.

Quite simply put though, Sir, the principle of flexible transfer only says this, that each child does not develop at the same rate as another, that each child develops at a different rate although we accept there is a certain age range within which that development will take place. To have a system of legislation that says that the age range is only 365 days is not to understand the capacity and rate at which children develop, and legislation must never be used as a tool of iniquity. This Government, therefore, felt strongly that the legislation had to change and become

broad enough to accommodate the rate of development and the range of competency of children. To that end, Sir, we passed legislation which says that children can now sit the examination **as** early as 8, although we accept that the majority of children will still continue to sit at 10 and 11. We have also said that a child must be capable of sitting the examination **as** late as 12 years old because that child may be developing a little slower than another child in the **class**.

We fully accept that the majority of children will continue to sit at age 10 and 11 but the legislation must be broad enough to accommodate those who need to sit early or sit late. In those circumstances, Sir, there has been some concern: "You mean to **tell** me you are going to let children go in at 9 with children going in at 13?" Now I want to say this to you, Sir, we in the **Ministry** of Education have set out very clearly the administrative criteria that will allow admission to early sitting of the examination, or deferral of the sitting of the examination. No child may be allowed to sit that examination early unless that child has been consistently performing in excess of 90% and has completed the curriculum for the examination. I want to repeat that, Sir. That child must be consistently scoring above 90% and must have satisfied the class teacher and the Principal that it has completed the syllabus for the Common Entrance Examination.

Now, Sir, when we look at our statistics we expect that there will be no more than about 40 or 50 children every year who will sit the examination at 8 or 9. We have found that in terms of those who will sit at 8 that number will, in fact, be one every few years, if so much. But one **must** still accommodate genius where genius exists and the law must not seek to retard the development of genius where it exists.

We also have laid down specific criteria for the persons who will defer sitting the examination for one year. Those children must be consistently scoring below 20% because we believe that if a child is still scoring below **20%**, then he or she really does not have a clue of what is going on in the **area** they are studying. A child with 30% at least did not perform well but understood some basic concepts to allow him to score the 30%. We could at least work with him or her in an easier way.

Now, Sir, **our** examination of the figures that will be involved in this area show that there will be some 400 to 500 children per year who can have the opportunity to defer sitting that examination. It is not just a question of letting them defer it for another year and hope they will do better in that year's time, but we have specifically designed a **programme** that will see that upon the decision to defer having been accepted by the Ministry, the same diagnostic and remedial policy unit will come in and test the child,

will seek to develop a programme with the class teacher how best to bring that child from where he or she is to the best that he or she can do, and that in addition to the development and implementation of those programmes based on testing, the Ministry will also conduct an intensive summer school for a period of 4 to 5 weeks to see those children being given an opportunity to develop their skills and competencies to the maximum of their ability.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I want to say something very clearly. We cannot guarantee that that child will zoom up the scale, but what we do know is that if we fail to do anything as a Government, and as a people, in respect of the best we can do for those children, then we stand to be condemned. I want to repeat that, Sir, because we cannot guarantee that that child will move from 10% to 50%, 40%, 70%, 30% or to 20%, but we will have discharged our responsibility to create the opportunity where he or she can perform to the maximum of his or her ability without the law and system hindering their development.

Having said that, Sir, there are other concerns **as** to the operation of the system. I want to say up front that the system provides for a right of appeal on the part of parents, that there will be a committee established in the Ministry of Education comprising the Chief Education Officer or his nominee **as** Chairman, and including a representative from BUT, the Conference of Primary School Heads and from the BSTU. It will be a technical committee. It will look at all the information produced by both the parents and the school and take a decision that is in the best developmental interest of that child.

Now, Sir, that, in a nutshell, is the crux of what we are seeking to do with flexible transfer. We have a responsibility **as** a country to meet the challenges facing the children of this country.
12.15 p.m.

I want to state further that for those persons who have felt that we should not implement it for another year, I could not in all conscience recommend to Cabinet that we would be party to those 450 children who might wish to defer the exam for another year so as to be able to be better prepared than their shuffling through the system simply because we could not make the changes in time to allow them an opportunity to learn more.

The chances of their falling by the wayside must be decreased **as** our provision will be far more accommodating to their individual needs. And I go back, Sir, to the refrain and theme of the White Paper that each one must matter, each one has to matter, that Barbados is small enough where we can make the adjustments to ensure that each child can be accommodated, as far as is possible.

There will always be a number of children as there has been, some 30 or 40 every year, who will never be able to sit the Common Entrance Exam. The Ministry has always provided for them. Many of those children go into special schools which specifically cater to their needs.

The question of partial zoning. The Barbados Labour Party has always been committed to partial zoning. When the Honourable Deputy Prime Minister was Minister of Education, a system of partial zoning was introduced in this country which functioned for some 2 or 3 years before it was dismantled by the last Government. The last Government's position seemed to have been not too clear because we have had Ministers of Education among them who have advocated partial zoning but who, unfortunately, did not remain there long enough to implement it.

Why do we feel that partial zoning is necessary? We believe that the present system of allocation of children to secondary schools results in children, for example, taking 2 and 3 buses to get to school. There are some children in this country, Mr. Speaker, who leave St. Philip at 6.00 o'clock in the morning to go to Bridgetown to catch a bus to Grantley Adams School in St. Joseph or to Coleridge and Parry in St. Peter and who do not get back home before 5.30, 6.00 and 6.30 in the evening. That is after leaving school at 3.00 o'clock. Not only are they being forced to have a much longer school day, therefore affecting their concentration span eventually but they are very often not even given the opportunity to participate in extra curricular activities because they cannot stay and play cricket until the sun sets. They cannot stay and kick a football until the sun sets. They are not getting home early enough to kick a football or to play cricket until the sun sets.

Aside.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Or as the Honourable Member says to carry out the animals.

The point is this. It is a sad, sad sight to see little children 11 and 12 years old in first form, young girls in first form walking the road at 6.00 a.m. and 6.15 a.m. when the sun has barely risen because they have to go to school on the other part of the island and because the bus routes do not accommodate them.

That also leads to the breakdown of communities because if you do not have children participating in the community in which they live, then there is no one to build on the legacies of that community and to maintain strong traditions in communities. One of the things that this Barbados Labour Party Government is very clear about is the role that communities must play in nation building whether it is in the development of housing, whether it is in ensuring that they have the capacity to manage their

sporting activities, church activities and the other things that they must do, or whether it is in the form of their interaction with PTAs and other social groups that communities must play a central role in. The Deputy Prime Minister always likes to say that the Barbados Labour Party is the **Party** of decentralization and the Democratic Labour Party has always been the Party of bringing everything to Bridgetown and making sure that the people in the country do not benefit from anything because everything is in Bridgetown. I will discuss that issue another day. I would not seek to detain the House on that.

Long distances also result in unpunctuality and the loss of teaching time. I was amazed yesterday. I had to rush back home around 9.00 a.m., 9.15 a.m. to get back down to a meeting for 9.30 a.m., and I was amazed at the number of children that I saw on the road in Alleyne School uniforms, in Grantley Adams uniforms, students going to the north of the country and they were some in Princess Margaret uniforms going to the south. This was in Bridgetown. School starts at 8.30 a.m. There is a serious problem in relation to unpunctuality and therefore the loss of teaching time. At the end of the day, that is what they are going to school for, to learn, to be taught.

There is also an element of tiredness and a lack of concentration on the part of many of these students who have, in fact, 12-hour days because they are on the road at 6.00 o'clock which means they are getting up at 5.00 o'clock or 4.30 a.m. To come home at 5.30 p.m., 6.00 p.m. means that you cannot settle down before 6.30 p.m. 7.00 p.m. If you have homework to do, Lord help you.

The final thing that we believe has to be remedied by the introduction of partial zoning is the distribution of pupils on a highly unequal basis. That is why there is one fundamental difference between the policy of partial zoning that we are implementing at this stage and the policy which was implemented on the last occasion we were in Government. It is fundamentally this, Sir. Each child will have two open choices to choose two schools from anywhere in the island, zone 1, zone 2, zone 3, any of the 23 secondary schools. Thereafter a child must choose schools in his or her zone. Those zones have been compiled in close association with the bus routes of this country so that no child should ever have to take more than one bus to get to school. In other words, some people may say, but why is the Alleyne School in zone 2 and other schools in St. Michael are in zone 2? The truth is that anybody who lives in Bush Hall or Station Hill knows that the bus going up to the Alleyne School passes through there. And, similarly, that the bus going up to the Grantley Adams School passes through The Turning. That child only has to take a 15-minute ride between The Turning and St. Joseph. We have been meticulous in ensuring that the zones have been compiled with a critical consideration of existing bus routes in this country.

I should say, as an aside here, that there is in fact a school transportation study taking place on which students councils have been fully represented as well and they have been so valuable that for a long time we have been making recommendations as to how we can increase transportation for students along the way.

Having chosen two open choices and then schools from your zone, there is one further requirement that must be met and that requirement is that each school must take 30% of its intake from its zone. In other words, 3 out of **every** 10 children must come from its zone. I want to say something, Mr. Speaker. If I had my way, separately, I believe that it should be 3 children outside of the range of marks to ensure a fuller mixing. But I have acceded to the concerns expressed by BAPPSS, the Barbados Union of Teachers and the BSTU and we have agreed that, at the very least, we will start with a mechanism which ensures that at least 30% of the children coming into the school come from the zone or the district in which the child lives. That is so critical, Sir, that when we met with the principals of the Government Secondary Schools two weeks ago, we decided that children and parents must be able to make better informed decisions as to how to move their children into schools. That, Sir, would be facilitated by the production of 23 two-minute videos to be broadcast on television, which would highlight the ethos of the school, which would highlight what the strengths of the schools are, which would highlight all of those things that would allow a parent to be able to take a better decision than they are currently capable of doing because the information is not there.

12.25 p.m.

In addition to that, Sir, I want to commend the principals of the public secondary schools for agreeing to hold 4 seminars across Barbados for the parents of those children sitting the exam so that they may be able to address the concerns and to tell their schools in a manner of speaking to those children and parents so that they may be able to make better decisions for their children. They have gone one step further and have agreed to institute an open day where the children from the schools in the district **who** are sitting the 11+ and their parents may come and visit the secondary school to get a true feel as to what that school has to offer. Therefore, Sir, I want to commend the public secondary principals for their willingness to give up as much of their time to ensure that proper and informed decisions are made on the part of these children. So, Sir, that explains our perspective of partial zoning and flexible transfers.

We are not relying on the goodness of the policy itself. We recognise we have a duty to communicate it and to communicate it effectively and we are working with a Committee that is representative of all the educational

stakeholders and has made representations. In some instances we have altered policy on the basis of those recommendations. So that we believe, Sir, that this is the correct way. We cannot promise 100% success but we believe it is right, we believe it can work and we believe it would put children in this country in a better position than they have been for many years.

Sir, the question of secondary schools and secondary education or certification is one that also occupies the attention of this White Paper. This White Paper, Sir, reflects the deep concern that is held by this Government as to the fact that we have six out of every 10 children leaving secondary school in Barbados without proper certification. We recognise however, that the solution to that problem does not lie in the secondary system alone but also lies in the manner in which we deal with the primary system and that at the end of the day we have to improve the basic competency and capacity of children at the primary level if they are going to make a difference at the secondary level.

We recognise, Sir, that really and truly there has to be the capacity to ensure that infrastructure in terms of certification is also available to the country if we **are** going to make changes in that regard. What do I mean by that, Sir? CXC exams, at the level of general proficiency, Sir, were never intended to be exams which the general population could or should take. Indeed, Sir, the basic proficiency exam was developed for that very reason. It is unfortunate that the basic proficiency exam, as well as the Barbados School Leaving Certificate, have both fallen into disregard and almost disuse insofar as having any validity with employers and indeed a number of private training institutions.

In those circumstances, Sir, Government has a responsibility to ensure that we review the question of certification and we have in fact received a report from a sub-committee which I set up last year which we **are** now considering. That sub-committee, Sir, was representative of all of the educational stakeholders and it has made some interesting suggestions which now have to be considered by this Government as to what form of certification is going to be available to Barbadians and when we can implement it.

We recognise, Sir, that it would be virtually impossible for us to implement any new system before 1998 and we are working towards that end. We deem it critical that there be a form of certification that has value, that has currency, that can represent what a child has in fact learnt or not learnt because I do not believe, Sir, that the 6 out of 10 leaving school without certification actually spend 5 years in school without learning anything at all,

but we have not been sophisticated enough to have a mechanism which can in fact measure competencies that may be acquired that are broader than the range currently focussed on. Therefore I give the commitment to this Honourable Chamber that that area in the White Paper is one that will be pursued with a level of diligence on our part.

I want to say this about secondary schools and primary schools principals because I want to deal with the issue of leadership. It struck me one day, Sir, that really and truly, having set the overall environment within which people must function, we really have to step back. Each one of us in here had to have the confidence that our teachers would have taught us and would have taught us well. Each one of us in here had to have the confidence, Sir, that our teachers would have prepared us for life and I do not believe therefore, Sir, that it is the responsibility or duty of a Ministry of Education to take away the discretion or the capacity for teachers and principals to function in their school environment. I believe, Sir, that in the same way I had that confidence as a child, I must have that confidence as an adult and particularly as a Minister of Education now. Therefore my responsibility and that of the Ministry must be on a macro-level while having the confidence for the teachers and principals to operate and operate effectively at the level of the school.

Of course there must be a system of accountability because I do not know of any privilege that does not come with responsibility and once those lines of accountability are kept clear and bare there is absolutely nothing wrong with ensuring that we back off a bit and give them more room to operate at the level of the school environment. It becomes more particularly so in a secondary school plant which is dealing with in excess of 1000 persons on plant, almost 100 people on staff and a budget of \$3½ million.

We do believe, Sir, that there may have to be some changes in terms of the financial management and systems of administration to ensure that there is more support and better mining available for persons who have to deal with budgets and staff bigger than a lot of businesses in Bridgetown. In those circumstances, Sir, we have set up a committee to review the terms and conditions of teachers and principals and to look at the reorganization of the school plant with the Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Education chairing that committee and Mr. Patrick Frost, General Secretary of the Barbados Secondary Teachers Union chairing a sub-committee.

In those circumstances, Sir, I would not wish to prejudge the report of that Committee which is referred to in this White Paper, as to their recommendations. Suffice

it to say, Sir, that I believe that that review of the fundamental terms and conditions of teachers and principals is so critical that it has the capacity to be one of the major changes that this Government can confront and the ability to bring about a level of teacher empowerment in this country.

I believe, Sir, therefore that we must wait until that Committee has reported in order to be able to make sense of where we must go, except to say that it must be on the premiss that they must be given room to operate. There must be a greater devolution of power to the level of the school and the Barbados Labour Party Manifesto committed itself to this principle.

Sir, this White Paper deals with a number of other issues, for example, relating to areas of excellence in secondary schools. We felt, Sir, that each school must be prepared to develop a level of excellence in some area of activity for which it is renowned nationally, in other words, Sir, that it has done so well in this particular area, nationally, that from the child to the parent, to the lab assistant, everybody would feel proud to say:

"Well you know this is my school. This is what I did at my school." What we did, Sir, was to ask principals to meet with their teachers and to identify for us what they would like those areas of excellence to be. I, Sir, would not respond to the tripe that I saw in the newspaper today talking about us being elitist in the choice of areas of excellence. The Ministry of Education had nothing to do with the choice of those areas of excellence because we believe that devolution of management must exist in relation to the strategic direction in which a school must carry itself and, therefore, at the end of the day, only market forces can determine whether the goal that that particular secondary school set itself has in fact become an area of excellence.

12.35 p.m.

Aside.

Sir, I would not respond anymore to him because that is the same man that tells us that there were a thousand children in the system without textbooks under the Government's Textbook Scheme. But he would not go ahead and tell you that this Ministry ensured by September 1995, with the assistance of facts the Public Secondary Principals in this country, that there were no children who should be without Government textbooks because the last Government carried the fees from \$20.00 to \$75.00. They will not tell you that, Sir. Now I am not blaming anybody but we did not walk about and beat our chest when we ensured that those children received books. We did not walk about and beat our chest because we believed that these were sensitive matters. Instead, we called in

the principals, we spoke to the principals in private about it, and we never made it a public issue because we believed that it could be managed internally and it related to sensitive issues.

It is true, Sir, that there may well have been some **children** who could have afforded to pay and were **just being** worthless and not paying. But we believe, Sir, that **as** leaders we have to be big enough and responsible enough to ensure that when children go to school they are there for learning and they must not be made to pay for either cheapness or the inability to pay because of the irresponsibility of their parents in terms of buying them expensive shoes but not giving them money for books. We have brought a resolution to that matter, Sir, and I am happy to say that, if there is any child in a school without a hook, that child must go to the principal of that school. All have given commitments that the situation will not recur. Because this is the same Government, Sir, who spoke about and have been committing ourselves to providing... We have just provided \$1.4 million in textbooks in primary schools because children's parents were having to spend in excess of \$150 to \$200 per child. In those circumstances, Sir, we felt that the textbooks had to be available to the children.

Now, Sir, in respect of tertiary education. I want to say that this Government's policy in relation to tertiary education has of necessity to have the fundamental goal of **expanding** access to tertiary education, whether it be at University, the Polytechnic, BCC or **Erdiston**. This Government's commitment is fundamentally to expand the numbers of persons going into tertiary education. We feel that Barbados' rate of transfer from secondary to tertiary is **too** low. We recognize that the difficulties have not only been financial but, in fact, have related to matriculation. In other words, it is the quality of person coming out of secondary being capable of entering tertiary education. In those circumstances, Sir, we have committed ourselves to change what is in fact the only index in our profile that really is consistent with a developing country. When you **look** at Barbados, everything else in our profile is consistent in being a developed country except for the rate of transfer from secondary to tertiary education.

To this end, Sir, one of the first policy initiatives taken by this Government was to expand the numbers of persons entering the Samuel **Jackman Prescod** Polytechnic for training. We got there, Sir, and there were some 1400 children who were going to the Polytechnic for training in this country. We said "no" that there were too many young people leaving school who did not have a skill, who did not have access to training and that we had as a matter of urgency to expand it. I **am** happy to report to this Honourable House, Sir, that one phase of that expansion has been successfully completed, that we moved from 1400 to 2000, an increase of 33 $\frac{1}{3}$ per cent on the course of last

September. Phase 2, Sir, is about to be implemented from September, 1996 which will see us move from 2000 to 2500.

In addition, Mr. Speaker, we have in fact commissioned the study that will see a re-examination of the academic year of the Polytechnic because we believe there is absolutely no reason why the Polytechnic must continue on the same academic year as secondary schools when you have significant investment in plant there, and when that academic year only meets for 38 weeks out of 52 and only 10 hours out of a day of 24 hours. Therefore, we are not getting the maximum potential out of the investment in plant that we have there and, before we talk about expanding in terms of new physical buildings, we have to be able to meet the demand in the system for a reorganization of the calendar year and from an incorporation of secondary school plant after 3 o'clock in other parts of this country that have significant investments in technical facilities and labs. So that that is this Government's policy in respect of the Polytechnic.

We are also looking to reorganize the management to make it far more effective and to ensure that there is a mechanism that is capable of adjusting the cumculum to meet the developmental needs of the country particularly because of the rate of technologic change that this **country** has had to face. By that, what do I mean, Sir? We came into Gvernment and found the situation where there had been **n** improvement in technology or plant in the Polytechnic for a substantial number of years. So what is the sense of training a mechanic or an auto electrician who now cannot go out there and deal with the technology that is coming in the cars in terms of new technology? What is the sense of training people who cannot go into a hotel plant and meet the capacity to fix things that are using different types of procedures that were not prevalent in use **10** years ago?

I **am** happy to say that the Board at the Polytechnic is doing an excellent job. We took a deliberate decision to have large private sector involvement in it because at the end of the **day** they are training people for the private and public sector needs of this country in terms of being able to equip the plant and to fix the things that are necessary to move this country forward. So it is critical to have that mechanism that will revise curriculum in a quick way and in a flexible way. We have also, Sir, implemented a major computer lab because we want to be able to train Barbadians to be able to meet the needs of fixing and dealing with computers as well and not only looking at it from the point of view of consumers.

Sir, the Barbados Community College continues to do exceedingly well. We have had significant expansion not only in terms of numbers but in terms of areas of responsibility.

12.45 p.m.

The new Hotel School is due to open for its training from September, 1996 with an expansion of 250 to 400 persons, and indeed with the introduction of three new courses which, for the very first time, will allow Barbadians who want to work in the hotel plant but who do not have certificates to be able to access training so as to be able to improve themselves and their level of service in the tourism industry. We would hope that with the three nine-months courses being offered in housekeeping, in the kitchen and in the maintenance of plant, we would be able to expand the numbers as the years go on so that those persons who would normally enter the tourist industry at the lowest levels would be able also to access training and not only those entering as managers or middle management. For the first time, Sir, I will remind you, this is being implemented.

In addition, we want to start negotiations with the University of the West Indies in respect of the potential development of a joint tourism degree between the Barbados Community College and the University of the West Indies, because we believe, particularly in the light of the OECS Co-operation Agreement signed by the Prime Minister, that we have to have the capacity to develop and provide training in tourism, which has become the principal economic earner for all these countries in the Eastern Caribbean, and there is in fact no full capacity to serve those training needs in the Eastern Caribbean at the moment. I would hope, therefore, to continue those discussions with the University of the West Indies and the BCC, as well as the Minister of Tourism, to meet the needs as we move into the 21st century in training and tourism, in particular the cruise industry which has been growing at a significant rate and which has been a significant employer of Barbadians within recent years in all areas from hospitality to music to actual mechanical work on board the ships.

The Community College, Sir, also is at the moment examining – and I have with me a draft final report on it – the expansion of the Community College's language laboratory. I spoke earlier in this debate as to the fact that we must as a country develop the capacity to incorporate a second language as part and parcel of our overall natural and economic development. Therefore, the Government is now examining the potential for the expansion of that language lab, given the report that is before us.

The Advisory Committee on Tertiary Education meets with me every other month and I want to take this opportunity to thank them, because they have been doing excellent work. We have not just been meeting and philosophising, but we have taken concrete decisions on the rationalisation of delivery of programmes, our capacity to develop managerial programmes and we are now looking at how to improve the delivery of management. We have

looked at IT and we have taken firm decisions as to how to expand our capacity to develop information technology training. What I want to say is that the Committee is looking at proposals for the establishment of an international school of services to meet the needs for professional training in the areas of services in our economy – banking, insurance, copyright, software design – all of the areas of service on which this economy relies so heavily, because there seems to be a feeling that once you get your degree and leave school you should not go back and receive any form of training. We believe that accountants, bankers, lawyers, insurance people, people involved in copyright and software design must have the capacity to do short training programmes that keep them at the cutting edge of development in the areas, particularly where a lot of services depend on the development of new products within the niche of services so as to gain additional business in this country.

Having recognised that, Sir, we see the **natural** symbiotic link of being able to use that school and attract students and professionals not only from the Eastern Caribbean, but if we can link it with the language laboratory at the Community College, which teaches from Japanese right back down to Spanish, to French and to everything, we would be able also to attract businessmen and professionals from Central and Latin America who want a broader perspective and want some short-term training, because we can offer them the language capacity through the expansion of the language **laboratory**.

The vision in respect of tertiary education has to be large, has not only to look at the question of training people out of secondary school, but must look at the **process** of retraining people at any and every stage of their development, particularly since downsizing has now become an integral part of the landscape of some of our businessmen.

Sir, the University of the West Indies. We took the decision that we have to be able expand numbers attending the University of the West Indies. I feel particularly honoured to be able to serve within the University of the West Indies at a time when there is a major re-examination of the *raison d'être* of that university and its role in the Caribbean, not only as an educational institution but as a major tool of development for this region. I am happy to announce, Sir, and some people may already be aware, that the report on the governance of the University was accepted by Council, that there have been a number of recommendations made which have been the subject of review by an Implementation Committee for the year and that those recommendations have in fact been now approved by Council. From August 1 the report on the governance in respect of major areas of implementation will take place. I believe that those areas which seek

to look at the question of the development, for example, of a graduate school, which will be far more responsive to the private and public sector needs in the region, that looks in fact at the structure of the University in terms of faculties and whether they cannot be far more cost effective and far more productive through the restructuring of the University, that those factors that also look at the University's capacity to **earn** money outside of subventions given by Government are critical to the sustainable growth of that institution and its relevance to us as Caribbean people.

In those circumstances, very often when you have major change like that it can only succeed if the political will is there to implement it. I am satisfied, having had the opportunity over the last **18** months to be integrally involved in the process, that the political will exists not only at the level of the Governments, but more importantly at the level of the leadership of the University of the West **Indies**. I would wish to publicly commend the leadership of that institution for being brave enough to meet in the face of all forms of opposition, but to insist that if we are going to be relevant to this region, these are the fundamental changes that must take place in this institution at this time. In that context it was particularly important to us therefore to ensure that we can increase the level of numbers going into the University. Indeed, Sir, one of the things we have also done to reduce the question of cost, and this was also done early in our administration, was to have the Barbados Community College and the University of the West **Indies** sit down together, as we said to them there must be an articulation agreement in place, because the Government of Barbados cannot continue to pay twice for people attending Community College and the University in respect of certain courses as now exists because of the absence of that articulation agreement. I am happy to report yet again to this **Honourable** Chamber that that draft report should be in my hands within two weeks. In fact, I believe all that is taking place is the refinement for presentation to me. Having had that report from the two principal negotiators, Sir Keith Hunte and Mrs. Norma Holder, we believe it will have the capacity of saving significant money for the Government of Barbados, which has had on occasion to pay for students both at BCC and UWI to learn the same thing over again, taught by the same person. That is the type of wastage we are committed to reducing.

Sir, the question of fees.

12.55 p.m.

Sir, this Government was met with the fact that the last Government had committed itself by way of a Cabinet decision in respect of a public expenditure programme in May **1993** to introduce fees at the Barbados Community College, the Samuel **Jackman** Prescod Polytechnic, Erdiston College and the University of the West **Indies**. Sir, the Cabinet paper is available and I have already in this

Honourable Chamber produced the documents which showed the Cabinet decision approving a public expenditure programme showing revenue coming to the Barbados Government by way of fees and taking the policy decision to implement the charging of fees at the Polytechnic and the Community College and at the University of the West **Indies** from **1996**.

Sir, it is a matter of public record that the former Minister of Education, the Hon. **Cyril** Walker, refused to give a commitment to the people of this country and to this Honourable Chamber to pay fees for Barbadian students beyond **1996**. That is a matter of public record and that is consistent with the Cabinet decision showing that Government would have charged fees from **1996**.

Sir, that Government of the Democratic Labour Party would have charged fees. That Sir, was further supported. They feel that I come in here to tell lies. Let me tell you something, Sir, this is an *Aide Memoire* signed by the Hon. L. V. H. Lewis, G.C.M., authorised representative of the Government of Barbados, a Minister of the Crown nonetheless of the day, a colleague of the Honourable Member for St. Michael West, in the same Cabinet in which the Honourable Member for St. Michael West and the Leader of the Opposition sat, signed it the week after the Cabinet took the decision.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: On a point of order, Sir. I hate to interrupt the Honourable Member. The Honourable Member has made reference to the Member for St. Michael West and I have said in this House before and I say it again I know absolutely nothing of the Cabinet Paper of which the Honourable Member speaks.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Speaker, Sir, since the Honourable Member used to be on a plane all the time I can believe that he may not have been present at the Cabinet meeting, but the principle of collective responsibility is a principle upon which our Constitution is based, and unless he now wishes to dissociate himself from the Democratic Labour Party, I would suggest that he not go down that line.

On May 14, **1993**, the week after Cabinet took the decision, a team of persons went to Washington to negotiate with the World Bank for the loan that is now being executed by this Government. On that occasion, the team led by the Honourable Senator Lewis specifically stated at page 2 of the *Aide Memoire* which I will make again a document of the House that the education public expenditure programme approved by Cabinet on May 6, **1993** was discussed and agreed upon and is attached at Annex 1.

Sir, it goes on to speak about the public expenditure programme. It goes on to talk about cost recovery measures, for example, tuition fees at the post-secondary institutions. It says, Sir:

"The adoption of a cost recovery programme at the post-secondary level, i.e. U.W.I., BCC, SJPP, Erdiston College is based on the principle that beneficiaries should assume more responsibility for the cost of their education.

The Government of Barbados is strongly committed to introducing cost recovery at the post-secondary level. The Barbados delegation pointed out by the Government has authority and jurisdiction to determine cost recovery for all Barbadian students attending the University of the West Indies.

The public expenditure programme which, by the way, was approved by Cabinet 8 days before calls for the introduction of tuition fees which will represent about 10% of economic costs. To ensure the success of the cost recovery programme, the Government proposes to carry out analytic work including the design of an alternative finance mechanism, that is, loans or grant schemes and generate a broad consensus among the general population prior to launching the programme in 1996."

It goes on finally to say that the introduction of a cost recovery programme represents an important step forward and constitutes an important additional source of revenue to the educational sector which can be redirected towards a qualitative approach.

Sir, not only are these Minutes, but it is an *Aide Memoire* bearing the signature of a Minister of the Crown who received his mandate from Cabinet the week before. He is not like the Leader of the Opposition who said that he went and negotiated with the World Bank without getting a mandate from Cabinet. He received a mandate.

I want to say, Sir, the only reason I am going back to this is that we have heard a level of hypocrisy in this country by the Democratic Labour Party which for the last 10 months through the yard fowls have continued to "pompaset" and tell people that they were never part of this decision. It is the most blatant form of dishonesty. I agree that the Honourable Member for St. Michael West had so little regard for the former Cabinet that he would not even consider this a decision.

The reality is, Sir, that when we sought to be honest with the people of this country and to say to the people of this country that we had already been committed to the World Bank, that there is no way we can charge fees at the

BCC or the Polytechnic or Erdiston but that we want to engender a level of public discussion in respect of the University of the West Indies because it is too fundamental an issue to have a decision taken clandestinely in a room without the public of this country having an input, all we sought to do, Sir, is to say that we don't know how you want to deal with this, let us as a country discuss it. There must be a defining point in the manner in which we handle the question of tuition fees in this country.

To that extent, we appointed an advisory committee on the financing of tertiary education which comprised a number of distinguished people in this country and which met extensively and went all about this country taking the opinions of people. The same Democratic Labour Party all of a sudden are now saying no fees, having agreed to it in 1993. They have done an intellectually dishonest somersault and now are taking a contrary position. Everybody has the right to change his mind, but the least they could be is honest and tell people that they are now changing their minds.

Sir, I want to publicly commend... The other nasty thing that was done Sir, was to talk about this Government's appointing commissions and paying people a large sum of money. Sir, I want to use this opportunity to publicly thank those persons who served on that Committee for not a single red cent and who in the interest of public service, met every Thursday for 8 months and sometimes Fridays and Saturdays to get what I will make a document of the House today, this Report of the Advisory Committee on the Financing of University Education.

1.05 p.m.

Sir, this Government has accepted the Report and has deliberated over its recommendations. The recommendation of the Report has been that Barbadian students should pay 50% of the tuition fees charged by the University of the West Indies. I want to repeat that, Sir. The recommendation of the Report and the Committee is that Barbadian students should pay 50% of the tuition fees which would, in effect, approximate, on the current billings, to Barbadian students contributing \$3 million to \$6 million per year in tuition fees. The Cabinet of Barbados, on the recommendation of the Minister of Education, has agreed that the Government of Barbados in what can only be described as a defining philosophical moment, should treat education as an economic sector in this country with the full realization that on a growth path of knowledge base and skill, intensive industries the major input to that productive sector is human resource development.

In the same way, Sir, that we recognise philosophically the role of Government to support the development of productive sectors such as tourism,

whether it was the purchase of the Hilton in the 1960s, or the development of the south coast hotels today, or Government's role in the development in the informatics sector, or manufacturing, that having determined that human resource development is the major contributor to our economic development, education must now be treated not simply as a social sector but indeed as an economic sector in this country. To that end, Mr. Speaker, we have determined that in the same way as we can bring about fiscal incentives and subsidies for inputs within the economic sector by giving duty free inputs to manufacturing that has seen the most tremendous growth in manufacturing in the last year, or to the tourism sector, that the Government of Barbados will treat the question of students' tuition fees as an economic cost that we are committed to pay. In other words, Mr. Speaker, there will be simply no tuition fees.

SUSPENSION OF SITTING

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that this House be suspended until 2.15 p.m. this afternoon.

Asides.

Mr. SPEAKER: The Hon. Member have you concluded?

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: No, Sir. We are 10 minutes into the lunch period, I will not be very much longer but I still need to conclude.

The question that the House be suspended until 2.15 p.m. was put and resolved in the affirmative without division and Mr. SPEAKER suspended the House accordingly.
2.25 p.m.

RESUMPTION

Mr. SPEAKER: This sitting is resumed. The Honourable Member for St. Michael North East.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Speaker, at the time at which the sitting was suspended for lunch, I was in the process of indicating this Government's policy in respect of tuition fees at the University of the West Indies. I clearly indicated that this Government has committed itself to continuing the payment of fees of Barbadian students attending the University of the West Indies on the basis that we believe that if we view education as we must as an economic sector, we will continue to ensure that we can have the valid and properly trained human resource base to meet the needs of national development.

We have also taken a decision, Sir, that there will be some limitation in respect of the payment of tuition fees,

and, indeed, Sir, we commit ourselves fully to the payment of tuition fees for one first degree at the University of the West Indies for the period of time the programme runs for the first degree, plus one additional year, because we recognise that sometimes people may fall ill, or there may be some other reason which may cause them to repeat their year in pursuance of their university education.

We have also determined, Sir, that we will pay for students pursuing one part-time first degree for the period of time that programme runs to complete the part-time first degree, plus one additional year. In those circumstances, we have also taken a decision to continue the policy in relation to post graduate **training** where anybody who receives an upper second class degree or a first class degree will be entitled to have their tuition fees paid as a right for post-graduate training and a discretion given to the Minister of Education to pay the tuition fees of any person who will be pursuing post-graduate training in an area of national demand as outlined by the Minister of Education on those circumstances. We believe that it is necessary to put those limits on the commitment to continuing the payment of student fees.

I would also let this Honourable Chamber know that these limitations have been consistent with views expressed in the Advisory Committee's Report and have also been consistent with views expressed by various sectors within the educational fraternity, including the Guild of Undergraduates. We believe that having given the opportunity to a person to pursue one full-time first degree, or one part-time first degree, the responsibility of Government extends not to another first degree but indeed to post-graduate training in those areas that currently exist which we will be continuing as a matter of policy.

I want to say all of this, Sir, because this whole issue of university fees, as I said, has been a contentious one. We took a decision that we could not give the commitment on this matter without a full and proper examination of the circumstances and indeed we ensured that we were capable of sounding public opinion as well as receiving studied memoranda from various members of the broader community and the educational community. We are satisfied, Mr. Speaker, after a full and proper ventilation of this matter, that we are in a position to determine it, and have done so by reason of the announcements addressed to you here. What also makes this so significant, as I said, was the position taken by the past Government, now the present Opposition.
2.25 p.m.

One of the significant things is that when we decided that we were not prepared to compromise at all on the Polytechnic or, indeed, the **BCC** or Erdiston that there

was a determination that even if it meant not being able to access the loan financing available from the World Bank we were not prepared at all to compromise on that position.

What was also significant, Mr. Speaker, was that we advanced that position to the World Bank and the World Bank in a letter to the Government of Barbados through the Director of Finance and Economic Affairs on March 10, 1995 which I will make a document of the House said that they understood, on page 2 and I quote:

"We understand the Government's reluctance to charge tuition fees for Students attending in-service teacher training programmes at Erdiston, to those attending the Polytechnic who come from relatively poor socio-economic backgrounds and to those at the Community College who are there because of a lack of adequate sixth form places in schools."

I make this point because there has, in fact, been in existence in Barbados for many years a policy in respect of cost recovery for part-time persons at a number of educational institutions who wanted to be able to broaden their mandate in the delivery of services. This Government has no intention of altering that situation because most of the persons who are pursuing those part-time courses are, in fact, in a position to contribute towards the cost of such courses.

Having said that, Mr. Speaker, Sir, I want to refer, very briefly, to the projections which we have in respect of the cost of university education over the next 10 years and the expansion rates. Basically, on the basis of information supplied from the University of the West Indies to us, we expect that total enrolment at the University which currently stands at 2 228 should be able to be expanded to at least 3 061 in the year 2004.

We also expect that there will be an increase in cost which will move. This year we will spend some \$28 million in economic cost. Although we have not received the formal billing yet, we expect the billing to be in the vicinity of some \$6 million to \$6½ million. In those circumstances, the calculations for projected cost increases to the year 2004 show that, by that stage, the economic cost should result in a billing to Government of some \$39 million, just under \$40 million in fact, \$39.9 million and of tuition fees of some \$7 million or just thereover.

In those circumstances, this Government therefore has not taken a decision without reference to information before it nor without reference to the full process of consultation with the people of this country. It is too fundamental a decision that can affect the future of the human resources of this country.

We also believe that the cost saving mechanisms currently being pursued at the University of the West Indies in pursuance of the implementation of the Government's report are substantial and we expect, therefore, to have some element of cost savings in respect of their capacity to manage their own programme. One of the little known facts of that implementation, Sir, is that the University of the West Indies Council which currently stands in excess of 200 persons will, in fact, drop to 21 people. That is a significant decision in respect of management of that institution. They are cost related because the University would, hitherto, have borne the cost of all 200 persons sitting on council in terms of their capacity to be at that meeting. There has been a clear decision that not only is that body unwieldy in size but, indeed, there is an element of cost saving that can be generated through the new structure that is being proposed.

There are a number of other mechanisms relating to the restructuring of faculties, to the delivery of consultancy services to the public sector and the private sector throughout the region that should, in fact, see a reduction in the overall percentage reliance of the University on the Governments in this region.

I wish to move now to the question of Erdiston Teachers' Training College. On the weekend I had the opportunity and the pleasure to announce that Erdiston had, in fact, been responding well to their new mandate. There was a time some three years ago where there was uncertainty as to whether Erdiston would continue to exist. I am happy that decision led to its continued existence.

Erdiston has been around for some 48 years. But even prior to Erdiston, teacher training was available in Barbados through the Rawle Training Institute. One of the things that have contributed to the relative success of education in this country has been, in my opinion, the capacity to train those persons who can affect output. It is therefore critical, Mr. Speaker, that we continue the process of teacher training in this country and retraining.

There is however as you would know, Mr. Speaker, a need to be able to measure the value of that training in the actual working environment. As recently as yesterday, the Chairman of Erdiston intimated to me that Erdiston is now seeking to develop a second mechanism that would allow them to trace the development of their students in the classroom as well as deliver a level of training in the classroom to ensure that that training is more relevant and not simply academic in nature.

Erdiston, as you may know, Sir, has taken over the programmes offered by the University of the West Indies in the form of the In-service Diploma on Education as well as the Certificate of Education Management and

Administration. But we believe that there is a category of persons in the teaching sector, particularly among temporary teachers that have not been trained, that deserve the opportunity to be trained and, indeed, Sir, that we must provide that opportunity for teachers who would wish to have training.

As a result of the cessation of full-time training, they have been unable for a very long time to access full-time training. In many instances, many of them could not even access part-time training as Your Honour may be aware. We took a decision last year that, at the very least, those **untrained** temporary teachers must be allowed to access part-time training in the interim and that, with the resumption of full-time training at Erdiston, they must be given priority.

This Government believes that from September, 1997, there will be an element of teacher training available to those untrained teachers which would lead to full-time qualifications on their part. I am happy therefore to announce this to this Honourable Chamber.

In addition, Sir, we recognize that there are still some difficulties. One of the unfortunate things about Erdiston is that the last Government did, in fact, tie them in to a downsizing of a substantial nature through the reduction of staff available to Erdiston College and indeed at a time, as Your Honour may be aware when they were increasing the workload of the college.

It has now left this Government in a difficult position because that too was contained as part of the negotiations between the World Bank and the Government.

We have decided that those resources in the form of people, whether on a consultancy basis, contractual basis or fully employed basis, **or** part-time employment must be available to Erdiston to meet what has been, in fact, an increased mandate. You cannot increase the mandate of an institution and then **downsize** its capacity to meet that mandate.

The Principal of Erdiston made this point at the weekend, at the graduation ceremony at Sherbourne and it is **one** which we have given a general commitment to ensure, that they have proper access to resources to deliver the mandate which has been given to them.

That institution, in pursuance of our discussions with the White Paper too also produced a training plan down to the year 2000. We believe that it is one worthy of support, having considered it and we will be continuing the expansion of the programme they have outlined.

One of the most significant things that I would wish to alert this Honourable Chamber about is the capacity of Erdiston to meet the needs of IT training, Information Technology training among teachers if we are going to move to a stage where we can use that technology in the form of computer aided learning.

I have announced previously, in public, that this Government is seeking to negotiate a loan which would see the rehabilitation of primary schools and, equally the computerization of primary schools in a ratio of one in four. In other words, one computer for every four pupils. If we are going to do that then we must be in the position not only to ensure that the hardware and the software are available in the schools but that we have so adequately trained our teaching population that it can be used as an effective tool in the learning and teaching process.

In those circumstances, Sir, we determined that we would need to start that process of training teachers in information technology for computer aided learning as a matter of urgency. I am happy to announce to this Honourable Chamber that we negotiated with the Caribbean Development Bank for a loan which we started negotiations for March last year and which the Caribbean Development **Bank** approved in December last year. That loan would see funds going to the completion of the St. **Thomas** Secondary School which has been costing the Government of Barbados some \$40 000 per month for the 3½ years that construction has ceased, and also to the cost of the diagnostic **testings** that I referred to this morning in terms of testing for physical impediments, and also for Erdiston College to embark on a training programme of teachers in the system over the next 3 years to be able to bring as many Barbadian teachers as possible to a level of competence in the use of information technology.
2.35 p.m.

Sir, we believe that this is an example of good planning. We believe that we are making sure that once we access the resources to be able to computerise the primary plant, Sir, and the secondary plant on a one in 10 ratio, we would have the human resources capable of using the technology which we would be putting in schools. One of the things a lot of countries that have sought to computerise have found, is that they computerised without preparing the teachers so that the computers sat in schools and could not be effectively used other than for the purposes of word processing or something basic like that, because they had not trained the teachers in the use of it as a computer aided learning tool which is something significantly different, it was almost to be described as a wasted investment.

In respect of that loan from the Caribbean Development Bank that I just referred to, we believe therefore that it will give Erdiston the capacity to

develop a potential for training. That training in fact, Mr. Speaker, Sir, for the computer aided learning will start from September 1996 and the loan provides not only for the purchase of hardware and software but indeed for technical assistance in the college as well.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, I have dealt essentially with Erdiston, with the Polytechnic, with the University of the West Indies and in a limited form, the Barbados Community College. As I indicated, the Barbados Community College continues to do an excellent job. Not only does it have to deal with the increased mandate through the Hospitality Institute but it has in fact also been the subject of serious discussion with the Ministry as to the capacity to extend information technology training in Barbados. Unfortunately the Community College at the moment will be able to meet very little of the demand that exists for information technology training and one of the things that we have addressed, both in the White Paper and in real terms, is our desire to expand that training in the course of the coming academic year so that we can move from a situation of training 200 persons per year to 425 persons in general training for information technology and to put on 3 advanced diploma courses for 12-week periods which would bring students who have already received that basic training to an even higher level and make them more able to meet the demands placed on them by businesses in the existing informatics sector in Barbados.

We hope, Sir, that we will be in a position to implement this fully by September and I would only wish to say, Sir, that the type of training and the type of commitment that we have seen at the Barbados Community College augurs well for the continued training of Barbadians as we move into the 21st Century. This is not only in informatics, Sir, but from all areas, whether it is in the area of health, whether it is in the area of hospitality, whether it is in the area simply of providing the outlet for alternative training to the 'A' Levels through the Associate Degree courses. I only wish to say at this stage, Sir, that this Government has the honour to announce that as of 1997, for the very first time, students pursuing the Associate Degree programme will be entitled to be awarded scholarships in this country and the mechanism for that has been virtually agreed upon between the Barbados Community College and the Ministry. We believe that the students should not be prejudiced by virtue of the fact that they have not chosen to do 'A' levels since in many instances the Associate Degree Programme extends beyond the 'A' Level courses. There should therefore be an opportunity for them to be able to access tertiary training at the level of a scholarship being available to them in circumstances where some of them in fact are doing work which is not different from the ones doing 'A' levels.

That brings me, Sir, to the question of whether in fact there was a case for additional sixth form institutions in this country. For a number of reasons, Sir, we believe, in

the Ministry, that we will in fact see a decline over the next few years in the number of persons taking 'A' levels. Sir, not only would the playing field be levelled by allowing Associate Degree students to be entitled to scholarships but the articulation agreements between the Barbados Community College and the University of the West Indies which we believe will be in place by the end of this month, will also ensure that students doing the associate degree will receive credits in some areas on which there is already agreement on articulation, and therefore they would be able to pursue and move forward at a quicker rate to a degree and in a more comprehensive manner than those persons who would have simply done 'A' levels and are matriculating on the basis of those 'A' levels.

In those circumstances, Mr. Speaker, we expect that there will continue to be a decline in the number of students wishing to pursue 'A' level subjects in their own right. This is an issue that will bear further examination particularly because of the commitment given by successive Governments of Barbados to the question of the 'A' level equivalent that CXC is seeking to develop in the region. We have therefore to examine these matters fully given the increased use and prevalence of the Associate Degree programme in our system.

I would not go so far as to say, Sir, that perhaps we are now seeing the vindication of an Honourable Member in here as to the existence of that college purely as being the only one that should provide sixth form education but I would venture to say, Sir, that the truth is that I suspect that he may well be correct before the end of the century.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, I want to address briefly the issue of teacher empowerment again because I spoke about teacher training just now in the context of Erdiston and I spoke about the need for devolution of greater management at the level of the schools. One of the significant things that has to be addressed in this system, Sir, is the question of teacher appraisal. I would only wish to say at this stage, Sir, that you cannot attempt to improve output in the system if you do not have a mechanism by which you can assess the performance of those who are largely charged with the job of improving output. Therefore it becomes necessary to have a uniform instrument of appraisal that bears application across the board and not the ad hoc system of appraisal that currently exists within the Ministry.

This has been an issue that has been under negotiation since 1989, Sir, but I believe that it has to be one of the fundamental points on which we can reach agreement across the sectors during the course of this calendar year. To that end I was able to call together all of the stakeholders late last year and we took a decision that there

had been some difficulties in the committee established previously which did not include members of the union on its drafting sub-committee although members of the union were on the full committee. In those circumstances, we felt that was unfair. We felt that they had to have the opportunity to put their philosophical position and then get down to the task of drafting with particularity what was required in respect of the instrument for this appraisal.

2.45 p.m.

I am awaiting, Sir, that Committee to finish its work. I expect that we should have a basic position by the end of March because, if we are going to seek to put a series of incentives in place to raise the rewarding as well as the morale of teachers, then we must have an objective system in place by which the teacher's performance can be judged. While it may be necessary, Mr. Speaker, to assess that performance and to reward them on the basis of those who can attain excellence, my own views are that there must be a broader mechanism which is capable of rewarding performance in the public service among teachers if we **are** going to make substantial headway.

Any consideration, Sir, of teacher appraisal must recognize that the types of evaluation to which teachers will be subject must be both summative and formative in nature and that the summative evaluation will be concerned **more** with the management and legal requirements. Generally, it is the type of evaluation where the teacher is given a final grading at the end of the year and the teacher **is** judged by some prescribed criteria worked out independently. Formative evaluation, Sir, is regarded by teachers as more desirable. Indeed, Sir, the major attractiveness of formative evaluation is based on the fact that it is continuous and is based on a mutual working **relationship** between teacher and evaluator, that it focuses on the positive attributes of the teacher and that is the stated aim of that evaluation is to improve the performance of the teacher.

Sir, there have been a number of concerns expressed about teacher evaluation and we have been sensitive to them and cognizant of them. Indeed, there has been a general fear that appraisal will be punitive and create frustration and disharmony among teachers. Sir, we feel that evaluation must concentrate more on being able to improve the performance of teachers rather than being used as a punitive instrument and this Government is committed to that.

We also recognize, Sir, that there are concerns as to who should be the person evaluating. In fact, one of the comments made by the Barbados Secondary Teachers' Union is that under no circumstances will they agree to student evaluation of teachers. This is a matter, Sir, that

might bear further discussion but we are sensitive to the difficulties. We believe that at the very least there must be evaluation by superiors and by peers. Sir, we are also sensitive to the concerns about confidentiality in respect of the use of appraisal documents and as in other areas of Government, Sir, we believe there has to be **the** greatest attention paid to who should be evaluating.

We also believe, Sir, that principals have to be the subject of evaluation as well and not simply teachers who **are** in the classrooms, because at **the** end of the day the principals are equally accountable in the system and really and truly there has to be the broadening of the definition of what we expect from them as principals, because to a large extent, it is not simply about managing a school environment but it is about being able to lead people, lead students, lead teachers and to inspire the confidence that you can perform in that **environment** and give them the freedom to grow and participate in the areas of the economy and in the areas of character development ultimately. Teachers **too**, Sir, must also **see** their role as centred on the capacity to create wealth in this country and by creating wealth I mean, Sir, creating economic, spiritual and cultural wealth in this country. Their job is not simply to teach a child how to do a, b, c but to develop a child who has the capacity to go forward and to **see** itself as part and parcel of the nation building process be it at the economic level, spiritual level or at the cultural level. We would hope that through our continued dialogue with teachers and their representatives and indeed through a strong information programme across the system, we **can** help bring about that, that is the kind of **attitudinal** change in this country. At the end of the day it matters that we **are** capable of altering the final product, that is the type of Barbadian child coming out of our school system not only in terms of academic performance but indeed in terms of character.

Equally, we must also account for the roles of parents. Parents play a significant part in a child's capacity to learn and continue to **learn** in life and must become more involved in the lives of their children in terms of their learning process at school, in terms of their extra curricula activities and in terms of the general instilment of values that bear full and proper examination by other persons and are capable of developing all that is best about this country and has been best about this country.

One of the things that bothers me, Sir, is that, as a corollary of a high incidence of teenage pregnancies, we have a relatively young set of people who are parents. There are a number of people who are under 30 years who are the parents of primary school children and who may still be going through a learning process in their own right for themselves, far less having to deal with the responsibility of children of their own. We believe, Sir, that the Ministry has to assist non-Governmental

organizations, the schools, the church and PTA in increasing the level of parent education programmes in this country. One of the things that the Alma Parris School, which has been performing extremely well since its establishment, has been able to do is to increase the level of parent education particularly of its students' parents. Many have been so glad that this is now available to them, and really and truly we wonder now why it has not happened before,

A number of other schools throughout the country, Sir, are seeing their role with the interaction of parents not simply in the form of the PTA, which I must say has become sometimes too focused on raising funds and nothing else, but also in terms of wanting to increase the educational opportunities available for parents. These are not only in terms of formal knowledge but in terms also, Sir, of the knowledge for life and in the sensitizing of parents of the types of problems that children may face and how they, as parents though sometimes confused as to how to deal with these problems, may receive assistance, support and counselling facilities that are available to help them as parents, while very often they themselves are still children a young adults, to be able to deal with the difficulties of their own children. Anybody who has spent a considerable amount of time particularly in St. Michael will understand that this is a very, very real problem for many of the parents of some of our children.

If these parents do not accept the challenge to rise to become more involved in their children's lives at school and their children's lives generally in what they are capable of providing them with and nurturing them with, then we will continue to see the kind of reckless and indiscriminate use of violence as well as displays of morals that we have seen among some of our young with which we are battling to try and get them back on the straight and narrow path,

So that I want to use this opportunity to appeal to parents here today, Sir, that they have to play their role. Yes, the teachers can affect output but at the end of the day parents have the most fundamental role to play in the development of their child and how that child can in fact move forward.

Sir, I want to say to you that of course there are some issues in here that I have not covered in depth but I expect that there will be a full debate on this matter. I expect that I will be in a position to answer concerns raised by Members on both sides as to this White Paper. But I want, Sir, to say that at the end of the day this is of no use unless we can communicate effectively to the people who need to participate in the process. This Government, Mr. Speaker, is painfully aware that this cannot simply be the policy of a Barbados Labour Party and expect that it will be successful in its implementation. That is not the

intention of this White Paper, this debate or this Government, and in the circumstances we feel strongly that this has to be treated in a national manner. We believe that there has to be the national and public recognition, that education is in fact one of the key things on which we must get our hands if we are going to make a substantial difference to our capacity to have long-term sustainable economic, cultural and spiritual growth. We also understand that we have to position it first in people's minds as an area in which urgent attention is needed. 2.55 p.m.

I believe, Sir, that during the course of the last 18 months we have been successful in causing Barbadians to stop and take stock of their educational system. There may not be agreement on everything, but I believe that for the first time in a long time there has been the focus on where education is going in this country and where it is taking us as a people spiritually, culturally and economically, I believe, Sir, that is only part of the stage, because having made people aware of the fact that there was a problem, we had then to produce a set of options available to the population to deal with that problem.

Mr. Speaker, I would wish to commend this document as being the primary basis from which those solutions can be drawn by the people of this country, not as a document of the Barbados Labour Party but as a document for a national co-operative effort in the development of education as one of the focal areas of this economy and this society. I want to challenge both sides of the House - or should I say all three sides - to treat this document with the national determination that it deserves and to treat it with the commitment to national development that I believe is necessary if we as a country are going to move forward.

We have always been fortunate in that there has genuinely and generally been a level of patriotism and a bipartisan approach towards the development of education in this country. In 1961 when the Democratic Labour Party came to power, it was capable of paying fees for students in Government secondary schools, because the places existed in the schools, and the places existed because between 1951 and 1961 there were over five public secondary schools built by Government in this country, including the St. Leonard's Girls', the St. Leonard's Boys', Parkinson, Grantley Adams (West St. Joseph). The point I am making is that there has always been a reasonable level of continuity on the major aspects of education in this country and we have been fortunate that our democracy has been sufficiently mature to be able to appreciate that one plays politics with education at one's peril.

I would hope that we would be able to continue to see the mature approach that has been exhibited

throughout the history of our country, except I must say that I expect fully that the National Democratic Party will distance itself from the intellectual 'dinosaurism' – because I do not **know** what else to call it – that would have resulted in **the** most predictable of comments from its **spokesman** on education. If he did not **talk** about elitism in **education**, it would not have been that **spokesman**, who is as predictable on these issues as anyone else. I believe that the leadership of that party reflects a greater level of **current** thinking that understands how we must approach matters of education in this country, and I would be disappointed if it was limited and **their** constitution was limited only to those comments made by the spokesman on education.

Sir, I want to challenge both sides to join hands on this issue in **respect** of education being a matter of national **concern**. We believe that we have to communicate effectively to people. We have had meetings not only in **Bridgetown** and **Speightstown**, we have also had meetings with PTA's. Up to last weekend yet again members of the Ministry staff were out addressing PTA's, church groups, **social** groups **across** the country, and for anyone to suggest that we have treated this in a manner that has not been fulsome is really to mislead this Honourable Chamber. Indeed, the **&bate** has been non-partisan to date; it has also **been** extensive, having **started** from as early as August, in **terms** of the formal document, but as I indicated earlier, consultations started much earlier.

I want to give the commitment to those members of the educational fraternity, who continue to be most **co-operative** with this **Government**, **that** all major policies in here still have to bear independent implementation. This document is simply a reflection of Government's policy intention, but to actually implement any one of these policies there still has to be the consultative process which we will continue to honour as we have done to date in the last 18 months. Therefore, whether it is on the issue of the new Education Act, which we hope to start preparing for in April this year, or whether it is on national certification, or whether it is on the creation of the second secondary school to deal with and have an alternative curriculum, we will continue to consult with the stakeholders. I believe we have met with the stakeholders more often than any recent Government in respect of education, and we have given them the chance not only to outline their views on the general issues of the White Paper, but on specific policies being pursued by this Ministry.

I want to take this opportunity really to thank those organisations, their leadership and their membership – The Barbados Association of Principals of Public Secondary Schools, the Barbados Union of Teachers, the Conference of Primary School Heads, the Barbados Secondary Teachers' Union, the National Forum on Education, the

Association of Assisted Private Secondary Schools – and others who have all continued to show a level of commitment towards the improvement of education in this country that is deserving of public recognition and merit. I want to give them the assurance that this Government will continue to consult with them. We may not always agree on everything, but we believe there must **be mutual** respect for positions and that is as critical to the process as the implementation of the policies themselves. We also feel that everything we do in here may not succeed 100%. If it could, we would not be **mortals**, but what we can assure this Honourable Chamber is that we will do our best in the implementation of these policies, because we believe them to be basically right and basically capable of improving the lot of children in this country, and that in the implementation of any new policy we expect there will be problems. We believe, therefore, there has to be a national effort at mobilising those persons in respect of coming on board and making this work for us and making this change that is necessary.

3.05 p.m.

I could not have managed to be standing here with you today in this Honourable Chamber **talking** were it not for the invaluable assistance of the officers in the Ministry of Education, and I want to take this opportunity to thank them publicly for working far beyond the call of duty, not only in the preparation of this White Paper but in the general approach to their work. I may not always be the most understanding person when it comes to getting things done because I like to see things done quickly and I may not appear that way, but I really want to say that the public servants in the Ministry of Education, both in the technical as well as the **administrative** section of that Ministry, have displayed a level of public service that is really befitting the strongest possible congratulations on the part of this Government and indeed on my personal part.

I hope that we will be able to continue to carry forward the process because at the end of the day, Sir, it is a total effort of all persons involved and no single person can **carry** this process forward. No single political party can carry this process forward. No single faction can **carry** this process forward. Therefore, I really seek to end by appealing to all those in this country who are on the side of carrying Barbados forward, who are on the side of improving the lot of Barbadians and in particular Barbadian children, who are on the side of being able to develop a nation that is strong and self-reliant that is capable of holding its own on the **global** stage and, indeed, capable of success and influence and giving other people assistance on the global stage.

I want, in the words of Martin Luther King, to remind Barbados of the fierce urgency of now, to understand that now is the time to move and now is the time to act. If

we seek to place these measures on the back burner we do so at our own peril. If we seek to engage in the luxury of cooling off or if we seek to engage in the luxury of taking the tranquilizing drug of **gradualism**, in the words of Martin Luther King, Sir, then we do so at the peril of this country as it seeks to adjust from one age to another, as we move into the 21st century.

Ours is not the lot where we can continue to believe that we must rely on quotas, subsidies and preferences. Ours must be the lot where we determine that we can be in charge of our own future, that we have the human potential, that we have the capacity to care, that we have the capacity to grow and to be self-reliant so that, at the end of the day, we can compete with anyone anywhere in the world on an even footing.

We, Sir, at the end of the day, have to determine that we must be craftsmen of our own fate. I thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. F. J. **STUART**: Mr. Speaker, any debate on a White Paper on Education Reform in any country at any time is necessarily an important debate and I should like to begin by thanking the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East for the initiatives which she and officers of her Ministry took, that have resulted in this debate here today. Any debate on education is a debate about a country and its future and no political party that is credible can say other than that it has a vested interest in the future of its children and therefore in the quality of its educational system. Mr. Speaker, one of the concerns that I have had in this debate so far is that the impression was given during the Honourable Member's speech that interest in education began in Barbados 18 months ago. Now I have a little difficulty with that because over the last 40 years of my life I have been aware of a certain effervescence in Barbados on matters educational. I am aware of the contribution of a long line of Ministers of Education to the quality of education we have here in Barbados today.

I think at this time of the late Mr. Luther Thome, for example, who was Minister of Education in Barbados until the year 1961 and whose contribution to the development of education in Barbados by all reports and published records has been massive, substantial and wise.

I think at this time too of the late Sir James Tudor who between 1961 and 1967 presided over what I would call a quiet revolution in education in Barbados: the introduction of tuition-free secondary education, the introduction of the school meals programme and many other initiatives which have helped to place Barbados on the educational road that it is on today.

Between 1967 and 1975 and then again between 1986 and 1987 I think of the contribution of the Honourable Member for St. Michael South, the longest **serving Minister** of Education, I believe, over the last 40 years in Barbados. His contribution too had been a sensible and insightful contribution. I believe the Minister was **appropriately** magnanimous today in acknowledging his contribution and input into the establishment of the Barbados Community College. Then, of course, there was the very brief contribution of Mr. Frederick Smith, now Sir **Frederick** Smith; and between 1976 and 1981 there was the Honourable Member for St. George South, whose contribution to the Ministry of Education and to education in Barbados nobody can dispute and, indeed, as we **speak** today about reform in education one has to be reminded that the Education Act under which we operate was largely that Honourable Member's doing.

Between 1981 and 1986, the Honourable Member for the City presided over education in this Island. And some there are who say that that was a very **tempestuous** period in education in Barbados and that it was a period of controversy. I do not believe that controversy is always a bad thing and I therefore do not **mark** down the Honourable Member on that.

3.15 p.m.

I believe that hers was a provocative period in education that the system was forced to question itself, to justify what it had, and to determine what it could get rid of.

Then, of course, I think of Mr. **Cyril** Walker whose interest in the use of technology in education none would want to dispute as indeed I think of Mr. Keith Simmons, whose interest in discipline none would want to dispute. Then there was Mr. Tyrone Estwick whose stay was a rather short one but, short though it was, it sparkled with possibilities and was unfortunately cut short by untoward and unexpected political events. So the foundation upon which the Honourable Member seeks to build today was laid by many distinguished Ministers of Education. Two have since been gathered unto their fathers and we remember them today with gratitude. Those who are still with us we acknowledge have placed us everlastingly in their debt.

Now, Mr. Speaker, education is as old as mankind himself. From the dawn of human civilization education **existed**. From the dawn of human civilization man has had to acquire knowledge and apply that knowledge to the solution of his problems, and also to confront nature with which he had been in a harsh and hostile encounter. So all education has been from time immemorial about the acquisition of knowledge and the application of that knowledge to the solution of human problems. Of course, man has always had basic needs like food, clothing

and shelter, and man's earliest educational efforts were in the direction of satisfying those needs. So the acquisition of knowledge and the application of that knowledge was for the purpose of satisfying the **needs** of food, clothing and shelter.

Obviously, Mr. Speaker, as human society developed, and as the division of labour **took** place, the relationship **between man and nature became** more complex and how man confronted nature necessarily changed so that whereas early man **confronted** nature directly as the division of labour overtook the evolution of human beings, and as man applied his knowledge to the development of technology, various pieces of technology mediated the relationship **between man and nature**. Even though all education is still about the application of human knowledge, and the application of that knowledge to the solution of human problems, **the** nature of the struggle man wages has changed because of human development.

When one thinks of education in Barbados, when one thinks of the reforms being introduced here today, that is the context within which one has to examine these reforms. Now, the White Paper on Education Reform, which is the subject matter of this debate, starts out with what is called a philosophical vision and that philosophical vision is crafted around a quotation **from** the late Tom **Adams**, a sensible quotation, that a revolutionary concept cannot work in a non-revolutionary framework. The moment one **sees** revolution one looks for change. One looks to **see** what one is changing from and what one is changing to. Therefore, when I read the White Paper, urged on and led on by the Minister's philosophical vision and that quotation, I looked **to see** what it was we were changing **from** and what it was we were changing to. I listened to the Honourable Member here today and I cannot claim to this **very** moment to have found out what it is we are changing **to**.

The context within which this debate takes place is that we now live in a world with one super power, a super power that has the same problems that Barbados has. We discuss debt here in Barbados, the Americans are discussing debt. We discuss deficit here in Barbados, the Americans are discussing deficit **too**. We discuss crime here in Barbados the Americans are discussing crime. We **discuss** unemployment here in Barbados, the Americans are discussing unemployment. **All** of the problems that afflict Barbados in 1996 are problems which are **afflicting** the United States of America as well, and those problems have been afflicting the United States of America for a very long time. I contend that had the United States of America the solution to those problems, those solutions would have been applied already. Therefore, it is not sensible for Barbados to expect that a country that cannot solve its own problems somehow has the solution to ours. Looking to the

so-called developed world for the solutions to our problems is, in my respectful submission, a mistake because they are grappling with the same problems and have proved manifestly incapable of dealing with those problems.

I make another point that in any municipal society, if history teaches anything at all, it teaches that all major change comes from below. **All** major change is precipitated **from** the bottom. People at the top do not want change because the *status quo* guarantees their being at the top. It is the people at the bottom who want change and if that is true of a municipal society, I contend that it is also true of international societies, that in the world order as we **see** it today, the countries at the top do not want anything changed. It is the countries at the bottom that want something changed because it is the countries at the bottom that are suffering as a result of how the world is at present organized. Therefore, the countries that have to be in the vanguard for a re-ordering of the world's business have to be countries like Barbados, and since our natural resources are limited, and since we are of limited size, the resources upon which we have to depend are our human resources, and the development of our human resources – and I agree with the Minister on this – can only meaningfully take place through the use of education. Education therefore has a role **to** play in social transformation and, dare I say, in global transformation.
3.25 p.m.

Looking at a White Paper on Education in 1996 cannot simply be a question of expanding on this and extending that and bringing back this and taking away that. It has to be based on the fact that Barbados has a role to play in international affairs and that that role has to be a leading role if the **reconfigured** world's business that has followed the Cold War is to give us our due, if we are to be able to extract what is ours from that world.

That is the context within which I looked at the White Paper. It was for that kind of thought that I looked. But I cannot confess to having seen anything in the White Paper that satisfies me **that** we have seized the issue, that we understand that ours must be a leading role in all of this. The obligation, of course, is even larger having regard to the fact that the United Nations Human Development Index places us nearly at the top of the developing world. I believe that two years ago we were at the top. If that is so, status implies responsibility. That enlarges our responsibility to be trendsetters in the area of human development and in the production of ideas that can reorder the world in a way that is advantageous to Barbados.

The debate also takes place, Mr. Speaker, at a time when there is an information explosion worldwide. Access to information is freer today than at any other time in human history. That fact has consequences for global

development because whereas 50 years ago an idea hatched in Barbados could have got lost on these shores, the development of information technology has now made it possible for creative ideas hatched in Barbados to find their way in Moscow or Teheran or Washington. Although we cannot export military hardware, **our** ideas can touch every corner of the globe with facility and we have a chance to determine how people elsewhere think. There is the information factor.

Then there is the third factor. The factor that Barbados is a post slavery society and that education has always been, because of that fact, scarce. After slavery, it is well-known that the bulk of the Barbadian population had to make do with a primary education called a seventh standard education. Not until starting in the fifties and into the sixties was any serious attempt made to make secondary education available to the bulk of the population. The whole question of access was seriously addressed from the 1950s on and accelerated during the 1960s **until** today we can boast that the average Barbadian has full access to secondary education.

The challenge today is in the area of tertiary education because whereas primary education is no longer scarce and whereas secondary education is no longer scarce, today I believe less than 10% or about 10% of our population only has access to tertiary education. That is an area of challenge to which we must respond.

Having said all of that, Mr. Speaker, I think it necessary to look at the pillars upon which our present educational system rests and has rested for all the years that we have had an educational system. I think these are 4 major pillars. For a start I think that **our** education has rested on what I call philosophical pragmatism. We have approached education in the manner of the philosophical pragmatist. Philosophical pragmatism had its genesis on the American continent. It has been described as the national philosophy of the United States of America. It was begotten of a Nineteenth Century Harvard Philosopher Charles Sanders Pierce. It was midwived into effective existence by a Nineteenth Century Harvard Philosopher **William** James and it was cradled and nourished to maturity by a Chicago scholar, Mr. John Dewey.

What the philosophical pragmatist basically say is this, that right or good is defined not by any notions of right or good but defined by what will work. The pragmatist does not **ask** himself whether this is good or this is bad. His question is, will this work? As long as the answer is yes, it will work, by definition it is good, by definition it is right.

It was a very progressive philosophy in the United States of America, a land of unlimited opportunity in the nineteenth century and the early part of this century. It was

admirably suited to **that kind of environment where**, for every individual, what was called **the American dream** could be **realized** because **of** the unlimited **possibilities** offered by that society.

It is not without **significance** that John Dewey sometimes called it **experimentalism** because it **was** his view that, in the United **States** of America, you **could** always take a chance, the opportunities were so unlimited that you could experiment **and** if you failed, there was adequate scope to get up and **run** again.

Pragmatism as a national philosophy admirably **suited** the United States of America and **the** challenges to which that environment was responding. In Barbados we have also, over the years, adopted that philosophy as well. We adopted that philosophy because economic possibilities allowed us to take chances in education and **to experiment** with what we had trying to find out what would work for us. To be fair to all those who have gone before and whose contribution I have lauded here **today**, their efforts were richly rewarded. What they hied **worked** and therefore, to that extent, it can be said that the pragmatist approach to education worked for Barbados.

I have always had difficulties at an ethical and **moral** level with pragmatism because I have always felt that, while it is true that those who originated it and those **who** have propagated it had good historical and environmental reasons for espousing it, that in a situation of scarcity, it can be a very dangerous weapon. How many of us reflect that the pragmatist's tendency not to take the long view but to concern himself with what will work now and what you can get out of a situation now is what really informs an armed robber. He is not concerned with the damage he causes to anybody or what consequences will flow to him down the road. The questions he **asks** now **are**, 'What is in this for me now? What will work now?' That is also true of the rapist. It is also true of the unscrupulous politician who, if a lie will work now will tell the lie.

But, Mr. Speaker, to get back to the point. That approach has worked and worked for us up **until** recently when a reconfigured world brought us face to face with the harsh realities of international life. So the system has rested on philosophical pragmatism. That is what we use as the vehicle both at the level of policy and at the level of **actual** teaching.

3.35 p.m.

If one wants to reflect on educational decisions that will bear out my point I can think of two offhand for example. I do not think anybody would seriously contend that it was not because of the fact that classical education, for example, the teaching Latin and Greek in schools, had no market value that we decided to ditch it. The question was: what is in this for us now? And having regard to

the fact that classics, Latin and **Greek**, had no market value, it could not fetch anything in the market place, we ditched it. It was not a matter of **concern** to us that there was anything of **intrinsic** worth in the classics themselves. It **was rather** that at **the level** of the **masses** it had no value. It **could not sell**, it could not buy and **therefore** it had to be ditched.

I can think of a more **recent** decision, well a decision of a kind. I reflect on a speech made in this Honourable House, I believe, some time in 1983, I believe it **was**, when the late Prime Minister Tom **Adams** was lamenting the fact that there was a **galloping** decay in our language, that **University graduates** and secondary school graduates could **not write proper** English and having lamented that fact, a qualitative problem, his response was, if I recall it **correctly**, to throw some money at it, to say whoever can do well at 'A' level in English, a Grade A, I believe, would get a prize of \$10 000. Now, that is a pragmatic approach. Throw **some** money at the problem. That might work. Money is an incentive that drives people. **Use** money to **see** whether we could get better results in our languages.

I am not aware, Mr. Speaker, that that has worked and the complaints about the quality of language in **Barbados** continue. If that decision proves anything, it proves that you cannot buy language. You cannot buy **English** or French or Spanish. But **talking** about the 4 pillars upon which our system is rested, philosophical **pragmatism** is the philosophy upon which it is rested.

The second pillar upon which it is rested is a principle **of** competition. Students in our schools have always **been** put in a situation where they have to compete with one another. Student A always has to try to prove that he is better than student B. The whole system, the principle upon which it **rests** is, I am better than you. I must prove that I am better than you and therefore I have known in my time as a **student** and as a teacher how students have contorted themselves in all sorts of funny ways in order to ensure that the person sitting next to them does not get a chance to **see** what they were writing or what they were **doing because** the idea is always to prove, I am better than you. I know something that you do not know. That has led to a kind of society where the same approach to life is acted out. At the adult level **the** competition continues and there is always the **tendency** to want to prove that you are **better** than somebody else.

Now the anthropologists tell me that certainly among **African** people that principle of competition, that rugged and ruthless individualism, has always been alien. Mr. Speaker, I know that the late Dr. Walter **Rodney** wrote on it extensively that the introduction of European colonialism into Africa introduced ruthless individualism which was

alien to the **African** experience and of course here in Barbados **as** well the same thing happened. It just happens that we were Africans in the **diaspora**. But the question has to be asked by serious educational panels in 1996 whether competition is really the **engine** that drives people, whether competing with one another is the way to bring the best out of any two people.

Anthropologists of the African experience point to a tradition of cooperation among people of African descent, point to an ethic that says, let us throw our talents together, let us share what we have. I respect your strengths, I respect your weaknesses. You respect my strengths. You respect my weaknesses but both of us have something to contribute to the solution of the problem at hand. I think that in 1996, **as** we reflect on the whole issue of education, the question which we have to **confront**, if we want to bring the best out of our citizens, is whether competition is the way to do it or whether cooperation is the way to do it.

The Honourable Member for St. Michael North East, the Honourable Minister of Education, has bemoaned the fact before today and today again that the system is progressively **marginalising** increasing numbers of people. The question has to be asked, what is causing that? Why are so many children losing the battle in the classroom? I throw out for the consideration of the Government whether it might not **be** wise to revisit the whole issue of competitive endeavour in the classroom and replacing it with a more cooperative approach to education in the classroom.

My view, based on the anthropological evidence and based on what I see in Barbados, is that the cooperative approach is more likely to bring the best out of people than the harsh individualistic competition which has now become so endemic a part of our society. So that is the second pillar upon which the system has rested. It has rested on philosophical pragmatism and it has rested on the principle of competition.

The third pillar upon which the system has rested is a thorough going elitism. That is a word the Minister may not **like** and she links it of course with the spokesman for education for the National Democratic Party. It is not a bad word; it is a fact that the educational system in Barbados and that the Society is an elitist society. Now, in the Minister's opening statement in the White Paper, in her philosophical vision, she herself acknowledges the existence of students who are gifted, students who are not so gifted and the others, and that categorization, Mr. Speaker, has a fairly long history. Twenty-five hundred years ago there was a prominent Athenian by the name of Plato. He wrote a book called 'The Republic' and, of course, Plato was from a prominent Athenian political family and he was concerned about the state of politics

in Athens. He did not believe that the problem would be **cured** by his getting involved in politics but he seemed to believe that the problem could be solved by his writing about the problem. Therefore, he spent some considerable time on the subject of education in his Republic. Plato's Republic has in it some interesting **insights** on education and, when those **insights** are read, it will be shown that there really is not that much difference between **2500** years ago and now and not much has changed. But the interesting thing **about** **Plato's** structuring of the Athens of his ideal Republic was that he thought that he had the premise to justify what he was saying on what he called a noble life. Some translators call it a magnificent falsehood and his Republic divided the society into 3 classes as well. The Minister stated **3** classes in school which are the gifted, not so gifted and the others. Plato's position was that when God fashioned man he put gold in some people and that those people with whom he mixed gold were born to rule. He said that he fashioned others and he denied them any gold. He put some silver in them and that their role was supposed to prop up the gold people and that the condemned majority of humanity created by God were made of iron and bronze. They were to be the farmers, the workers, the hewers of wood and the drawers of water.

3.45 p.m.

Now gold people, gold students, silver students and bronze students have never appealed to me as a teacher or as a student myself. I therefore do not accept that kind of structure of any kind of society. I believe that every human being has some gold in him if I accept Plato's characterization and that the challenge of any educational system must be to find the gold in each one of us, that we cannot proceed on the basis that some are born gifted and others are born not so gifted and others **are** the desperados, or as **Frederick Nietzsche** would call the bungled and the botched. I do not accept that and therefore that pillar upon which our education system has rested has always offended me. I think that a White Paper that promises revolution and change was under an obligation to tackle that fact and I do not see it tackled in any comprehensible way in this White Paper on Education. If I needed any proof of that, I would only reflect again on the philosophical vision which the Minister wrote in the Introduction to the White Paper and her acceptance of these 3 categories of the gifted, not so gifted and the rest. I think that one of the principal challenges facing education in Barbados is to look at the structuring of the education system and to work out some **kind** of accommodation that will take care of those who have traditionally been regarded as iron and bronze people or iron and copper people and try to point all persons to the spark of gold that can be found in them. That elitist system is what I suspect and I am not **speaking** for the National Democratic Party. But that is what I suspect that Mr. Comissioning is talking about and on that point he and I coincide because I have never accepted that kind of altering of human relations.

Aside.

Mr. F. J. **STUART**: Fair enough. I am glad to hear that nobody accepts it now. But I am saying that concrete steps have to be taken to deal with that issue. Then the fourth pillar, Mr. Speaker, with which the White Paper should have dealt was this issue of the **distinction between** mental and manual labour. That is the fourth pillar upon which our educational system has **traditionally** rested. **The** perverse view is that some people use their brains because they have **brains** and other people because they have no brains use their hands and that between the two there is a great gulf fixed and that a distinction between mental and manual labour is defensible. Now this is stated in **all kinds** of technical and vocational programmes, all of which are justified because there are people who **can** use their hands more efficiently than **others**. When I was a **student** at school, I believe that it **took** me about **2** years to make a bread board in **the** woodwork shop. I just could not get it done. But there were others who could make them very easily.

Now this distinction between mental and manual labour has to be addressed. I have never, Mr. Speaker, met a human being who did not have a brain. All human beings have a **brain** and all human beings as long as that brain is not damaged, in which **case** they are no use to themselves or to anybody else, use their **brain** to relate to their environment, to confront and to arrest what they want from nature and to make decisions in their lives. I do not **accept** that the joiner who made a table is a **manual** worker **and** that he did not have to use his brain. That item of furniture is all the proof one needs of how much brain work is **called** for on the part of those who use their hands for the transforming of nature. So that all human beings use their brains and use their hands as **a result** of what **their** brain tells them to do, what they have to do.

3.55 p.m.

In our structure, a doctor or dentist would be a brain worker, a knowledge worker, but my dentist uses his hands **all** too often as far as I am concerned, certainly, when I go to him. A surgeon, a doctor, uses his hands after he has made a diagnosis by the use of his brain. The gardener has an idea of what **kind** of garden he wants and then he applies his hands to the creation of that garden. The distinction between mental and manual labour is a fraudulent one, and I think that we are only going to get the educational system on track when that fraudulence is exposed and when the system begins to treat people who use their hands in the same way as those who use pens, and in the case of doctors, scalpels and injection needles.

This approach has led to the monstrous absurdity that if all the people who are considered to be manual **workers** were to withdraw their labour now the society could

not function because we are all dependent on them.' If even a few of them withdraw their labour the society could not function. The very people upon whom we depend and upon whom the engine of society depends for its movement we relegate to inferior positions and say they **are** not the successes of the system.

It is my view that that is an issue which a White Paper on Education that threatens revolution in education would have to confront and I do not think that this problem has been confronted in any fundamental way. The Paper promises to improve **the** facilities for those who **are** doing technical and vocational studies. All quite proper. But at the end of the **day**, they want to know what **kind** of place they are going to occupy in this society, and that is not made clear.

There is no evidence of any plan to re-order social relationships in Barbados to introduce a genuine equality of education, and as a result I **think** that the White Paper has not answered 4 fundamental questions. It has not answered the question: whether we still consider philosophical pragmatism adequate to our purposes. It has not answered the question whether we consider competition the principle upon which we should operate our educational system. It does **not** answer the question whether we accept an ordering of the society that divides the society into gold, silver and iron and bronze people. Nor does it address the issue whether the distinction between mental and manual **labour** is a valid and defensible distinction or whether that distinction should go through the window and our schools from **pre-primary** up to tertiary should deal with that issue, whether the changing of that approach should be a part of our teaching.

Having located the pillars upon which this system rests, and having determined that the White Paper as I have read and understood it does not really tackle the fundamental pillar upon which the system rests, those pillars remain intact, I have to come to the conclusion that while with the best of intentions – and I am sure the Minister's intentions are good, I do not belong to that school of politics that believes that politicians **are** actuated by malevolence even across a partisan divide, I believe that they are all interested in enhancing the lives of people and developing Barbados. We may disagree on the approaches. We may disagree on particular measures but at the end of the day I believe we **are** all interested in the improvement of our fair land and I think that with that in mind I have respectfully to disagree with the Minister of Education that any change that is fundamental is taking place as a result of the White Paper we are debating in Barbados today. I believe she genuinely intends measures to improve the system, but I do not accept that the measures the Honourable Member is introducing or proposing, which she hopes to craft into actual policy, change anything

fundamentally in Barbados. That is where the **divide** between **the** Honourable Minister and myself is.

When we talk about the educational system or when we talk about education and we focus on the system that we have, what do we find? Whenever one is **talking** about a system one reminds oneself that **all** systems **are** ultimately a collection of elements that are related to or connected in such a way that they form a unified whole. All systems **are** made up of a collection of elements that depend on each other and form some kind of unified whole.

When one looks at the educational system in Barbados, one looks to separate out these elements that **are** critical to the functioning of the system. We think of the manpower element, the curricular element, the student element and we think about the school element and about the culture. I shall just briefly deal with these in turn.

First, the manpower element, the teachers in the system, the people who teach the children. I am pleased that the Honourable Minister of Education has come to the conclusion that the teachers in the system are not getting the best deal and that they must be more intimately involved in what happens in education and in what happens in their lives. I was pleased to see the phrase '**limited** career paths', because that acknowledges that a bottleneck has developed in the teaching profession that has done a lot of damage to the aspirations of teachers.

4.05 p.m.

I think that is a progressive move and the Minister has my wholehearted support on that. Now, how can that be best achieved? I think that if one accepts, as the Minister does, that some students are gifted, some are not so gifted, and some **are** just hopeless or need special attention, that it follows that the same has to be true of teachers. Some teachers are gifted as teachers, some are not so gifted, and some are really deserving of very special treatment and attention. The challenge facing the educational system therefore has to be how to organize the efforts of the most gifted teachers in the system to ensure that their talents are made available to the entire educational system and how to organize the talents of the best teachers in the system to ensure that these talents are put at the disposal of all the students in the educational system.

I do not know. There must be many ways of doing this. But one of the complaints I persistently hear now, and I heard it when I was a teacher as well, and I heard it when I was a student, is that the best teachers in the system are not made available, or their talents are not made available to all the students in the system. Now, I think that one way out of this dilemma is to provide a little more

upward mobility for teachers. I believe that with teacher appraisal, once the difficulties of summative and formative appraisal are sorted out, and once the Ministry comes to a conclusion with the agreement of the teachers on how teachers are going to be appraised, that it might be useful to create what I would call the status of a **consultant/teacher**, a designation that would be the equivalent, for example, to a Q.C. in law.

This teacher – obviously these would be the best teachers in the system across both the primary and secondary system – would be made available to the system. He would not be timetabled at any particular school for any two or three terms. He would just be available to the system to move around the system and to assist with the solving of problems. His talents should be made available to the entire system.

Now, that must mean that, based on his status, the salary goes up. It also means that since he is a travelling officer he is going to be paid travelling allowance. It also means he is going to wear a designation. In the same way a lawyer is a Q.C. for all of his life, a **consultant/teacher** is one for all of his life, and it should be open to any teacher at a school who is having a problem in any area to look and see who are the consultant teachers in his area and say, "Let me see if I can get Mr. So and So to come down to my school for two weeks to help me in this area so that my students can be exposed to the best and most meaningful talents and skills in the system".

I think this would do a lot for teachers. I think it would do a lot for their motivation. I think they would have something at which to aim because the number of opportunities available to teachers for promotion are very limited and I suspect that it would do the profession a lot of good and would certainly enhance feelings of genuine professionalism if they are made to feel that they can impact on the entire system on terms that are slightly different from those who are below them, but who has something to aim at in the system as well.

Now, this is a suggestion. The Minister is free to reject it but if this suggestion is rejected I still think the Minister faces the question of how to mobilize the best talents in the teaching profession and have those talents benefit the entire student population in Barbados. I know that was one of the grouses of students in the newer secondary schools over a long number of years. I taught at one and they used to hear all these big names from the so-called older and better secondary schools and it was a source of exquisite pain for them that these talents were being made available to a select group of people while they had to make do with talents that were regarded as being inferior.

This, as I said, is an issue which education in Barbados has to **face**. **Teachers** are not, as I understand them, the happiest professionals in Barbados. Teaching is still regarded as the Cinderella profession when, in fact, it is perhaps the best profession around since there can be few things more precious in a society than the mind of a child so that the manpower element in education has to be confronted and the deployment of the resources of the educational system has to be taken up and dealt with as a critical issue.

Then there is the issue, Mr. Speaker, of the curricular element. No education system can design a good or sensible curriculum unless it is clear what the national objectives are. The Minister of Education, the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East, is quite correct when she says that the education system is really perhaps the most critical area of the productive sector because it produces human beings. A manufacturer may produce furniture. Furniture perishes but ideas do not have a shelf life. Ideas live on and on through the ages. **Today** we are still influenced by the ideas of Old Testament times and the purveyors of those ideas have long passed on. Therefore, it seems to me that curriculum design has to be linked with social, economic and **political** objectives in a society. What kind of Barbados is it that we want? Until we can answer that question, we cannot know what is the best kind of curriculum to put at the disposal of our children.

Now, I listened here today, I read the White Paper and I must confess I am not omniscient. I never claimed to be, but I am not clear from this White Paper what is the national plan for Barbados. I really do not know. I do not know what kind of Barbados it is that we want. I do not know what is our vision of mankind and therefore I do not think that we designed an education system in the absence of that kind of information. Yes, you want people to work but that has been true from the **dawn** of creation. Yes, we want people to be able to read and write. That has been **true** for my entire lifetime. Yes, we want Barbadians to be competitive, **vis-a-vis** people in other parts of the world. That has always been so. That does not make contact with what kind of Barbados it is we really want and what it is we are teaching our children to become.

4.15 p.m.

I see words like innovators, problem solvers and so on. **But** these words need to be – to use a good country phrase – nailed down. I do not know what they mean in the context of a national vision for Barbados. **Curriculum** time has to take into account what kind of society it is we want.

Education has never been neutral. The United States of America does not teach its children because it wants them to learn to read and write. It teaches them to believe that the United States is the best place in the world

and that it should rule the world Colonial Britain did not just teach children to read and write. It taught them to believe that Britain had a right to rule the world. Education is not **neutral**. Education is a political instrument. Until we face that fact and **decide** what kind of Barbados it is we want and what role Barbados is to play in the global community, curriculum planning will flounder on the shoulders of failed experiments.

I am concerned, Mr. Speaker, about the vagueness in the **area** of curriculum planning in Barbados. I do not think that we should overlook the fact that education is a tool of social transformation. I do not think we should overlook the fact that education has never been neutral. Education policy cannot possibly be neutral. It has to have clear national objectives because if we allow ourselves to be beguiled by **the** view that there is something called impartial education and so on, **the** world is not organized in that way.

Nature is not impartial. There was a **calypsonian** in Trinidad some years ago, along with John King, who sang, "Destruction of the Weak is Nature's Plan". Nature distinguishes between a weak house and a strong one. The fittest survive and therefore, we have to find ourselves in a situation where we want to place Barbados amongst the fittest countries in the world. We cannot place Barbados among the fittest countries in the world by military might, but if we **turn** out the right kind of people, with the right kind of ideas, in the same way that every year around the time of **the** 11+ exam the ideas of Plato surface about gold, silver, iron and bronze and we are told how some students are gifted, others **are** not so gifted and the others are plain hopeless. Those ideas **are** 2500 years old. We have to understand the power of ideas and our ability as a highly resourceful people to determine, by ideas, using all the **information** technology at our disposal, how that world out **there** **reacts** to us.

I move on from the curriculum element to the student element. I do not need to develop this very much, Mr. Speaker, I think that the positions articulated in the White Paper set out genuinely to develop our children. As I said, the Minister's vision on education and mine are different. When we look out on the world we see slightly different things. But nobody can claim to be right in education or wrong. We **all** wish that the system improves and that all of our children benefit from it.

Therefore I can only hope that the policies for **pre**-primary, primary, secondary and tertiary education are right. But I entertain misgivings based on the point I made earlier, that is to say that unless you know what you are educating people for, you cannot know that you are educating them correctly. They have to be clear as to where

it is you want to carry them and what role they are going to play in the world. That role has to go beyond **working**. It has to go beyond eating and **drinking**. It has to be a role that is lived up to, that is acted out in the context of clearly defined national objectives.

The whole question of remediation, this is an old issue in education. I do not know why the impression is being given that this is something new. I have been hearing about remediation from my school days. All that is happening now is that we are putting more emphasis on **remediation** but the need for remediation was always there and was always talked about, from my school days and, certainly, when I was a teacher, it was an issue that was frequently discussed.

I am glad that we are making some progress in this area and that our children who suffer from physical disabilities or mental disabilities have held out before them the prospect of being able to fit into the system, to make meaningful contributions to it and to derive meaningful satisfaction from it.

Then there is the issue of the school element in education itself. This issue touches the question of the so-called older and newer secondary schools and the whole question of elitism in education again. Mr. Speaker, this is an old issue. I myself taught at a newer secondary school and, to be quite frank, some of the brightest people I have met **in** my life I met while teaching at that newer secondary school. Some have gone on to do exceptionally well and are making meaningful contributions to Barbados. I could never understand this distinction. But every year there is a mad scramble, on the part of **parents** and teachers in Barbados, to ensure that their children get into certain schools and that, as far as possible, that other schools be marginalized and sidelined. This is unfortunate and it is doing our society no good.

I think the fact has to be faced that, until recently, the resources **put** into older secondary education were larger than the resources put into newer secondary education, and that the myth developed that those who were going to newer secondary schools were inferior to those who were going to older secondary schools. It is a myth. It is really not true. Because people have different aptitudes does not mean that one is superior and the other is inferior. Difference of aptitudes only means difference. That is all it is. But we have a contribution to make to the treasury of civilization.

What I find particularly sinful – I use the word sinful because this is how I feel about it – is that, over the years, and I have had examples of this as recently as the last Common Entrance Examination in 1995, there have been teachers in the newer secondary schools of Barbados who were actively encouraging parents not to choose newer

secondary schools at which they were teaching. There are cases which have been drawn to my attention where teachers in the newer secondary schools of Barbados have told parents, "**Look**, I do not know about you, but my child could never come to school here" and talking about the school at which they teach. That is very unfortunate.

I just want to appeal to these teachers to show some sense of loyalty to the institutions at which they work. The prejudices of the society perhaps are an explanation for that kind of behaviour. But, **at** the end of the day, we all have to live in Barbados with our children whether they go to this school or that school and we have to be careful about the amount of anger that we are creating in this society by these hidebound prejudices. I think that the efforts of the Minister in the area of partial zoning is her way of dealing with the problem. That is her view of the world. I know that the view of partial zoning was canvassed in the Democratic Labour Party's last regime. I do not believe that that is going to solve the problem. I think the fact has to be faced that as long as we live in Barbados and there is a school called **Combermere** and there is a school called Deighton Griffith, **Deighton Griffith** will never be as old as **Combermere**. The tradition of Combermere will always be a longer **tradition** and therefore on the fact of age alone people **will** be able to point to more products of Combermere than they would be able to point to products of Deighton Griffith. That does not mean that Deighton Griffith is an inferior school to Combermere School. It cannot mean that. It is an excellent school as indeed are so many of the other newer secondary schools in Barbados. In fact all of them are very good schools.

4.25 p.m.

As I said, I taught at one and I saw the sterling qualities. The Member for St. **Philip** North and I taught at that school together. I believe he taught at 3 of them and it would be the testimony of both of us that in these schools can be found some of the best talent in Barbados. But we have to work on the traditions of our institution. We cannot disparage them. The people who work at these institutions have to show some commitment to them and some pride in them. This is anecdotal, but it will make the point. When **I entered** secondary school in 1960, that is 35 years ago, the son of the school's headmaster sat next to me in first form and at the age of 9, this is why flexible transfer is not apocalyptic to me, I entered secondary school at age 9 but the headmaster's son, sitting next to me told me a story that if this school is good enough for the headmaster's son, it is a good school. I think that teachers in the newer secondary schools have to help parents towards having faith in those institutions by showing that they themselves have faith in them to produce the kind of academic and other successes that can make Barbados proud.

I think, Mr. Speaker, that the **White Paper on Education**, so far as it **seeks** to deal with this **problem** by implication through partial zoning makes an attempt to deal with that problem. I do not know how far **the attempt** will work but it is an attempt and we cannot claim omniscience in matters educational. We just have to wait and **see how** it goes but for the benefit of the children of Barbados and in the interest of the people of Barbados, I hope **the Minister** is right on this. I hope it goes some way towards reinforcing faith in **all** the schools in the system.

Sir, at the end of the **day** we **are** not saying **that** the plant at **St. James Secondary School** is inferior to the plant at Combermere. We are not saying that **the teachers at St. James Secondary School** are inferior to the teachers at **Combermere**. We are not saying that the **non-academic staff** at St. James Secondary School **are** inferior **to** the non-academic staff at Combermere. What we **are** saying is, tragically, that the children at St. James Secondary School are inferior to the ones **at** Combermere and **that**, in my view, is sinful. It does not make **sense** and I think that policy makers in education have to make contact with that issue so that the self-esteem of which the **White Paper** speaks and at which it aims can become a more easily attainable goal.

Then, Mr. Speaker, there is element of culture in the society. I make this point because I started off this speech by making the point that long before there **was** anything called a school there was something called education. That man has always had to acquire knowledge and apply that knowledge to the solution of his problems. Schools have come along the way but education existed long before that and therefore we have to face the reality that there is a distinction between formal education which takes place in our institutions and informal education which takes place in the society. Governments cannot really control the **informal** aspects of education as much as they can control the **formal** aspects of education. What Governments **can** do is so to manage the education system that the products of the system who will influence people informally, are so trained and have a view of the world that will make for a positive impact on the children in Barbados.

Our newscasters, our MC's, our minibus drivers, our policemen, all of these people are informal educators. In fact, I believe it was the local scholar George Lamming that taught wherever two or three people sit down and talk school takes place because there is formal school and informal school and wherever there is a sharing of knowledge, a learning process, school is taking place. In the bar of a shop, on the cricket field, wherever people are gathered school is taking place and therefore we have to be very careful about what the system throws up and who is in a position to influence the minds of our children and to influence the course and the marketing of ideas in this society.

So, Mr. **Speaker**, this debate as I said at the beginning has the potential of being a very useful and a very productive debate. It is important because the educational system determines what kind of society we have. It is not a **partisan** issue therefore I do not get into the points scoring that can sometimes characterise education debate. It is an issue that goes to the root of the welfare of the children of Barbados. I think while there is a divide between the Honourable Member for St. Michael North **East** and myself as to what a White Paper should really be doing and what it should really be tackling in order to achieve the change she **seeks**, I think that when all is said and done her attempts to improve the system are genuine and that is a fact we have to face. We have to hope that she is right. The Democratic Labour Party has no vested interest in the failure of her policies if the success of those policies will **conduce** to the improvement of the welfare of every citizen in Barbados.

We hope that the Honourable Member is correct. We do not agree with her focus but we lay no claim to omniscience in these matters. Nobody **can** lay claim to omniscience in these matters, and so, Mr. Speaker, in winding down let me say this to you, that it is the view of the Democratic **Labour** Party that we have now got to the stage in Barbados where we need to effect changes of a fundamental nature in education to effect a second stage of social transformation. It was this Party that at the turn of the 1960's introduced measures that transformed education in Barbados with the consequence that the entire society was transformed. We believe in the potential of education to achieve that and we think that a second stage of transformation is now called for having regard to the fact that we now live in a reordered world that poses challenges to our ingenuity. We do not think that the measures contained in the White Paper speak to those challenges and speak to the changes which have to be made in education if Barbados is to launch into a meaningful role in global affairs. But, as I said, we applaud the Minister's efforts at trying to achieve something. There is not much new in this White Paper. The ideas contained in this White Paper I have been hearing at sometime or another over the last 25 years in Barbados. It has **all** been pulled together and that constitutes the White Paper on Education Reform In Barbados, 1995. We wish the Minister well. We do not agree with the approach that she has adopted in the White Paper. It does not reflect our view of the world. We do not believe that the changes that the proposals contained in this document will effect be fundamental changes and, in that regard, we reserve ourselves the right to differ with her on this issue.

I am obliged to you, Sir.
4.35 p.m.

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

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: Mr. Speaker, I **am** very grateful for this opportunity to address you and through you this Chamber and the people of Barbados on this very vital subject of education in this country. I know there is little that I can say that you are not already aware of because of your involvement and commitment in the field of education over many years. Right at the beginning I should like to observe that what is abundantly clear is that it is so difficult to politicize issues relating to education and no matter how one tries you find it exceedingly difficult and I **am** quite sure there are others in this Chamber who will recognize that intrinsic difficulty. In reality education development in Barbados has been a continuous process and, when one looks very carefully at what is before us today and if I were to be cynical, perhaps one would say that the most outstanding policy change and the only one which I have not heard canvassed in this House or outside before is that an 8-year old every 3 or 4 years may sit the 11 Plus Exam. That is about the only point that I have not heard before in this House or outside of this House and that is an absolute fact in terms of policies. I am talking about administration, various committees and so on. Sir, I might have been forced to comment on the statement that today is a defining moment in the history of Barbados when education is recognized not only as a social sector but also an economic sector. Now I believe generations of students, educators, politicians and many other people will certainly differ from that in that everyone involved in education over the years has recognized its social and economic importance. But I do not want to dwell on those things.

What I really want to talk about is the fact that the Ministry of Education should be commended for bringing together in one document many of the problems facing our educational system in this point in our history. Also, I think that the Minister should be commended for seizing this opportunity to bring all these things together and try to present some kind of complete picture to this Honourable House and also some policy initiatives in relation to some of them. Therefore, I will not say that 99.9 per cent of what I heard **today** was cold soup warmed over for perhaps some 3 hours or so. I might elevate it to say that it was probably a potpourri which was enhanced somewhat by a fragrance of words and a refreshingly new presentation. I believe, Sir, that would be a very fair comment. But it is not within the province of the Ministry to create new things in education. Education is not the kind of subject that lends itself readily to new ideas, because ideas evolve over time and what we are seeing here is the pulling together of a whole lot of ideas that have been canvassed before and are now presented to this Honourable House in this particular form. Now this does not mean that, if the Minister is successful in articulating the problems, in putting them together and bringing about some kind of solution to some of the problems, there is no element of success. But I think there is a need to be careful as to how one assesses the entirety of this situation.

I want to speak first of all to the issue of elitism and make no mistake **about** this, Sir, that one of the fundamental problems in this society which we have not been able to deal with is elitism in our **educational** system. It **has** emerged that way from pre-colonial days through colonial **times**. Until **that** matter is dealt with, it is going to **continue** to **frustrate** the efforts of people who formulate policy in order to **make** sure that this country benefits to its **maximum** from the resources which it makes available to the children of this country.

Now Barbados is a peculiar place. People seeking elitist education for their children are not confined to Barbados. **Throughout** the Western democracies of the world, you will find such persons. But where Barbados is unusual is that in those countries you may have your Eton, Harrow and you have these specialized schools where **people** are **prepared** to pull their pockets and pay for the elitist education that they want for their children. That is **understood** in the **Western** democratic societies and I think in some **parts** of the Caribbean but not in Barbados. What those people who are in power, and I **speak** in a wide sense of **the** word, what they wish to do is to use the resources of **the State**, use the tax dollars of the poor to maintain a system which in the long run is fundamentally elitist. There **is** no point **trying** to get around it. Many of the problems with zoning, many of the problems with the newer secondary schools, many of the problems that **frustrate** young people in this country, a lot of it stems from that.
4.45 p.m.

I am against the use of public resources to support a system which we have inherited from pre-colonial days and which has continued to the present day. At the same time, I believe in democracy and if they want to pull their pockets, build their schools, hire their teachers, send their children there I don't have a problem with that because I know that in Barbados you would be lucky to find 50 people prepared to do that. They are not going to do that; but they are going to move heaven and earth to make sure that **progressive** policies are not put in place by educators and by the political process in this country to stamp out that particular evil. The result is that all policy initiatives will always be compromised to a significant extent by those considerations and in the long run it is our people who suffer, it is our children who suffer. It is the kind of image they have of themselves from the time they go to primary school to secondary school right through and they feel that they are inferior citizens and they never recover from that throughout their entire lives. That is a fact. That is a scene in Barbados. It is a scene that I came up in. It is a scene that needs to be changed. If we are **talking** about revolutionary change I think that that is one of the issues **that** we need to put on the table and deal with decisively at some time in the future in Barbados.

Certainly, my support will be there for revolutionary change in that regard. I am not suggesting at any moment

that the quality of education should be in anyway disrupted by any such change; but I believe very strongly that the time has come for the fullest and complete democratisation of the educational process in this country. Therefore, Mr. Speaker, I want to say a few words in relation to the victims of our educational system. Where do we find them? We **find** them among the unemployed. We find them in the prisons. We find them very often among those young people that we see day after day, spending their lives without any hope. In fact, Sir, they dare not hope. **They** dare not dream because if they hope or dream then that would only increase their levels of frustration in this society. I believe that the time has come when we must put an end to a situation where children can go through a primary and secondary school system and come out without **certification** and without the ability to read or write. This kind of thing must be dealt with decisively. And the time is now.

Sir, this brings me to the whole question of the 11 Plus. **What** should be the fundamental approach to **the** 11 Plus? I will tell you what it should be. It should be to abolish it. I am all in favour of the total abolition of the 11 Plus in this country and to institute a system **where** people will be able to move from primary to secondary education without the problems of the 11 Plus.

What we **see** the Minister introducing now is an attempt, and the Minister must understand that I am not attacking her. I am just saying what my vision is and what my objectives are.

Aside.

Mt. **SPEAKER**. .Please! Please!

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: In what way is the Minister dealing with the issue of the 11 Plus? To some extent she is addressing the problems of the slow learners which I understand will affect about 400 people. She is dealing with the question of those specially gifted persons, the occasional 8-year olds and about 50 or so who consistently get 90 or over during their evaluations. But that is just tinkering with the problem. In my view, that is not dealing with the fundamental problems, especially in a situation where we are thinking of zoning ultimately. I am going to deal with the question of partial zoning later, but I think that is also a compromise situation so that what we are seeing here today is a compromise situation and I would have hoped that the ultimate vision is that children would go into a process of a continual assessment from primary right through secondary schools until they sit an appropriate exam and then they move into the tertiary system or into the streams for which, during that period when they sojourn in the primary and secondary schools, it is recognised that they have special talents. I think

that is the objective that I would like to see and what I hoped would be the final product of our educational system, because I feel that in that way that we would be addressing the problems of the underprivileged.

When you really think about it, who are the people who are the victims of our educational system? Who are the people who complain about the educational system? **Who are** the people who have the problems with the educational system? Who are the people whom you can count and who are visibly let down by the educational system? I dare say, Mr. Speaker, that 90% or more of those people must come **from** the lower income groups of this country **and** we need to target our reforms in education to deal with the problems that have resulted in their being further disadvantaged as a result of the educational system and **try to** remove the road blocks in their way.

Then, Sir, there is the question of what do we do about our teachers? How do we motivate our teachers? How do we ensure that our teachers have the commitment at plant level? I say this, Sir. We have to commit ourselves to paying our teachers better. Let us get down to practical ways. They need to be better paid. They need better conditions of service. They need wider opportunities for training and above **all** they need to be re-empowered at the level of the schools because there was a time...

Aside.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: ... the White Paper said "empower", but what I **am** saying is that they need to be re-empowered to be able to perform in the same way in which I **am** quite sure that you, Sir, can perform in the environment in which you function. No one is going to remove that power from you or not easily. It is not going to be wrested. I am quite sure about that.

So, Mr. Speaker, then comes the question of certification. I am pleased that the whole question of the CXC is being addressed after many years. I am pleased to note that there will be an effort to discover that there is something good academically or otherwise about most of the students who go through our secondary system and there will be appropriate recognition.

It is important that we do not just devalue the educational process by simply issuing certificates because they attended **school**. **You** have to have a programme in place to make sure that people reach a particular level **and** qualify for the certificate. Otherwise, you will have a problem.

Then, Sir, there is the whole question of what happens in terms of other aspects of the flexible transfer system, but I won't deal with that.

Then there is the level of **free** university **education**. **There** was a little political point being made here earlier. While all of us recognise the value of free education in Barbados and by free education, free at all stages, I think that this is fundamental in this society and I will tell you why. The greatest resource of Barbados over the past **100** years has been its human resources.
4.55 p.m.

Aside.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: Prior to **100** years ago what has happened in the days of slavery? I suppose human resource was so devalued, but what I am saying is over the past **100** years what has happened is that Barbadians through human resource development have been able to impact, not only on the development of this country, but the development of the world.

Sir, if you permit me, I would only like to draw as an example to this Honourable House what the late Louis Lynch as a single individual in a private school has been able to do, to export throughout the world excellent students who had achieved tremendous excellence at his school where I taught for a short period. I taught there for a year. Sir, if you were to go to Canada today, the United States or the United Kingdom you will see the tremendous contribution which that school made in a very short period of time, not only to human resource development at home but also the international contribution which the products of that school have been able to make in the areas of education, health and particularly in the area of nursing. Then you begin to understand how that, when multiplied a thousand times throughout Barbados, has influenced the development of this country. When you look at the development of the export of Barbadians, not only to Europe, Panama, Brazil and to many areas of the world, you begin to recognise what the educational system of this country has done for Barbadians and it should in no way be compromised. Therefore, Sir, let there be no doubt where we stand in the **NDP** on the issue of free education at all stages for Barbadians. We cannot afford the kind of luxury of the more developed societies where we can start charging people for education at any particular stage in our development at this point in time.

Now, Sir, what does one perceive as being the very major problem that needs to be dealt with now? This is where I am a little disappointed in the White Paper. We know that there are probably 10 000 or 15 000 young people out there who, as I said, have been victims of the system. Even if all the measures put in place by the Minister for remedial evaluation, measures for wider inputs in primary and secondary education, even if all those measures are put in place, you are still faced with a backlog that you have and it is going to take years

before those particular policies would translate into a significant number of people benefiting from them. So what happens in the interim?

I would have hoped to see some **kind** of recognition for the thousands of young people out there with this problem, having gone through our primary and secondary care system, who come out without certification and, in many instances, cannot read or write or reason effectively. Would there be any programme to deal with the existing problem? Is there going to be any programme to deal with those who came out last year in the same situation? Is there any programme to deal with those who are going to come out this year, and next year because educational changes just do not produce results overnight? It is a gradual process and if you recognise there is a problem, if you recognise the urgency of the problem, then I think we need to do something.

Now, Sir, this White Paper was very articulate in dealing with the **kind** of social and economic problems which confront these individuals ranging **from** crime, unemployment and this kind of thing but, at the same time, I have not heard any position articulated that would deal with this particular problem on a mass scale and that is what is very necessary right now. How do we rescue those persons? How do we make sure that we do not continue to throw large numbers of such persons out of our education system over the next few years? It is almost inevitable, as I have said. No matter if all these measures were put in place today, problems in primary education will manifest themselves in someone who is 4 or 5 years old probably 11 years down the road and in secondary education probably 5 years down the road. So you are going to have that backlog and I think we just cannot write them off. We have to deal with it in some kind of very fundamental way.

I am very glad to **see** that there is a recognition of the need for a second language.

Aside.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: I am dealing with some of these issues. This has been mentioned, the need for a second language. I remember very well the first person to articulate that particular need in Barbados was someone who spoke **out** today in the media on behalf of the National Democratic Party whom the Honourable Minister knows very well. He spoke on the issue of elitism today; but he was one of the first persons in this country who pointed out the critical importance of making sure that all our children be exposed to a second language.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. Between the years 1981 and 1986 ■ had the honour to be the Minister of Education of this country and

during that time for the **first** time Spanish was **designated** officially as the second language. It is quite **wrong** for the Honourable Member for St. **Michael** South **Central** to say that what appeared in a newspaper article **today** is the **first** time such a point is being made. It is totally misleading. The Honourable Member has not read the White **Paper** and is jumping from point to point.

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

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: Mr. Speaker, I do **not** believe the Honourable Member understood what I said. I said that he spoke **today** on another matter but he was the **first** person in this country, as far as I can recall, to **talk** about the exposure of people to a second language at primary **and** secondary level. He is a person who has a tremendous vision and his name is **David** Comissiong.

Asides.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: Mr. Speaker I do not know why I constantly excite this lady like this. It seems quite inevitable Sir, that as soon as I start to **speak this** lady becomes hyperactive or something like that. You just have to control her, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. SPEAKER: There is some excitement maybe about you.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: Anyhow, Sir, also documents of this House are the Manifestos of the NDP of 1991 and 1994. I believe the Honourable Minister has read them very carefully because if you look very carefully at many of the problems articulated as set out here, the whole question of education as a strategic factor in the development of our nation and a potential passport to prosperity for the individual, the commitment to Government financed education at all levels up to university level, the recognition of the complexity of education and the use of technology both in delivery and the introduction of students to technology throughout our educational system. 5.05 p.m.

The whole question of promoting a diversity in the subjects and interest to which our children will **be** exposed, the whole question of creating a school environment characterized by discipline, enthusiasm, initiative and creativity among all staff and students, the need to offer a better deal for our teachers particularly in the area of restoring esteem to a level consonant with their strategic importance to the well-being of our society all these are issues that were canvassed here extensively. They are **all** here in the NDP's Manifesto of 1991. In addition, it goes on to speak to the need to:

"Put an end to overcrowded **classrooms**.

Restrict the maximum size of a school, to a **scientifically** determined optimum.

Eliminate the substandard physical conditions which exist **at many** schools.

Ensure that **all** schools are adequately staffed and **equipped**.

Encourage greater breadth, depth and diversity of curricula within and among **schools** so as to ensure that our educational system produces students with the requisite mix of skills to meet the human **resources** requirements of a services oriented economy, in the modern technological age.

Encourage schools to be innovative and to develop distinctive **personalities**.

Allow more secondary schools to compete in different **areas**.

Widen the **scope** of decision making by school Principals and their staff, and confer on teachers **well-**defined authority and responsibility for discipline, on the clear understanding that such authority must be used to restore discipline to the highest level.

Seek a national consensus for a change in the system for **transferring** students from primary to secondary schools.

Depoliticize the management of **schools**, and increase the authority of School Boards."

All these concepts, all these ideas **are** to be found in here. When you listened to the presentation this morning on the White **Paper**, a lot of it was just **an** expansion of these ideas. Let me say this. I do not want to take any particular **credit** for this. What I am saying is that the problems and the ideas have been out there for generations. That is **all** I am saying.

In a short period of time I have been able to cover probably 90% of the concepts which were expanded on this morning. They **are** all captured here in the **1991** Manifesto of the National Democratic Party and many of them, Sir, are reproduced in the **1994** Manifesto of the National Democratic **Party**. Not the solutions. I am talking of many of the analyses and many of the things that require immediate attention.

Therefore I cannot quarrel with the Minister if she recognizes many of the same problems that we recognize and if she seeks to articulate them more expansively in a

larger document, I do not have a problem with that either. We may quarrel on particular areas where I do not think that she has really been revolutionary in her dealings with these matters.

Aside.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: What did you say?

Aside.

Mr. SPEAKER: Please, please, **please**.

Dr. R. C. 'H A W S : That I did what?

Mr. SPEAKER: Please, please, please.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: Thank you very much for the compliment about my tie. I am very pleased about it. I seem to have been disturbing the Honourable Member for the City with my tie. Thanks very much.

Sir, before I conclude, let me say this. I hope that this debate would allow this Parliament and the Minister of Education clearly to understand how we feel about education on the one hand, but also, let this debate not finish without a clear understanding of the problems of access that people face day-to-day in our educational system. Let us remember that there are thousands of poor people whom you and I represent who have problems with such things as school uniforms, bus fares, lunch money.

There are a lot of very fundamental things that compromise the access of our students to the educational system in this country. There are still many students in Barbados who do not go to school every day because their parents are unemployed or because they do not have enough money to buy lunch or pay bus fares. There are still households in Barbados where they have to do this in rotation, where there is more than one child. We have to address these problems and recognize that we cannot discuss education in a vacuum, that we have to recognize the kind of society for which our educational system is being fashioned and to make sure that we make the resources available to the parents so that that kind of pressure will be taken off the poor people whom I represent in **Carrington's** Village and whom you represent in Bank Hall and where we share a common playing ground at the Gullyfield where we cannot get a pavilion. But we have to work together on that one, Sir.

I will move on, Sir. Finally, on this question of zoning. I think that it was **not** a brave decision to talk about partial zoning. If you are going to zone, go ahead and zone because my suspicion is that you are going to end up with the same composition in all the schools as exist right now. My suspicion is that you are going to end up

with the same composition in the schools as you have now. My suspicion is that you are going to end up with the **same** transportation problems as you have now, to a very large extent.

Aside.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: I am not **talking** about transportation problems for the students only. I am talking about the kind of transportation problems that we all face coming into Bridgetown, in the morning during school terms, which vanishes overnight **during** vacation.

Aside.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: If I may continue, Sir. There are 2 transportation problems. The transportation problems which affect the students and the transportation problems that affect the society at different times during the day and so on.

I will recommend that the Minister takes a bold decision in relation to zoning, in relation to the **11+**. Do not be fearful about it because, in the long run, you will get the support of the students, you will get the support of the majority of Barbadians and those people who want to maintain an elitist system, eventually they will fall in line. But somebody has to bite the bullet some time. Somebody has to take the decision. Somebody has to say to himself or herself "Our education system has to be restructured in the interest of the students." I do not know of any student who objects to zoning. I have never heard of a single student who objects to zoning unless they have been brainwashed by their parents.

How are you going to build communities? How are you going to reinforce community values? How are you going to reinforce family values unless you have the support of the community, the schools and all that goes on around a school 365 days a year, the image of the school in the community and so on. Opportunities are there for you.

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

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: Sure. Opportunities are there for you, Minister. Seize them. You and the Ministry have put together the problems and I have commended you both for them already.

What I urge you now to do is to be more definite, more definitive in the solutions that you attempt. I know that you are a member of a very right wing conservative party. You are not going to get the support of the Honourable Member for the City. You are not going to get

the support of others. But nevertheless, you will have my support over here in bringing about revolutionary change to our educational system in the **interest** of the broad masses of the people of Barbados and in the interest of the poor. Let that be your objective.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for St. James North.
5.15 p.m.

Hon. R. C. EASTMOND: Mr. Speaker, Sir, as I rise to make my own observations on what we have before us I must point out that what impresses me about this White Paper is that this White Paper has not **been** brought here in a vacuum nor has it been brought here **opportunistically** but it has been brought here informed by a **series** of objectives and one objective that has been clear to me has **been that** encouraging public debate on the Paper in addition to the objective of pointing the way to reform.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, I believe that the Honourable Minister of Education, from her own presentation, was clear that she has come to a stage where she thinks that our educational system is in need of reform. But even before she came to that position I am sure that she brought this document before this Honourable House several weeks ago to encourage a measure of public **debate** and public discussion and nobody who is interested in the delivery of wholesome educational services in Barbados would look askance at the question of the timing of this White Paper or to the fact that it has been brought before **us**.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I believe that any Honourable Member in this House who is going to give his mind **to** this White Paper must look at the question of a number of historical forces that were behind education in Barbados up to now. We had a situation in Barbados years ago, Mr. Speaker, where successive administrations, in the **interest** of equity, thought that the building of school plant was important way back in time, that the provision of physical facilities would have been important.

We also had successive Governments, Mr. Speaker, looking at the question of the physical comfort of children in the schools in addition to ensuring that children who came to school would have been able to abide their time in school in an atmosphere where they could give their minds to learning, and programmes such as the provision of text **books** and school meals informed a position where, down the ages, successive Governments provided what, in my mind, would have been educational infrastructure. There can be no denying that we have up until now seen educational policies geared primarily to the provision of educational infrastructure but where are we now?

The White Paper talks in terms that each one matters, and each one matters is a pointed statement at the **micro-level but, at the** national community level, I would go so far as to add, fashion me a people. Fashion me a people in addition to each one matters, because while we have **been** providing **information** infrastructure a number of variables **have** still been out there in the air that have gone against **education**. Let me give you an example, Mr. Speaker. We **have** had in Barbados, and I believe Honourable Members, especially the **more** experienced ones in this House of Assembly, such as the Honourable Member for the City, the Honourable Member for St. George North, the Honourable Member for St. Thomas, **the** Honourable Member for St. Michael South, **the** Honourable Member for Christ Church South, the Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central, **all** of these experienced Members **will** tell you that in their experience ...

Aside.

Hon. R. C. EASTMOND: The Honourable Member for St. Michael West, my apologies. In their experience there used to be a time in the history of education in Barbados when the thrust seemed to be on a concept called superannuation and I believe that the Honourable Minister of Education is dealing with that problem. I recall in the 1960s and **1970s**, children going to school and being placed in a class or **form** and irrespective of their attainment shifted to a next class the next year and a third class the next year and a fourth class and so on, irrespective of their achievement, irrespective of what difficulties faced them, irrespective of their attainment.

The concept then, Mr. Speaker, in my subjective but respectful view was the question of superannuation. You put a fellow in a school and you gave him a certain minimum number of years to be educated. What was wrong with that system was that that system was not sufficiently diagnostic, Mr. Speaker, to take into account problems that beset individual people or even situations that went to the benefit of students who because of the whole system and the thrust of superannuation were not well accounted for. I will give you some examples.

I vividly recall, many years ago, a student who had problems both with his sight and his hearing went to a secondary school and was shifted from first form to second form, to third form, to fourth form and when he got to 4th form he was at the exact, the same stage he was in 4th as he had been in 1st because he had undiagnosed learning difficulties. It is to her credit, Mr. Speaker, that the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East and Minister of Education has recognised that there are those in the school system faced with learning difficulties who have to be catered for and indeed this is consistent with her programme which is not necessarily well set out here but

which she has already introduced where at the primary level she introduced a policy and a programme of education to diagnose learning difficulties, the reason being that she wanted to make sure that each child mattered.

Mr. Speaker, we have had in Barbados a situation where we have seen children at 11 with an actual chronological age of 11 and a learning age intellectual achievement of 7, forced to do the common entrance examination with dire consequences.

Mr. Speaker, we have had situations too where on the contrary there were students who at age 8 were manifesting a particular genius and who were kept back because of a legislative policy that kept them back. I vividly recall, Mr. Speaker, a few years ago, at the St. Silas School in St. James, where there was a child age 8, in a class with children age 11. The highest attainment in that class of 11 was 75 and passed for Foundation. That child who passed for Foundation was 11 years old, got 75 and went to Foundation. There was a child in the same class at 8 who beat that child who went to Foundation but had to wait 3 more years for an opportunity to go to secondary school. This is precisely the problem that my learned friend and colleague, the distinguished Minister of Education, is dealing with. But that is not the only problem she is dealing with, Mr. Speaker, she has considered, apart from the question of textbook transfer, she has considered a number of variables which go and which impinge on education in Barbados.

I will not pretend to be that model of virtue who observes hours between 8.00 o'clock and 4.00 o'clock and vanishes from the scene. Because of not being in a position to observe such virtues, I have been in Bridgetown at 11:00 o'clock a night and seen a child in school uniform coming from a school in the rural South East of Barbados and reaching Broad Street so exhausted, having both gone to school and done extra curricula activities, that when he reached Broad Street he sheltered under a box because he did not have it in him to try to get home to St. Lucy where he came from. This is a **real** problem and I think that the Honourable Minister of Education must be complimented on this question of partial zoning. Partial zoning is not a non point nor is it something informed by hypocrisy. When first the concept of zoning was introduced 12 or 15 years ago it was met by a lot of hypocrisy? The position is this now, Mr. Speaker, that notwithstanding the views held by some distinguished Members of this House that Barbados is so small that you can have access from one part of Barbados to another easily.

5.25 p.m.

The fact of the matter is that children leave North Point, St. Lucy to come to Bridgetown to get to **Princess Margaret** and they have to leave at 5.30 a.m. What rest could they have got? What time do they get home? The

concept of partial zoning permits parents both to be able to choose particular schools as their first choice but at the same time to permit a measure of zoning in one package. What is wrong with that? There is no hypocrisy in that, Mr. Speaker. There is no educational **unrighteousness** in that. There is nothing **unrighteous** or sinful, to borrow a word **from** a distinguished Member on this question. If a poor child has to travel 26 miles to go to school, has to meet the vagaries of life, has to risk getting to school late in the morning, risk getting home late in the evening, risk not being able to do the homework, then partial zoning comes to fill a void while at the same time giving the parent and the child an opportunity still to exercise a measure of choice.

Mr. Speaker, if these were the only policies in the educational White Paper, then the Minister would have scored 70 or 80 but there are several more. Let us look at the whole question of the approach to curriculum and curriculum development. The Honourable Minister of Education, youthful as she is but with a conscience also in serving her country, has recognized the all important notion of curriculum development in education.

At no time was the Minister of Education so opportunistic as to **try** to present for education nice and **short-term** ends. She suggested both that **she** was inclined to a policy of curriculum reform. She even went so far as to indicate that she was in the process of reactivating a committee to look at the whole question of the curriculum. We in this great Party, a Party that is great beyond dispute, take objection to anybody suggesting that we are far right and ultra-conservative. I take most strenuous objection to any person saying that in this Honourable House. No person from the real Opposition has said so, but another facsimile Opposition parading in here under the guise of democratic privilege has sought to say that we are a group of right wing opportunistic **politicians**. It is that same facsimile Opposition labouring under the effect of defeat and in his last days of any formal political recognition in this country.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, this is the position. The Honourable Minister has made it transparently clear that any thrust towards educational reform must look at the concept of curriculum and must also involve persons in education who have a contribution to make towards curriculum development. Many years ago there used to be a philosophy of education to build an old bursar. I have no objection with that. Then we had an opportunistic thing come in place suggesting that education should be made exclusively for the marketplace. I do not believe either in wholesale intrinsic education for its own sake nor is education prudent for the marketplace. There must be a combination. There must be an educational system to prepare people for the marketplace blended with a system

to bring out the right **man** or bring out **the** right woman. Educate – lead out, bring out, help develop. **The** Minister was right on point when she suggested that that type of thinking was behind **this** White Paper. **She** also **made** it pellucidly clear – I do not want to use **the** word "transparently" clear again – that **she** was **prepared to** look at those children in the educational system who **were** at risk. I must commend her because in **her** White Paper **she** states quite clearly that she was going to **increase** the number of educational psychologists **and** for that **she** must be commended.

The whole notion of having **educational** psychologists, Mr. Speaker, is important. A **number of** **learning** difficulties, and you might be amazed that beyond hearing problems and sight problems that **there are other problems** which stand in the way of children **fulfilling** themselves. Educational psychologists have training in psychology but know how to apply the principles of psychology to **the** whole process of learning. With **the** Minister's stated intention of increasing the number of educational psychologists in the system, we have no choice but to commend her **on** this. As if she were not content, Mr. Speaker, to rest on her laurels, she went beyond the education of children into the realm of tertiary **education**. I must invite Honourable Members who have **not** read the White Paper to look at it. The whole fact about it is that the Honourable Minister of Education has looked at the education of children at primary and secondary stages but she has also grappled with the problem of **tertiary** education. No human being, Mr. Speaker, can be complete in these days on a mere primary or secondary education. Tertiary education is a must and it is a necessity because it is at that stage that you get a chance to top up your education and to achieve genuine self-actualization. You will get some learning at the primary and secondary stages, but the purpose of any educational system is to let people receive genuine self actualization in the **sense of self-**fulfilment and she has addressed this question,

She has also to her credit, and there is some political risk in it, addressed the question of teacher assessment. Now the difficulty of teacher assessment in my experience, Mr. Speaker, is that there are those teachers who do well, who work hard, who are devoted but who sometimes sense that the system of assessing them is subjective and they sometimes blame people in their own schools for giving them an assessment that they do not like. Now the Minister is not afraid of that challenge. I understand that there is a risk in it because some people will either avoid the issue or let the **status** quo continue. There are those who will be for that system of assessment. Let it continue. I will not check it. But the Minister has to her credit decided that we must have a system of ongoing teacher evaluation following **on** a system of proper and thorough teacher development and teacher preparation. In fact, the Minister quite early in this White Paper has spoken to the whole question of teacher development.

What is also **significant** about this and what is very **impressive** about this, Mr. Speaker, is that this White Paper **addresses** a wide range of issues in education. Another very important **feature** of this is the question of **the** reference in the White Paper in **dealing** with the problem of low achievement. Now this is something that we have to look **at**. **There** is no Barbadian except for those unfortunate few with brain damage who is **foolish**. There is absolutely no Barbadian who is **foolish** or who is **ignorant**. But yet the reality of **the situation** is that there is the tendency among a **minority** to experience low achievement.

There were **those** whom we used to call slow learners. I do **not** know who is a slow **learner**. A slow learner might be a fellow who compared with somebody who gets 90, he only **gets** 19. But low achievement is a reality. It is not in my **considered** judgment, Mr. Speaker, a widespread **problem** but it is that we **are** interested in the notion of **each one** has to matter. We **still** have to look at that minority of **people** who experience low achievement. **Sometimes** they experience low achievement from **under-motivation**, sometimes they have learning **difficulties**, sometimes it is the style of teaching, sometimes it is the **environment** and sometimes it is the **socio-economic problems** in the household. But the Minister is prepared to **face** that **problem**, come to terms with it and deal with it.

Mr. Speaker, I am saying that even though an **Honourable** Member in this debate said that the significant **section of resources** in Barbados that mattered the most **are** human resources and that he saw nothing in this Paper. I am saying that if you take **into** account both the content of **the** Paper and my submission in respect of defending it, and my submission has been made in the best of faith, then we **are** interested in bringing out the best in our people and our fellow beings our human resource. Even though I sit on the front bench, I feel that I am free to say that one thing that was not **addressed** was the question of the continuing **status** of an examination called BSSC, the Barbados Secondary School **Certificate**. This thing has lingered on and **on** for a long time and had no real status. It was supposed to be replaced for the school leaving exam. It is **called** the Barbados Secondary School Certificate Part I. **There** has never been a Part **II**. I was hoping to see in this White Paper some dealing with this matter in terms of trying to see whether in the context of national certification we can put this thing properly in its resting place on the dump heap because it has never served any proper purpose.

The other thing **too**, Mr. Speaker, that I want to address is this. I am not criticizing the White Paper. It is an excellent Paper but there is one little gap. There are those of us who **are** hying to look for gaps. This question of tertiary private secondary schools or the question of tertiary institutions at the private level in my view could have been addressed. **There are** those tertiary private institutions some

of which **are** located as close as Bank Hall or Whitepark, St. Michael, Mr. Speaker, that play an excellent role and **are** in need of support and of being rationalized into the system which we do not yet have properly highlighted here. 5.35 p.m.

There are also other schools in **country** districts, where people go to so-called private **lessons**, which can benefit from being embraced in the system. I do not think that for the future the Minister intends this White Paper to be a *carte blanche* and would be beyond any sort of criticism, but the Minister is simply commenting on starting a process of debate by which education and the achievement of proper instruction for people in Barbados would be properly met.

I am heartened too, Mr. Speaker, that the Minister, to her credit, did not shy away from the question of looking at the cost of education. There is nothing to suggest that the Minister belongs to such a right wing party **as** would want to say that the costs **are so** high she would want to see people pay them. She never said so, so those who accused my colleague, the Minister, of being right wing had better watch what they **are** saying. Her whole attitude **and** demeanour in this debate was that she was interested in seeing the youth brought up, in seeing teachers teach properly, in seeing parents rewarded, **indeed** she identified them as **stakeholders**. The only thing about it is that in the short-term a stakeholder in education can be a student, a teacher or a parent, but **in** the long-term a stakeholder in education can be the entire community, because **the** whole of Barbados **is** interested in seeing Barbadians **properly** educated.

I am satisfied too, Mr. Speaker, that the Minister's approach to introducing a measure of remedial education at the Polytechnic and in the National Youth Service is to be commended. I am also impressed by the fact that the Minister has, not been **so** reckless **as** to go rushing to abolish the **Common** Entrance Examination where there is a host of variables affecting that examination that require the closest scrutiny before any decision can be made to abolish it.

All in all, Mr. Speaker, I am satisfied that the effort in bringing this White Paper here today is an effort which admits the fact that, even though this country has made progress in education, there is still a lot more to be achieved. This Paper also admits the fact that, even though millions upon millions of dollars have been spent developing human resources, we must still have a process of ongoing evaluation and assessment of where we are and where we want to go. I was rather disturbed that some spokesman said that in his estimation the Paper should have said where we are and where we want to go, but the Paper says so quite clearly.

The Honourable Minister took into account a whole number of factors, vicissitudes and variables affecting education. She has come here determined to invite this Parliament's reaction to her determination to reform, and based on the fact that she has brought it in good faith, that it is well thought out, that she has the support of technical people like the Chief Education Officer and his excellent staff in the Ministry of Education who worked hard to help her, I am satisfied that this Paper has a lot of merit.

With these few words, Mr. Speaker, I am deeply obliged to you.

Rt. Hon. L. E. SANDIFORD: Mr. Speaker, I rise to make some comment on this White Paper that is before us and, perhaps what is more important, to make comments on where we are in education and where we should be seeking to go.

I, for one, have always believed that education fundamentally is a subject in which we should seek the broadest possible support and in which, as far as possible, partisan positions should be dropped, but where of course it affects deep and complex choices sometimes the differences will come through. I have never in my career benefitted from that kind of approach, because in almost every decision I had to take, I had to contend with very severe, serious and partisan opposition from the party and groups outside. If we had benefitted in the kind of support that should have been forthcoming in terms of the educational process and in terms of educational change, then we would have been much farther along in this country and many of the issues we are discussing now we would not really be discussing, because they would have been part and parcel of the educational train of thought in Barbados.

But when we are talking about curriculum development, Sir, it is little realised, even though the Minister made a reference to it and I believe the White Paper does, that it was way back in 1972 or 1973 that we set up a National Curriculum Development Council to deal with what for me is the key issue in education, that is, how do you make the entire educational process more effective and more efficient for the 60 000 or so children - I don't have the number at hand...

Aside.

Rt. Hon. L. E. SANDIFORD: Only 40 000? I am told it is 40 000, Sir. There has been a significant drop in those numbers, but to make efficient and effective education for the children in the society. That, after all, is the key to it.

I wish to make a reference to this question of elitism. I am not of the elite and my thinking is not elitist. I believe that our country and our educational system must provide

the kind of educational experiences for all of our children that will enable each one of them, as far as practicable, to get the best of what is going in the country and to make the most of their own potentialities and capabilities. That is what I believe. If that is the objective, then we have to fashion a system that will enable children to go through the system with as many opportunities as possible. If it is excellence in education and if it is a democratisation of the system, it means that there must be enough places, comfortable places, efficient places in our system for all of the children of Barbados. I do not believe, Sir, contrary to what may be said, that we have yet reached that stage. We have had a situation in which at the primary level we had enough places, but there was a severe shortage at the secondary level so that there could be no provision of comparable places for everyone going for transfers from the primary to the secondary level. So any Government in the 1950s, the 1960s and the 1970s would have had, if the philosophy was one of democratisation, to provide additional educational places and that process is not yet complete because there had to be certain compromises through the provision or designation of senior and composite schools and others in order to meet the demand for secondary school places.

5.45 p.m.

Sir, that is where the distortion comes in, because it was canvassed and propagated that the entire educational policy had to do only with the provision of secondary school places. As I said, Sir, we have not completed the process of providing the secondary school places. The St. Thomas School is still to be completed and I believe...

Asides.

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

Rt. Hon. L. E. SANDIFORD: I am saying, Sir, if we are providing the number of places we have to do that. It was intended as additional places. When I started the school are you telling me what it was intended to be?

Mr. SPEAKER: Press on.

Rt. Hon. L. E. SANDIFORD: That is what was planned. I was Minister of Education.

Sir, at the same time that you are providing additional school places, you have to take into account the tired school buildings at the primary and secondary level which would need replacement. Any Government now and in the future must have an effective school building programme either to replace existing schools or to provide additional schools. When we take into account a system of education which indicates that we have to place increasing attention at the pre-primary level to nursery education, we will

see that we still have work to do in those areas. I believe that **nursery** education is tremendously important, especially where some in our society are able to get their children at school at age 3 and others have to wait until 5 or whenever they can get them into the public school system. Inequalities have origins where we may least think they occur. So we have to do something about that.

Having looked at the total school population, as a country we have to **ask** ourselves, as parents, educators, policy makers and above **all** as teachers, what it is that we want to achieve for our children, what **kind** of society do we wish them to **grow up** in, what is the provision we are going to make for them. This comes down to the basic philosophy of education. What **Q** you believe in? What is the role and scope of the individual and what is the role and scope of the group and how the two must interact. **These are** fundamental questions and then we have to ask ourselves how **are** we to translate our philosophy, our aims and objectives into a curriculum that can be parcelled into different subjects or groups of subjects that may be digestible through the term or the semester as the **case** may **be**.

That is the role of a national curriculum development **council**: to identify the subjects which are to be taught, how they should be taught, when they should be taught. **That** is the how and why and wherefore of the educational process. I think that is at the heart and the key to it. In my view, we have passed the stage where we can think that the **3 R's** are **all** that we have to do and to teach. There is a whole range of knowledge that we have to pass on in a society such as this and this debate cannot help but be a philosophical debate.

I am fully conscious that anything I say here will not influence the Government in anyway whatsoever. So we are going through the motions. I say that because the very document that we are discussing is **called** a White Paper and a White Paper refers to settled government policy. If it were a Green Paper coming before this Honourable Chamber it means that these are some propositions and some possibilities and options but the Government has not yet made up its mind.

I hate to speak, Sir, when you are conducting a **seminar** for parliamentarians but the Government itself apparently is not aware that a White Paper represents settled policy. So, Sir, I say these matters. The consultations with all of the teachers and all of the different bodies in the system have taken place but for the consultation in here now we are given a White Paper.

Aside.

Rt. Hon. L. E. **SANDIFORD**: I know I have a point to make and I will make the point, Mr. Speaker, and they will listen but **as** I say, their hearts are already hardened.

I will take the cue from the Member for St. Thomas. He says he is listening and he has an open mind and I hope that he will take the point that I am making that the Government should complete the St. Thomas School as quickly as possible. I say that in his interest.

Sir, I believe that we have to ensure that the young people have positive lifestyles.
5.55 p.m.

We have to pass on that information and it has to be parcelled out. It has to be in the subjects that are taught, whether you do team teaching, whether it is integrated subjects or however it is parcelled out, or whether it is provided in different subjects but pulled together at the end of the process or at the end of a certain period. We have to let our people know that there should be regular medical checkups. It has to be taught in the schools and reinforced over and over again. We have to let them know that as far as possible they should not be smoking anything from a pot or a pipe. We have to let them know that they should avoid alcohol and, if they cannot avoid it, take it in very moderate quantities.

Sir, I believe they have to be told about interpersonal relationships. That is how I prefer to put it. I believe they have to be told that the country that they will live in will only make progress if we are able to save and invest more, that we will only make progress if our deficits are kept low and that we will only make progress if we are able to reduce poverty and human suffering. The point I am making here, Sir, is that in the area of personal finance and development, we have to pass the information on if not we cannot and should not hope that these things are part of the environment or the universe and somehow or another they will be inculcated. They have to be taught. I now will hear how crowded the curriculum is. You will hear that, Sir, but the curriculum will always remain crowded if 80% of the time is spent on Mathematics and English and you are only left with 20% to do these other things which are so very important. So we have to find a way and a method of teaching English and Mathematics without allocating so much time to those subjects so that time would be available for other subjects to be taught without teachers believing that they are being deprived of the time to do what they consider to be essential.

If we are talking, Sir, about the efficient delivery of education then we have to think in **terms** of ensuring that there is specialist teaching in our schools. What is the system we have? For students at age 9 or 10 we take the best and most experienced teachers and expose them to a whole class for a whole year. They are teaching the common entrance class, so those teachers have to be struggling to undo any damage that has been done earlier and then impart the kind of information they feel relates

to the main subjects that are tested in the Common Entrance Examination. That Common Entrance Examination is the only national examination that we have where all the children take the exam. We have persisted down through the years in distorting the educational system by limiting it to two subjects basically, English and Mathematics.

The whole system needs broadening to take into account a genuine theory of education which will include Social Sciences and the Sciences. That is my view. If they have open ears, they are listening. But if we continue to narrow that base in the national exam where all the children are taking it, we will continue to have the kind of distortion of genuine and **true** education. Then that examination is the only one we have, age 10 or 11, and yet I have a feeling that for **too** many years we never really examined the results of that examination with a view of working with the schools to **see** where their strengths and weaknesses were. I am grateful to the Ministry of Education down through the years for making available the results of that examination to me. I carry out my own analysis, but I believe that analysis should be done on a national scale and not analysis simply for the sake of analysing, but to see how it can inform school improvement and pupil performance.

Our challenge, Sir, is to ensure that the amount of money we spend on education is giving us the kinds of returns from the expenditure, and there will always be room for improvement. I believe we can do a better job. I believe that down through the years we have done a good job in spite of the criticisms and that is being recognised from day-to-day. I do not mind that the White Paper speaks about the new Education Act of 1983. It does not say that the major Education Act was introduced in 1975, I believe but that might be because I was Minister of Education at the time. It does not say that, but I **am** accustomed to that.

I heard one Member said that I was given some commendation by the Minister. I did not hear it myself. I know the Minister looked across at me but she did not say the Member for St. Michael South, so she could have been speaking about anybody out here. I do not know. She could be speaking about my colleague for St. Michael West for **all** I know. He acted as Minister of Education sometimes. That is why we were able to get the St. **Leonard's** situation cleared up, Sir, he and the then Member for St. **George North**.

6.05 p.m.

But we have got to deal with these matters, Sir, and we have got to be sure that our human resources are developed to the fullest. We have to ensure that our children have self-respect, that they have self-identity and worth.

The Honourable Member for St. James North included self-actualization and I would **agree** with him **on** that. Self-respect, all of those must be part of it, Sir. We have to get those across to our **students**.

At the tertiary level, we are **talking** about things that should have been settled **some** time ago. I **am happy** to hear from the Minister of Education that the Barbados Community College **will** continue to play a major **role** in achieving the educational goals of Barbados.

We are a democracy and I do not know if the **one** institute that was set up in that place, the institute of a democracy is functioning. We are talking about **democracy**. We have to remain democratic in this country. It **will** not just **happen**. We need to have the institutions in place that will pass on the knowledge, **information** and so on. **Perhaps** I will hear something about that **particular** body, Sir, because it is a key institution, according to the vision that we have of our country.

It is time that we are bold. This talk still in 1996 of tutors, assistant tutors and **so** on in a major tertiary educational institution needs throwing out. **The** standard term is that of professor. Do not be afraid. I can tell you how the **term** tutor came about. I have never said it before. But it was to come to **terms** with **Erdiston** at a time when the Barbados Labour Party, the union then constituted and others inside and outside were against the idea of a Community College. We had, as far as possible, to try to integrate it into a system and to hitch the positions **on** to something existing at Erdiston. But in any institution you think you should have a position called tutor? You **are** not in the Oxford system.

Aside.

Rt. Hon. L. E. SANDIFORD: I **am** a **survivor**, although my Government could not survive the last onslaught.

Aside.

Rt. Hon. L. E. SANDIFORD: You warned me. But you did not warn me about yourself. I **am sorry**, Mr. Speaker. I **am** not speaking about you, Sir.

Those things have to be thrown out. The legislation was changed, as far as I **recall**, so that the institution can award its own degrees, both earned degrees and honorary degrees. If you are looking for a system of honouring teachers as I note in the White Paper, the process of honorary degrees from the Community College can recognize the contribution of teachers and others who make a contribution to the educational system.

Asides.

Rt. **Hon.** L. E. SANDIFORD: Sir, at that point of transfer..

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

Rt. **Hon.** L. E. SANDIFORD: Sir, I will not be able to conclude this discourse in the 2-minutes remaining. I have never been a 2-minute man and therefore, I cannot conclude in the 2 minutes. I can terminate.

There will be other occasions for me to continue what I believe, in this Chamber, would be an important discourse on education which is a very tremendous subject.

Before I stop, let me say that I am impressed with what is to be called the Hospitality Institute and before that, the Hotel School. I believe that has a tremendous role to play in broadening the concept of what education at the tertiary level is all about. It has never been about only academic subjects but it has been about education in the broadest sense and about continuing education as well, which we all have to embrace. I think there will be excellent facilities there. I am impressed with the plans that were drawn up and made and also the implementation of those plans. I look forward to the opening of that institution.

In the end, let me stress what the spokesman on education, the Honourable Member for St. Philip South has said. The White Paper speaks in terms of competition. I think it would have been better to balance that with co-operation and that the two should go together. Competition but co-operation. I am not speaking about the Co-operative High School but I am speaking about co-operation as an energizing concept.

I will stop at this stage, Sir. Thank you.

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

Mr. W. C. C. CALLENDER: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I think it is a good point on which I should rise. When I hear of co-operation, I usually respond because I have been involved in the co-operative exercise for quite a long while.

The White Paper on Education Reform comes after many years of discussion among the many partners in education.
6.15 p.m.

I know, particularly during the last 3 years, these discussions have been going on and, Sir, I was involved in that process and I must register my disappointment that

when it seemed as if we are at the point of seeing reform taking place, instead of seeing reform we saw confusion. Let me be specific, Sir. Let me go back first of all to the former Minister of Education the Honourable Cyril Walker. He had some discussions on education reform. The National Advisory Commission on Education was looking at the various views and then in the midst of these discussions up came the Minister with this great proposal in which he is looking at education in the future and in that proposal he was recommending that we have two stages, that we have the traditional secondary school and that secondary school would go to 3rd form. After that you would go to stage 2, something akin to the American system. That would have resulted in a lot of dislocation, a lot of duplication, and it would have reinforced the kind of problems that have been spoken about where the children have to take exams at age 11, then another exam at age 14, and then another one at age 16. Sir, needless to say, the National Advisory Commission on Education did not support the proposal. I believe too the Government of the day did not support it because after much public debate we heard no more about it and we were left to begin renegotiation.

Then, up came the other Minister, the Honourable Keith Simmons and, Sir, I must compliment his energy. He had a number of meetings on all matters relating to education and this led to the establishment of a steering committee to look at the transfer system, to look at transportation, to look at values education and all these things that were relevant to education. Just at that point when we thought that we were seeing a transformation taking place, lo and behold another stage of confusion.

Then, Sir, in came Honourable Tyrone Estwick, another Minister of Education. As if to reflect on the problems of the past, as many people do, he decided to take no action because that was the safest thing to do and so he decided that the status quo would remain. That is why, Sir, I have to congratulate the current Minister of Education because she has not allowed any inertia and there certainly has not been any confusion, and as a result she has been able to have this White Paper on Education Reform brought to Parliament for discussion and I am happy about that, Sir.

When I read this Paper, Sir, I see that it reflects the views of the key sectoral interests in education and I refer to a number of my papers from the past. When I look through these papers I see that there were great areas of agreement which are reflected now in this White Paper. It shows, Sir, that this is a Government of real consensus. It shows, Sir, that this is a Government of consultation. It shows, Sir, that this is a Government that takes the views of key sectoral interests into consideration.

Sir, I am saying that because I **am** aware that the Barbados Association of Principals of Public Secondary Schools, the National Council of Parent Teachers' Associations, the Barbados Union of Teachers and **all** of the other associations, had reached consensus on the need for partial zoning. So we were just **waiting** for some Minister to have the conscientiousness to present it speedily to Parliament for ratification. So I notice there is no difficulty with **partial** zoning. It is agreed that there should be partial zoning. There may be differences in terms of at what stage the partial zoning and at what stage you should proceed to full zoning. Some people have said there should be a choice of 4 schools and then you go to your zone. Some have said you should have your choice of 4. From looking back at my papers, Sir, there was the Sub Committee of The National Advisory Commission on Education looking at the transfer to secondary schools and this Committee had recommended that there be two open choices given and then students would be allocated according to zones. This is the position that is being adopted here in the White Paper.

Sir, in any system of zoning there will be perceptions of some inequity but in the interest of community development, in the interest of having parents who have an affinity to the schools within the community working together, I believe that we have no choice but to support a system of partial zoning.

We recall the days when most of the boys and girls, because at that time there was the Foundation Boys' School and the Foundation Girls' School, the boys from the area went to Foundation Boys' and the girls went to Foundation Girls', and to this day there are great linkages between those people who went to those schools and the families because they knew each other very well. This is what has strengthened the communities in such areas as Christ Church, an area which I grew up in and which I love dearly because I knew not only the boys I went to school with, but I knew the friends of my brothers, I knew the friends of other family members, cousins and so on who went to Foundation School. And, Sir, I believe **firmly** that having a school which is central to community development is critical especially at the point in time when communities are breaking down. When communities are in need of leadership, when they are in need of greater unity, it is important that the key institutions that traditionally were supposed to give guidance to the community are preserved in the traditional way in which we knew them.

Many times, Sir, we touch things in nature and we believe we **will** do a better job, then we discover that we have touched the wrong thing and we say to ourselves that we have to revert to what we had before. There is nothing wrong with that and therefore I strongly support the case for partial zoning. I however know, Sir, that we have to contend with the issue of the perception in disparity of

schools and that over time we will have to address that by ensuring that all the schools have the requisite facilities and in **this** regard, Sir, I **am** pleased to **see** that the **Paper** proposes that the St. **Leonards** Girls' School will be amalgamated with the St. **Thomas** School as we call it or by any other name which it will be given. It will be a **co**-educational school that facility there in Richmond Gap which accommodates both the boys and the **girls** the problems of the past **would** indicate that the facility is **too** small. There is no playground.

6.25 p.m.

There is **too** much congestion and it is therefore inadequate and with the separation of the 2 schools it will present better facilities and therefore we will not have a situation of any one group placed in an under-privileged position. I am therefore pleased **that** this is being done and it is necessary in order to have a **sense** of equity within the system.

Sir, I am pleased that the White Paper **looks** at children at risk. When we speak of children at **risk**, we are **speaking** about those children who **because** of a lack of proper guidance or some **psychological** problem have found themselves given to trouble at school and they find themselves with suspension and then they get expelled. Usually, it is because they lack some kind of guidance. The children at risk concept deals with providing **the** kind of guidance necessary for these children and the White Paper itself **speaks** of having those **children** receiving **counseling** on a weekly basis. The White Paper also speaks of providing 2 additional psychologists at **the** Ministry of Education. At this time, **Sir**, there is only one and I am familiar with a number of cases where we have had children at school who needed the guidance of a psychologist and could not be seen because there was only one and there were too many children whom this psychologist had to deal with. So it is long overdue, **Sir**, for there to be a minimum of these 2 psychologists at the Ministry of Education. Also, there is **the** need to have guidance and counselling for these children and that is long overdue. Therefore, I again must congratulate the Minister for addressing the current **societal** needs. Anyone who reads the White Paper with a different perception may not have seen what it was saying. I studied a little literature at school to Sixth Form and I know that sometimes you have to read through the thing carefully. But if you read it superficially or **hurriedly** at night, you may not **see** straight fully everything in front of you and I suspect that some people read it hurriedly. Therefore, when they claimed that the White Paper was not looking at these issues, I can just excuse them that they did not have enough time last night to look over the Paper and they did not see these things by careful reading. From my understanding of the problems that confront students in our society, this White Paper addresses those problems.

Sir, when we look at the issue of diagnostic testing in schools for children who cannot **see** or hear well or who have speech problems and when we **think** that they **are** not willing to learn **or** when they are called duncy, it is not that. It is because they have some physical impediment **which** is being addressed in this White Paper. When we look, **too**, at the psychological problems of children within the school system where some have problems within the home, they may be deaf, or parents may be divorced **or** whatever other circumstance, we have in this system teachers who sometimes **are** not mindful of the fact that we live in a very complex society and our children **are** subject to these **kinds** of considerations. We sometimes figure that these children **are** just giving trouble where, in fact, these children need the **kind** of counselling that this White Paper addresses.

Sir, the White Paper also addresses the fact that children develop at different stages. I remember when I **was** at school there was a boy who was just 15 years old called "**Steinbok**" – I believe the Honourable Member for St. **Michael** South would know. I believe that he had the honour of teaching him – who became a Barbados Scholar at age 15 **or** 16 years simply because he went to school at a very early age. I went to Foundation when I was just about 8 **or** 9 years old at **that** time, Sir...

Mr. SPEAKER: I went to school at an early age too.

Mr. W. C. C. CALLENDER:..I did not have the privilege of meeting **too** many good people and I will speak briefly about some of them when I speak about the Foundation School a little later in my presentation. I will have to advert to that just a little bit. So that when we speak about flexible transfer, we **are** making **sure** that we go back to something that was good. I have seen many children being kept back at 8 years when they **are** doing well and they become frustrated within the primary school. This Paper addresses that problem. It also addresses the problem of someone who might want to move on at a later stage. Sir, I also noticed too that there is an arrangement being made for assistance to be given for teachers at assisted private schools to get special training in remediation. In these assisted private schools you have a number of children who would leave the primary schools with some learning disabilities and this is also another good step.

Also, Sir, the White Paper proposes that at the private secondary schools there be a subvention given for information technology because this is the direction in which we are headed. Also, arrangements are provided for in-service training because, as it says, each one matters whether you are going to a private school or a public school. Quality education for all.

Sir, I can go on and on **regarding** this **matter** and it would only be someone who is insensitive, who would not recognize **that** the White Paper has **come** at a time **when** the society has **been** crying out for it, when the society **demands** it and when it should be put in place with the utmost **haste**. So I **am** also **pleased** to **see** that the **issue** of teacher education has been **addressed**. **When** we **look** at Erdiston College which traditionally has **produced** **teachers** for normal **teaching**, you will notice that it has **gone** to a **situation** where we **are** looking at **special** **courses** in information technology, remedial **education**, and **values** **education** which is very critical in an **age** **when** it **seems** as if some of the people who **are** **committing** these crimes have not entered **the** church **door** **or** have not **received** any kind of instruction of that **nature**, because **those** people **who** deal with them will tell you that **they** do not **understand** good from bad. This is why **values** **education** is critical.

Another area to be **addressed** is that of **conflict** resolution. How do you **resolve** a **conflict**? In this day and age when you have **conflicts**, to resolve **than** **one** might take up a cutlass and the next **in** **will** do the **same** thing or they may even go for a gun. **So** **that** **these** **things** need to be taught in the school. How **are** you able to **deal** with conflict resolution? How to address **special** **educational** needs? If you are looking at **marketing**, **Sir**, you would **say** that this White Paper is **specially** packaged **to** **meet** the needs of the consumers, the **consumers** **being** the children, parents and the general community. It is totally **packaged** from outside, inside and all **corners**, totally **packaged**.

Sir, another point is the ongoing assessment within the school system. This is a **concept** **that** **has** been agreed by **all** the key **partners** in **education**. Everyone has **agreed** on this at age 7, 9, and 11 and not only **assessment** in **terms** of academics but assessment in **terms** of psychological and physical needs. This has **been** **agreed** and this is what the White Paper says we will do.

Sir, I am just happy as I said following the earlier frustrations of that, this White Paper has **come** to this Parliament and that it is to be implemented, but I would hope that it is implemented expeditiously. It is one thing for it to come and the second thing is for it to be implemented expeditiously because it provides the answers for this time. **These** answers have been **provided** by **all** the key players within the educational sector.

Sir, there is this idea that children **are** not doing well simply because they do not pass a lot of subjects in the Common Entrance Exam. Yet when we go out on the **streets** we **find** that people **are** smart. Some of these people who do not have the CXC **are** smarter than a lot of us in here. I believe that before we come to a judgment we have to look at the examination to **see** whether it is not demanding more under the present conditions. Within a three-hour paper you **are** expected to do **too** much. In

addition to that, you have to do all these school based assessments, which take away the time for learning, and therefore it might have an implication for your retention. It might be a problem of retention, **so** we need to look at the CXC examination. I do not believe that all the smart children I am seeing around **are** failures, I believe that something is wrong with the examination.
6.35 p.m.

When I did history at school, I sat two papers. I did not have school based assessments to do, I **read** the **books** and then I remembered something, used my little common sense and I passed history with a decent grade. In this day and age I believe I would have failed it, because I would have had to address all of these school based assessments and may not have had enough time to learn the work in addition to doing the other seven or eight subjects. So I believe it could be a matter of doing too much in a short space of time. I am not sure, but I am saying we **need** to re-examine the CXC examination before we start **to** condemn our children and deem them as failures when the standard being required is perhaps **too** high.

Sir, on the issue of sixth forms, the Paper is very clear. I will **read** a section. It says:

"It is clear that the capacity does exist to accommodate most of those who can be expected to go on to do Advanced Levels in any given year."

But the conclusion says:

"Therefore, we **can** safely say that the demand **does** not exist to create another sixth form school."

I agree with the foregoing sentence, but I am not sure that it necessary follows that we **can** safely say that the demand does not exist to create another sixth form school.

I wish to propose that in view of how the zoning system is structured, in view of the fact that we are looking at retention of traditional values, at uplifting communities, I am **strongly** suggesting that the Christ Church Foundation School **as** it is now, a school that had a sixth form. . . . When I was just a youngster I knew the sixth form boys, people like Richard "Johnny" Cheltenham, along with those before that time, we had heard about Bobby **Thomas** who had won a Barbados Scholarship and all the younger boys who did not know him but heard about him knew that he had gone to that school and he had become a Barbados Scholar. It gave the people of Christ Church a sense of pride in that institution. It brought a feeling of achievement. So I am proposing that, while most of these people are being accommodated, it would not hurt to restore the prestige, the **tradition** of the Christ Church Foundation School by simply providing a sixth form, but

not a big sixth form. All we **are** asking for is in keeping with our environment, a place where you have a lot of businesses, that you have a business sixth form where people can get in-house training as well, where students can go on attachment to businesses in the area, **so** that you **are** doing a complete job by providing a business sixth form for Christ Church Foundation School.

Sir, the school itself has been asking for this sixth form for a number of years and a Paper was presented in which a recommendation was made for a sixth form of just 30 students, and the facilities **are** there already. **The** space is there, they are into information technology, the computers are there, the teachers have Masters degrees, they **are** good teachers, they **are** looking at doing things that they are doing well, the students do well in business, in accounts, in information technology and we are looking to have a sixth form in which children would do such subjects as accounts, economics, **mathematics**, computer science, technical drawing and a combination of these called information technology. I have been reliably advised that the school has the facility, that there would therefore be a minimal cost, **so** for a minimal cost my only appeal is that we restore the glory of Christ Church, an area which accounts for 20% of the population of Barbados, an area where the networks are such that you can **walk** to the school, where you would not have to leave Christ Church and go down to the Community College, **Harrison** College, Queen's College or Combermere; or to go by two buses to The Lodge School.

In keeping with all the themes, the sub-themes and the concepts presented here, I believe it would really enhance this Paper if we could only be given a sixth form at the Christ Church Foundation School, and I am hoping that the Minister will hear us in our plea for this sixth form. It would do much more good and would do no harm if that sixth **form** is provided at that **school**. I understand the considerations that the Associate Degree has been provided by the Community College....

Mr. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member has two minutes more.

Mr. W. C. C. CALLENDER: . . . and I think it is good that those students who are sitting the Associate Degree will have an opportunity to qualify for the Barbados Scholarship in 1997. It shows vision, that we are now moving with the times, but amidst **all** this my one plea for an addition to the Paper is to look at the tradition of the Foundation School and provide it with a business sixth form which complements the whole area and which restores the school to its tradition.

Sir, I feel very good this evening as well, because we heard the announcement that every boy and girl will have an opportunity to get free tertiary education, whether it

be at the Samuel **Jackman Prescod** Polytechnic, the Community College, Erdiston or at the University of the West **Indies**.

Mr. SPEAKER: Will the Honourable Member conclude, please?

Mr. W. C. C. CALLENDER: I spoke last year and said I would like the boys and girls of Silver Sands, St. **Christopher** and **all** those poor areas in my constituency to be able to get the same free education I got. Today I feel like a good man, I have grown ten feet tall because this Government has shown once again that it cares for the poor people of this country.

Thank you very much.

Mr. B. M. **TAITT**: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I think every one who has listened to this debate so far will be satisfied that it is a debate which is desirable, and I **am** pleased to be able to participate in it if for no other reason than to put my views on the record of this House. I **am** aware that these views have been articulated before in different places, but as I listened to the debate and as I look at the White Paper I cannot help a sense of feeling that in many ways the White Paper does not go to the heart of what change we need in education to take us into the 21st century.

I believe, in spite of the fact that this White Paper has been published since 1995, that because it says it is a White Paper and because many of the recommendations in it have either been implemented or are in the process of **being** implemented, the emphasis which the Minister has been placing on consultation in her presentation is not borne out by the facts.
6.45 p.m.

It is unfortunate that such changes as envisaged will not be the result of real genuine consultation and exchange and to a large extent they will not embrace real change. Mr. Speaker, education is everybody's business. Unfortunately, there is a school of thought which has been noised abroad that education is something for the education experts but in truth if we are to discuss changes in the education which is provided in this country, then the people who have the most interest in education are in fact those mothers and fathers whom Your Honour will see any morning walking. Those of us who live in the areas where the schools are within walking distance, we see morning time, lunch time and afternoon a number of young mothers, sometimes with one child in the left hand and the other child holding in the right hand on the way to or from school.

Education is important and a debate on education is important to those people, because in the final analysis we

are discussing the changes that **are** to be made in the fortunes of the children of Barbados. There is no one who has any greater interest in the education of his or her child than the neighbour would have in the education of his or her child. Sometimes when I hear the so-called **experts talking** about education I marvel at how many of them seem to have lost touch with the reason for education.

The Honourable Member who just sat **down** talked about the consumers. In **truth**, Sir, I can speak about the consumers, not because I **am** one but because I represent so many who quite often **are** voiceless in the decisions that **are** made about them and their progeny. Mr. Speaker, I do not have a personal interest. It is ironic that as I get up to speak the second of my children would have been **born** 30 years ago today. So it is unlikely then – Happy Birthday, dear, I **am** not able to buy the expensive gift you asked me for.

Seriously, Mr. Speaker, 30 years ago my second child was born and the next one is only a few years younger. The other one is in tertiary education. But the point is when we have young children whose fortunes have not yet been settled as to where they are going to go to school and what type of education they **are** going to have, we have a more passionate interest in these matters than when we have passed that stage. Even so, Sir, I have over 40 godchildren at various stages of education and I represent a constituency where, as I said, there **are** not many people who have a voice in the decision making of what is going to happen to their children in the educational process and that is why it is important that I speak for them. I have a passionate commitment to speak for them because I believe that I and most of the Honourable Members in here come from amongst those kinds of people. We sometimes forget as we talk about the educational process and the educational infrastructure and we use the jargon of the experts that we are in fact discussing the evolutionary process of which we are a part and only recently a very integral part.

As I have said before, as we address each other in this House and we speak of the Honourable Member for this and the Honourable Member for that, each of us can remember a few years ago, it seems, when we were struggling to be part of that educational process called secondary education in this country.

So, Sir, my advice to the Minister and to the educational experts is that first of all we should not try to re-invent the wheel. We should try to see if we can accept what has gone before, accept that there has been pioneering in education before and recognise that all we are seeking to do most of the time is to improve on what we have or what we were given. Much of our difficulty in the educational

debate across the country relates to our inheritance in education. While many of **us** in **Barbados** continue to believe that what we inherited some time ago is sacrosanct, the British **from whom** we inherited most of our systems have long ago **looked at** and instituted reform and, I **think** it would be fair to **point out**, have **returned** in some instances to what they had before. We **are** talking now for example **about** flexible transfer. Mr. Speaker, when Your Honour and I were going to elementary school there was flexible transfer. I **believe** that it is no secret **that** I was **flexibly** transferred from Wesley Hall to **Combermere** when I was 9 years and 8 months. In those days, there was no **common entrance** exam. A **teacher** in the school would **draw to** your mother's attention that he **and** she thought that you were **material** to take one of **the** exams. There were 3 or 4 exams at **the** time, the Civic, if you were a member of **the** Civic Society, they **had** an exam where there might have been 2 scholarships. There was the St. **Michael's Vestry** and there was the Exhibition, second grade and first grade, the **second grade** if you were going to one of the **second grade** schools and **first grade** if you were going to **Harrison College or Queen's College**. That was it. A very short time ago.

Access to **secondary** education within this country was **determined** to a large extent by lot. If you happened to be **picked up** by one **of** the teachers as a promising pupil and if you **happened** to take the exam and you were successful you got a scholarship because if you didn't get a scholarship you didn't get to go to any secondary school even though **the** fees were a mere **\$8** a term. In those days, Mr. Speaker, you would **recall that** **\$8** a **term** was simply **too** much for many a parent to pay.

I am aware of many of **the** persons in **Fairfield**, **Black Rock** and **Tudor Bridge** who were brighter by far than many persons who have become prominent in this country over the last 30 or 40 years but who **remained** more or less at the levels they were educated to at St. **Leonard's** or St. **Stephen's** or **Wesley Hall** because their parents could not **afford the \$8** per term that was necessary to go to the **secondary** schools. It behoves a lot of people to forget that, because in the relatively short time between 1960 and today a large quantity of people have been exposed to secondary and tertiary education. But it was only yesterday that only a few had access to secondary education of a certain kind. What that means for me, Mr. Speaker, is that every time I hear of an education debate I know that I have to participate because the mandate which I got, not from my constituents, but from the people in **Fairfield** and the place where I was born and grew up was that I had a responsibility.

I dare suppose that everybody else like me has such a responsibility to see that we manage to get the education

cake broadened to allow more and more people to sustain themselves intellectually from it.
6.55 p.m.

Mr. Speaker, **this** White Paper is the result, as the Minister says, of a lot of **hard work** on the part of her officials, and they have produced to a large extent material that has been going around and around, but they **are** seeking to find solutions. It would take a lot longer than half an hour to address these issues effectively and properly as I would like but there **are** a couple of issues which we can deal with which **are** symptomatic of the other issues.

Let us take the question of partial zoning. Partial zoning, Mr. Speaker, seeks to provide everybody who lives in a particular **area** with a school of a certain quality near to that **area** and according to the debate we have heard today, it seeks to preclude young children from having to go long distances to school. I have no particular view on partial zoning as it has been described. I do not have a view one way or **the** other as long as people **are** going to have the opportunity to **get** a decent education, but I think we should face the fact in this country. It is not going to be acceptable for the people from **Alkins Gap**, **Westbury Gap** or the people from Peterkin's not to have the opportunity to go to a school that is perceived by their parents as having the best facilities or the best opportunity for that child to have the upward mobility which it has been indicated is desirable for a **good** quality life.

Now the Minister is seeking to solve that problem by making two choices available at large. When I look at those two choices, it is the difference between those two choices and what up until then persons had, that is three choices. But when you look at Zones 1, 2 and 3 and you examine them, what you have is that a number of young women who would have read only a few weeks ago that St. Michael School, was the school where the **Governor-General** went to school and it is the best school for women, or, according to the Minister's own statement a few weeks ago, it is now **the** school of choice for those, in her words, with a lighter shade of **pale**, **when** people look at that school and they happen to live somewhere where that school is no longer **in** the zone, they will simply change their address.

Mr. Speaker, I lived in New York and the simple matter to deal with zoning for most people who wanted to be in a particular zone was to have a mailing address in the zone.

Aside.

Mr. B. M. **TAIFT**: That is true, because I take it seriously. The Honourable Member is saying that I am the only Member of Parliament who caused **them** to make an adjustment to the zone. It is because I take it very

seriously. I work with my constituents and I recognise that the zone as it was identified in this White Paper created a problem. I discussed it with the Ministry and I will say for the Minister and the Ministry that they saw the point and I **am** understanding now that they have made a slight adjustment.

The point I am making is that there is no point our **getting** very uptight about the zones because those persons who are determined to be in the right zone will be in the right zone. If a child says that it lives at its aunt, there is no force on **earth** that is going to say that that child does not now live at its aunt even though the child's parents might live in St. Lucy and the aunt lives in Christ Church. All of these indicate that people are still passionately concerned about the quality of education which their children will **get**. So if we want to make fundamental changes, we have to tackle the issue, not only in terms of zoning but the issue of the qualitative capacity of the schools which we have. We have to understand that there **are** certain psychological differences relating to traditions which are not going to change merely because we wish them to change. We have to get those who **are** the disseminators of information to stop putting out jargon which creates in the minds of those persons who read that there is one law for the Medes and another for the Persians.

Mr. Speaker, the Common Entrance Examination sought to differentiate between those who could make it and those who could not but, at the same time, it provided in some ways the only fair way of distributing the elite places, or by whatever name called, the good places that were available. Until we systematically improve the quality of the respective schools that are recognised and identified as **the** elite schools, until we improve the quality of the **other** schools either by virtue of telling people the good parts of those schools or by putting more resources into those schools, we are going to continue to be dogged by the difficulties connected with zoning.

Mr. Speaker, I can think of no reason why a teacher who is teaching at **Harrison** College, for example, or Combermere, who is the best French teacher, should not be available to the students of Lynch's Secondary School. I can think of no reason why a teacher who is specially gifted in the teaching of Geography who is teaching at the Lodge School should not be available to the students of Princess Margaret. We need to examine the methodology of employment in the system. It seems to me that if we are going to talk about fundamental change these **are** the kinds of things we have to tackle. If the Honourable Member for St. Michael South is a magnificent History teacher and he is in the system and if we have six like him, but we have **28** schools, then we have to work out our remuneration capacity in such a way that those six teachers **are** available to the **28** schools in the subjects in which they are

excellent. **These are** areas which I would have **considered** revolutionary attempts. I believe that if consultation is made with **the appropriate** unions in this country and if the right system of remuneration is **arrived at**, the **people will agree**.

Mr. **Speaker**, when we were discussing tourism, **the Honourable Members** on that side said that where you had special capacity and ability **that** you had to be rewarded accordingly. But if you have a fantastic Geography teacher there is nothing wrong with rewarding that fantastic Geography teacher in a particular way so as to allow that teacher to be available to more than one school. **These are** the kinds of changes which would have to occur in **our** education system for the people to have a feeling that the zoning is genuine, that it is real and that it will not affect them adversely. Some would say it is a difficult concept, but it is not in terms of the university system.

7.05 p.m.

Everyone knows, for example, that in the university system, a person who teaches a particular subject teaches it to more than one group and, in some instances, teaches it **at** more than one university. There is no reason why we, in a relatively small country, could not find an accommodation for some of that.

Mr. Speaker, I also wish to address the issue of free education or so-called free education, that is, education that is not paid for by the client. **The** Government today through the Minister made an announcement which, to someone who had just arrived from Mars, would have seemed as if it were a revolutionary decision, that the Government of Barbados will, in fact, be paying tuition for persons who **are** going to the university.

When you **look at** the White Paper itself, the White Paper said – let me use the Report that came in – that what they were required to do – my time is such that I do not think I want to spend the time reading all of it, Sir – was one of six things, the first of which was to maintain the *status quo*. To maintain the *status quo* is exactly what the Minister has accepted. To maintain the *status quo* in relation to the university is precisely the decision which **has** been made in relation to the White Paper. **The** Honourable Member, while discussing that, turned to a paper which is a memorandum and I **think** the people of Barbados deserve to know precisely what it is. It says, "Barbados Human Resources Project **Agreed Minutes of Negotiations** May 14, 1993."

The Honourable Member read from this document and being a lawyer she read only the part that was concerned with the point she was making. She went on to leave the impression, as had been done in the past, that

this **was** a document that somehow bound the Government of **Barbados** to a commitment. Here is the last paragraph of that, Sir. Paragraph 6 – it is the Minutes of a meeting – which is the last paragraph reads **as** follows:

"Upon return to Barbados, the delegation will request the **Director** of Finance and Planning to send the bank a telex not later **than** May 21, 1993 – listen to this, Sir – **confirming** the Government's agreement with the negotiated draft loan agreement and supplemental letter. In addition the Governor **of** the Bank for Barbados or his alternate will nominate an expert to **sign** the Statutory Committee Report."

Mr. Speaker, I challenge the Minister to show the telex...

Hon. Miss M. A. **MOTTLEY**: **On** a point of order, Sir, the Honourable Member is misleading this Chamber. In the course of my speech, I stated **specifically** that those agreed Minutes were pursuant to a mandate given by the then Minister, Senator **Harcourt** Lewis, **as** a result of a decision taken by Cabinet on May 6, 1993 for the approval of a public expenditure programme and, what is more, which I did **not** say **today**, is that ...

Asides.

Hon. Miss M. A. **MOTTLEY**: Sir, I just wanted to make the point on a point of elucidation that a loan based on the agreed conditions of these Minutes was signed in August, 1993 on the very same conditions that were negotiated by **Harcourt** Lewis.

Mr. B. M. **TAITT**: The Honourable Member quoted from the document that I am quoting from. I am quoting the last paragraph which said that whoever signed the **document** Hon. L. V. H. Lewis, G.C.M., Authorized Representative for the Government of Barbados and **Miriam Schneidnam I.D.R.D.** The last paragraph said and I quoted it just now and I repeat:

"Upon return to Barbados, the delegation will request that **the** Director of Finance and Planning," *et cetera*.

I want to say further, Sir, that the then Prime Minister went to the BCC, the Barbados Community College. This document is dated May 14, 1993.

Aside.

Mr. B. M. **TAITT**: No, no. Because our integrity has been put on the line by these Honourable Members. It will not be that.

Hon. Miss B. A. **MILLER**: Sir,...

Mr. **SPEAKER**: On what do you rise?

Hon. Miss B. A. **MILLER**: **On** account of the hour.

Mr. B. M. **TAITT**: The hour? There is no hour that you can get now. We are going **to**...

Mr. **SPEAKER**: Please, please.

Mr. B. M. **TAITT**: I am sorry, Sir

Hon. Miss B. A. **MILLER**: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I have already signalled the Honourable Member but it is now well past 7.00 o'clock. This is the hour at which I will normally **ask** for the suspension.

Mr. **SPEAKER**: Could you allow the Honourable Member to conclude his point, please?

Mr. B. M. **TAITT**: Mr. Speaker, Sir, that was May 14, 1993. In January, **1994**...

Aside.

Mr. B. M. **TAITT**: You can bring all the Cabinet Papers. You can bring all the Cabinet Papers that the Cabinet has. In 1994 the Prime Minister of Barbados went to the Barbados Community College and said and the newspaper reported, Prime Minister **Erskine** Sandiford made the point that Government should foot most of the bill for young Barbadian tertiary education. Prime Minister **Erskine Sandiford** made that point clear on Saturday evening as he **addressed**...

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

Mr. B. M. **TAITT**: ...the graduation ceremony of the Barbados Community College. I am quoting him, Sir:

"While we in Barbados require our tertiary level students to bear a small part of the cost, that is what they are paying, that is what they were paying then. We remain unswerving in our position that the bulk of the cost should come out of our general revenue."

Aside.

Mr. **SPEAKER**: Please, please, please.

Mr. B. M. **TAITT**: I want to say further, Sir, that I have made it a position of my life in all the Cabinets and the Honourable Members can confirm it, that we would never agree to the payment of fees.

But I go further. The Honourable Member has appointed a Committee and put, as the Chairman of that Committee, a person whose position on fees was

well-known and documented in this country. Put this person to be Chairman of an Advisory Committee on financing university education. In fairness to that person, the person recommended...

Aside.

Mr. SPEAKER: Would the Honourable Member please conclude. Your time **has** expired. Your time has expired.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Yes, Sir. In **the** Report, the **Chairman** said 50%. Can you imagine in this day and age that a Committee on financing recommended that the students of Barbados pay 50% of their fees? In fairness to the Chairman of that Committee; Dr. Shorey, he said he did not agree with the majority view. He was of the opinion that provided the loan provisions recommended are put in place students should be **required** to pay **the full** amount of their tuition fees. He asked that his dissent be recorded.

I am quoting from the document which the Honourable Member made a document of the House and I am saying, Mr. Speaker, Sir, that it is disreputable for anyone to suggest that this Government was going to cause university students to pay fees.

Aside.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: On a point of order, Sir.

Mr. SPEAKER: Your point of order, please.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: If the Honourable Member wants, by implication, to refer to another Honourable Member as disreputable, since I am the only person who **has** made the allegation in here today that that Government on May 6, 1993, May 14, 1993 and in August 1993 signed documents and gave commitments to charge fees at those institutions at the rate of 10% while still agreeing to pay the **bulk** of the economic cost of 90%.

If he is suggesting that I am disreputable, he has not only to withdraw it but to tell the public that his problem is that he wants to excuse himself **from** not being present at that Cabinet meeting.

Mr. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member, please. The Honourable Member for St. Michael West, I am asking you to withdraw the word disreputable.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Yes, Sir, I withdraw the word disreputable. I draw to your attention, Sir...

Mr. SPEAKER: Go ahead, please.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: ...that I had not said **that the** Honourable Member **was disreputable**. I withdraw **that**. But I am just saying, for the **record**, that I said it is **disreputable** for anyone. I withdraw **that**, Sir.

Mr. SPEAKER: Your time **has** expired.

Aside.

Mr. SPEAKER: Please.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Mr. Speaker...

Mr. SPEAKER: **Please**. Could you conclude? Your time has expired.

Aside.

Mr. SPEAKER: Please.

Aside.

Mr. SPEAKER: Your time has expired. Could you conclude, please?
7.15 p.m.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: No one **including** and especially the Leader of this House, the **Honourable** Member for the City, will be able to stop me from speaking for the rights of the people of Barbados. The people of St. **Michael** West sent me here 25 **years** ago and you will **never** be able to stop me.

Mr. SPEAKER: Your time has expired, Sir.

SUSPENSION OF SITTING

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I beg to move that this House be suspended until **8:15** this evening.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: I beg to second that, Mr. Speaker.

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

RESUMPTION

Mr. SPEAKER: This sitting is resumed.

Hon. R. N. GREENIDGE: Mr. Speaker, I want to **first** begin by saying that over the years Barbados has had a very good track record where education is concerned. In fact, Mr. Speaker, when I was a boy I recall students coming from virtually all over the world to be educated at the Lodge School when they had the boarding establishment at that institution. I know that Mapps

College is also a **school** where there is some form of **boarding**.

Mr. Speaker, when you travel throughout the region and you visit any regional institution, whether you are at **Mona** in Jamaica, whether you **are** at the theological college in Jamaica, **or the agricultural** college in Trinidad or **wherever** you are, **people** always speak in glowing **terms** about **our** educational system.

I believe **too**, Mr. Speaker, that we have exported more teachers throughout this region **than** any other country has. We have left a legacy in places like the **Turks and Caicos Islands** and in places like the Cayman Islands. We have also left an outstanding legacy in **The Bahamas**, the British Virgin Islands, Bermuda, St. Vincent, Antigua, Guyana and in fact throughout the region. I believe that we have a very good solid foundation where our educational **history** is concerned.

This White Paper which we are debating today, Sir, is another part of our *educational* story and I believe that **we** have to **see** it in that light because we make our boast that we **are** the leaders in education in the region and this is a significant step which we **are** taking. I agree that everything in the **paper** may not be revolutionary. We may be **complementing**, Sir, the existing systems and programmes but the Minister has to be congratulated **for** the **effort** which she had made, a very young, enthusiastic and competent Minister of Education and I think Barbados should be proud of the Minister of Education.

Now, I want to speak to quite a few of the issues raised in the White Paper. The Honourable Member for St. James North has dealt so well with things like partial zoning and curriculum development that I think I am going to satisfy myself with looking primarily at two aspects really of the White Paper. **These** two aspects have really caught my fancy. They are the flexible transfer from primary to secondary school and teacher evaluation.

If we look first, Sir, at the flexible transfer it is a fact, it is a reality of life, and those of us who have been teaching will attest to this, that children often work one, sometimes two forms ahead of their age group. It is a fact and Honourable Members in this Chamber today have also said that they themselves worked ahead of their age group. I heard that claim coming from the Honourable Member for St. **Philip** South and the Honourable Member for St. Michael West. I know the Minister for Education, the Honourable Member for **St. Michael North East** worked ahead of her age group. I do not think, Sir, that we should punish a child for being bright. As it stands now, very often we get this very bright child sitting in a classroom next to children who **are** maybe 11 years old and here is

the 9-year old performing on par with them and sometimes better. What usually happens, Sir, is that you keep that child behind and I think that is a punishment because the child sometimes has a better mark than the 11-year old and then the friends go on to the secondary school and leave this **bright** 9-year old child behind. I do not **see** why age should be a barrier at that stage to that particular child. The child may lose interest after that. In fact there is a case in my constituency where a child that was doing extremely well was kept back because of age and performed less creditably than it was performing previously.

Sir, **experience** has taught me that there is really no magic in 11 and I **dare** say no magic in 11+ either. A child has no control, Mr. Speaker, over things like how bright it will be. It has no control over its date of birth and I think it is unfair to be telling a child that he was **born** a month too late because that is what it ends up **as**. When come perhaps August 31 the child **has** not yet reached the required eleven and therefore the child has to be kept back and the child must repeat a year.

I must say, Mr. Speaker, that where this 11+ is concerned I must tell the Minister in this instance that she must follow her own intuition on this one and take her advice from the people at the Ministry of Education because I sat in this Chamber today and I heard the Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central say that this particular exam should be abolished altogether. A few minutes after that I listened to the Honourable Member for St. Michael South and he is telling the Minister of Education that this 11+ **needs to** be expanded. Where does she stand if she takes advice **from** here or from there? There are divergent views on it and I must say, Mr. Speaker, that I fully agree with making the age **range** as elastic as she has done. I agree with making it elastic where you can accommodate **from 8+** on to 12. You accommodate the **ones** who are bright and the ones who are travelling more slowly. But I know that there **are** many of us in Barbados who are averse to change and perhaps do not want to change from what it presently is, that is, **11+**. I agree that it should have been made **as** broad as it has been from **8+** until 12.

High achievers and brilliant children, Mr. Speaker, must be acknowledged. Years ago, before we placed our children into that 11+ straight jacket, I recall a young bright **man** who took the exam at the age of 9. He came **first** in the island at the age of 9 and he went into **Harrison** College, he won a Barbados Scholarship. He is now a lecturer in law at University. I see no reason why any obstacle should have been put in that young man's quest for knowledge.

The Honourable Member for Christ Church East mentioned today the case of a school mate of mine. We sat side by side, a young man by the name of Paul Steinbok,

and I **am** sure that the Honourable Member for St. Michael South at whose feet he sat, would agree that Paul Steinbok was one of the most brilliant students ever, anywhere in the world.
8.30 p.m.

At the age of 13 Paul Steinbok had already had "O" Levels. When he sat beside me in Sixth **Form**, he was about **15 years** old and I was a big strapping **man** ready to leave **and** here was a 15-year old who was a lot brighter than we were. This young man was so brilliant, Sir, that at **15 years** old he **had** three "A" Levels. I think they were English, History and French. But Steinbok did not stop there in Fifth Form. In fact, he did not get **the** scholarship at 15 years and he had grades good enough to get the scholarship. But what Paul Steinbok did was to go on and do science and he got **the** Barbados Scholarship in science and he is now one of the leading doctors in the world This is sheer genius.

I have a few reservations like anybody else on the whole question of **the** White Paper. I have a few questions on the issue of the flexible transfer. I was wondering, Mr. Speaker, if it would have been possible to **make** it where the **person** would be given more than one attempt. This is something which I **think** may be looked into and perhaps as we go along there is always room for change. Then there is the temptation always, Mr. Speaker, to experiment with the very bright children. I **am** pleased that there is a provision now which says **the** child must be scoring consistently above 90 and that the child must complete the syllabus. There is also a provision which insists that the parents and the principal must carefully monitor situation. I think those checks and balances **are** good and those **are** some of the reservations which I had about this whole case of flexible transfer. I agree with the Minister of Education that the high-fliers which we have may be about 50 or so. But the question of course was that like everything else we may be trying to help and we may destroy and therefore I **see** why the checks and balances are there that you should not push a person too quickly. The critical analogy is clear. Sometimes we take a youngster and we want to put him into this team or that team and sometimes we destroy the person. Therefore, as I said, those provisions which say over 90 per cent always in grades and that the child must complete the syllabus and a right to **appeal** as well goes to some extent to satisfy my **concerns**.

Mr. Speaker, I now want to say just a few words about the whole question of teacher evaluation because there is no doubt in my mind whatsoever that ongoing teacher evaluation is a *sine qua non* to our educational system. We must have teacher evaluation. Teachers have to know where they are now and how much farther they have to go and we just cannot let them loose and let them be teaching at random and not making any appraisal or

assessment in the way they are **performing**. I recall, Sir, when I was a **teacher** they had what I consider to be a very vague instrument which was used as a **form** of teacher evaluation. Every **year** the headteacher would give you some grades like a, b, c, d or whatever. That was the way to measure the teacher's performance. I **must** say, Mr. Speaker, that is no **longer** in existence. I say **that** it was vague **instrument**, Mr. Speaker, **because** the headings in which you were adjudged were very **often** nebulous. They had something on it, for **instance**, called "influence" as a heading and you were to be judged on influence. Sometimes one would wonder **what** "influence" **meant**. Does it mean what influence I have **on** my fellow teachers? Does it mean what **influence** I have on the students? If it means what influence I have on the **students**, would not the person evaluating have to **find** out **from the students** what influence I was having on them? **All** those questions were asked.

Mr. Speaker, very often the headmaster was the **person** who actually wrote on the report. I **mean** the way a school is so busy the headmaster himself did **not** have the time to **come** and watch you **do your** lessons **and** the headmaster was **the** person who had to be judging you and your performance, had to be putting **down** things like your knowledge of the subject **matter**, and had to be judging you on discipline in your classroom. I **used** to **find**, Mr. Speaker, that very **often** the wrong **impression** could have **been** given because **the** person who sent the **most people** to the headmaster for **punishment or** whatever could very well have been adjudged as the person who exerts the most discipline **on** the class. But the **person** who never sent anybody in my opinion **might** very well have been the person who was exerting the **most** influence, because he never had to send anybody. But very often you found that it **backfired** and the person who sent the most people **would** get a better grade for discipline. I am glad to hear that particular instrument from most schools is now out of **the** system.

Now I have heard of a **case** too where some head-teachers will ask you to sign **first** and then put in the **grades** **because** you did not want to **confront** the person with a bad grade **and** you got the **person's** signature **first**. It was that **kind** of instrument and it was largely regarded as what the Honourable Minister referred to as a punitive instrument where people always thought of a whipping rod and **that** they were going to use that instrument when they wanted you transferred **or** when they wanted to prevent you from getting a promotion. This particular method of assessment and **appraisal** which the Minister is coming with is a different type altogether. I believe that a lot of public relations need to be done with it if we are to remove that perception that the teacher evaluation process is a punitive one. We have to give it some public relations and we have to let people know that it is for the teacher's benefit. The teachers have to know this. It is a different type of

system altogether. Now it must be made clear that the assessment **procedure** will be aimed at improving things like class management of the teacher in order to ensure that the student in the long **run** is better off. It is the class management and so on that we **are** working on. It is going to **be** a continuous **process**. There is going to **be** dialogue on it always **and one** thing I **like** about it, Sir, is the whole question of parents evaluation where you **are** going to be **working on** the strengths and **weaknesses** of the teacher. I **think** that this is a move in the right **direction** because any assessment should reflect the way the **fellow** teachers feel about you as well and that parent evaluation is going to **do** justice. For instance, do other teachers rely on me as a teacher?

Now I recall, Mr. Speaker, where a headmistress was teaching in a Second **Form** and next door there was a young teacher teaching the identical subject which the head-tawher was teaching. It was a subject and verb **agreement** why for instance we have to say: "A box of matches **is**" and **not** "A box of matches **are**". It was that kind of tricky subject and verb agreement. It is tricky **for** a Second **Former**.

Aside.

Hon. R. N. **GREENIDGE**: Mr. Speaker, I know the Honourable Member for St. John wants something to laugh at, but the correct thing is a box of matches **is**. It is only one box. That is what the lesson was about. But what the headmistress was saying was that the young teacher was teaching the lesson **better** than she herself was teaching it and in the long run she **made** use of that teacher to teach that particular area of English for her. If this particular point is **taken** to its limit, Mr. Speaker, we had in here today **two** suggestions. We had one suggestion that when you **are** good, you should be used as a consultant teacher like how you use a Q.C.

8.40 p.m.

That is the type of thing I am speaking about. Here is somebody who **excelled** at what they were doing, it is the same point which was made earlier. Then we had another suggestion from the Honourable Member for St. Michael West, that if you **are** a good Spanish **teacher** you should be able to teach not only at the school you are teaching at, but you should be used at another school. This is what teacher evaluation is about under this new system. If you drive it to its logical conclusion, it is exactly what they are saying and I would join hands with them on that. If you want really and truly to use the teacher evaluation process to do something, this is what can come out of it.

Such a document, Mr. Speaker, is going to play a part in promotion. Do you know what else I would like to see come out of that document? I do not believe in promotion

by seniority or by age, I believe in promotion by merit. This particular document could very well go a long way in eradicating that whole idea that as long as you **are** the **oldest** teacher, or the longest **serving** teacher, automatically you **are** next in line. Very often when it reaches that stage you realise that you do not have anything more to do, you do not have to **try** any longer, because you **are** going to be the next man, and therefore I think this is something else which this particular document can do. In the long run we can have the most beautiful appraisal system in the world, we can have the best teacher evaluation method in the world, but if you **are** using the wrong **persons** to evaluate the system it is all going to break down. **Therefore**, we have to ensure that the Heads, the **Year** Heads and the **Heads of Department** are the correct people, that they **are** trustworthy and that things **like** favouritism, political patronage and so on are no longer part and parcel of **their** armoury.

You can have a very weak Head Teacher, **for** instance, who knows within himself or herself that the teacher being assessed deserves a 'C', but who may not want to hurt the teacher and for that reason, and that **reason** only, he might not give the teacher a 'C'. I am saying you have to be strong, especially in a system like this one, which is new, and a lot is going to depend on it. I urge the **Head** Teachers, **Year** Heads and Heads of Department to **take** this particular one much more seriously than they took the last one. The gist of what I have said is that it is not a foolproof system. It might be an excellent system, but you are still going to have a few problems.

Mr. Speaker, I said I was going to speak on two issues. I think I have even gone on longer than I thought I would. Therefore, in conclusion I want to commend the Minister of Education for the steps she has taken in bringing this White Paper before Parliament. I **think** it is a step in the right direction and it can only do good for education in Barbados.

Thank you, Sir.

Mr. H. F. **LASHLEY**: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I rise on this occasion to add my voice to this debate. I should **like** to take a different perspective and look at community participation in education, the way forward.

I believe that our educational system should be geared to develop more well-rounded individuals so that they could achieve the best out of life and it is against this background that I believe education is not a 9.00 to 3.00 exercise. I know that a lot of programmes go on long after 3 o'clock. I want to link the community into the school and vice versa and I would like to draw a reference, using Parkinson School in this instance. There was a time in Pinelands when the community had no access whatsoever

to use the school and the school had been continuously vandalised, because there was this missing link between the school and the community. At the formation of the Pinelands Creative Workshop, members of the Workshop and people from the Seventh Day Adventist Church went to the Headmaster, the late Mr. Denneth **Reece**, and came up with a proposal on how to link the community into the school and the reverse. The result of that is now history, because the model of Pinelands and Wildey has become No. 1 for cultural and sporting development in Barbados. I believe that throughout Barbados, particularly the newer secondary schools, should always be open for **NGO's** to use them whenever they want to use them, under some kind of guidance from the Board of Management.

We also have to look at the schools in Barbados using the resources within the community from persons who have excelled in their particular disciplines as resource persons where they could come into the various schools and offer their services as counsellors. Let me draw an instance. I am living in a community that probably produces the best sporting and cultural talent anywhere in the Caribbean. That is undisputed. Let me start identifying it for Honourable Members. When I look at people like **Rodney Grant**, who co-ordinates a regional programme through established cultural fusion that has its secretariat in Pinelands. He is an expert in drama, dance and the arts, and you could use his skills at Parkinson School. In addition, we have a young gentleman like Mark Forde, who qualified as the youngest FIFA referee this part of the world. Again, he can teach refereeing and any related aspect of football from a theoretical point of view. Not only that, that school has produced individuals, like Rawle Clarke who represented Barbados at the Montreal Olympics. We also have within the community itself resource persons like Keith Griffith, **Colin Forde** and Miss **Sandra Fergusson**. I could call a host of names, but the important point I want to make is that we cannot have the schools as a separate entity and then the communities far removed from them. If you go down that road, you will be on the wrong path and create a lot of problems.

Asides.

Mr. SPEAKER: Let us hear the Honourable Member please.

Mr. H. F. LASHLEY: It is against that kind of background that I am talking about the newer secondary schools, because I am a product of a newer secondary school, Parkinson School. I am saying that when we look at the educational system within the newer secondary schools that today's youth are more energetic, more creative than at any other time in Barbados. I am saying that because they diversified the programmes in the newer secondary schools the school halls like that at Parkinson

School, the Garrison Secondary School, Princess **Margaret**, all of those school halls should be renovated for what I call **theatrical** halls for the performing arts. The reason why is that it leads us to the fact that we could introduce drama, dance, folk singing and even jazz music on the school curriculum, but we have to have the facilities where the students can exhibit their energies.

8.50 p.m.

Sir, last Friday I was very happy to be in this Honourable Chamber when the Honourable Member for St. Thomas was speaking on the **Prisons Act** and he drew to mind a very pertinent point which relates to this same Bill we are speaking about here tonight, that between **1985** and **1995** the prison population has almost doubled. I go to the Prisons every fortnight to visit members of my constituency. We continue to say we have a **problem** with young people but what we do have is a problem with young males in Barbados and if we introduce community based programmes, because the genesis of the problem why we have so many young men in prison lies within the community, if we could support the community organisations in Barbados, if Government offered the community organisations more subventions, particularly **NGOs**, we would go a long way to correct the problem.

Each single educational programme that we develop in Barbados from **hereon** should have a leadership component attached to it because young men today have a very low sense of self-esteem and we have to devise programmes to save our males. I was in a conversation with Dr. Bradley **Niles** from the University of the West **Indies** and we are working on a programme to save our young males.

In addition to that, I think that the Honourable Minister of Education should also look at the possibility of introducing what I call a vocational school of the arts programme in Barbados. It is one that works well in Trinidad at the St. Augustine Campus of the University. It is one where students from all over the world fly into Trinidad and participate in this vocational school of the arts programme. For Members of this Honourable Chamber, let me outline the subject areas in that vocational school of the arts. There is photography, choreography, dance, drama, script writing, calligraphy, production management – I did the course in Trinidad in production management and it has served me well – lighting and song. These are **non-traditional** areas that we have to examine if we are going to chart a meaningful course for our young people.

Sir, I also want to examine remedial classes. The Pinelands Development Council in conjunction with some business firms that I will not call... If you realise Sir, I have been talking about action all night. The Honourable

Member for St. Michael South said he is not a 2-minute **person** and I am not either. I **am** saying that another important area is remedial classes. We have launched a remedial set of classes which began last year and is geared for **persons 16** years old and up to **21** and if other adults want to participate. That particular course was very successful.

I am saying, Sir, that if we could get programmes like these generated **throughout** the entire island I am sure that we will go a long way to solve part of this problem among our youth in Barbados. We have to have a joint national effort of development of the youth in Barbados. It is not only left to parliamentarians. The Honourable Member for St. Michael West made the point that education is everybody's business. We cannot come in here and try to make political **grandstanding** on a sensitive issue like **education**. Both sides of this Chamber should be able to come together and form a new course for the development of our youth.

I figure, Sir, that too little money continuously is being voted for our youth and we have to correct that imbalance if we are going to do something very positive.

Finally, Sir, let me say in winding up that Martin Luther **King** said and the Honourable Minister of Education also quoted him today in this Chamber, but I would also say that Martin Luther King's speech on Washington Square said that Rip Van Winkle slept through a revolution. If we continue to fall asleep while this silent revolution is happening in Barbados then we all will be found wanting. Let us work collectively towards the better and quick development of this country that we call Barbados that we so dearly love. Thank you.

Mr. L. R. **TULL**: Mr. Speaker, in view of the lateness of the hour, I will not be as long as I would normally be but I do have to say that the best years that I spent in public service were spent in the Ministry of Education and for that reason I find it very difficult whenever there is a debate, either formal or informal on education, not to participate and indeed not to listen with a great deal of interest. I am one who have expressed his views on numerous occasions on the Floor of this Parliament that education cannot admit to radical surgery. I have held that view and continue to say it.

We have had a good educational system. It has its flaws and strengths and it has served this country well. We must from **time** to time reform and **amend** but we must be careful in our efforts not to throw out the baby with the bath water. I also want to say that educational policy in this country is a continuum. All the Ministers of Education who have served in Barbados have made some contribution

large or small to the development of education in this country and I would not want to **see** the debate as a partisan debate. What we are trying to seek to do should transcend political partisanship. That is not to say Mr. Speaker that we should not use the opportunity to correct some wrong views and many have come through in this debate.

However, Sir, I want to say very quickly that changes in education must be reflective of the circumstances and the needs of a particular time and therefore it is difficult to compare one period or one incumbency with the other. I give my own example, my incumbency between **1976** and **1981**. I went into a Ministry that was perhaps going through its most turbulent period in the history of the Ministry of Education.

9.00 p.m.

I found a Teachers' Union that was on the rampage led by a very strong and compelling character. Many things were being challenged at the time and what was required during my incumbency was to settle the atmosphere among the partners in the education system. That was almost a full-time job. I also had during my incumbency the requirement to provide the additional secondary school plant so that we could enjoy universal secondary education in Barbados. For more than a century we had enjoyed universal primary education but it **took** a long time before we reached the stage where we could by law require all children to go to school to the age of **16** and provide the educational plant to support such a policy. We also during my incumbency had to go through a period of rapid upgrading of teacher training. I think there is no period – I say this with a great deal of certainty – in which the training of teachers accelerated as it did during that period.

When I was Minister of Education, we in **the** Ministry started the course in the Faculty of Education, a Bachelor of Science Degree in Educational Management and Administration, because we realized that the size of the secondary schools – and at that time one of the schools had **as many as 1 700** children – and the skills required for management of a modern educational plant are something that could not be passed on to teachers just because they were senior. **We** realized that we had to provide the skills required to manage schools of that size and that was one of our priorities. We started the courses, not only in the University, but in Erdiston Teachers' Training College to make teachers ready for the important job they had to do. Other things have happened in other times. This is a period we now move to in which many of the gains that have been acquired in the past have been consolidated but we also most importantly must come up with an educational policy to keep in line with the blinding pace of change that is engulfing the whole world.

This document, the White Paper on Education Reform, captures, in essence, the position of this **Government** in the way in which we would like to bring education in line to meet the rapid developments that **are** taking place. We **are** talking, for instance, of the explosion of information, the development of technology, the availability of knowledge and the increase in information that is required for further knowledge requirement. We know, Sir, that we are moving from a period of labour intensive work to knowledge intensive work. **The** knowledge industries are developing apace and it is necessary for new approaches to be made in our educational system to meet that **kind** of reality.

We have the situation, Sir, in which in a **free** wheeling, free trade global environment the movement of capital takes place apace. What is even more interesting is that the movement of management and knowledge can equally be moved apace and countries like Barbados which are short of natural resources, can use the traditional resources of our people and our good educational system of record to improve it and put us in a position where we can compete worldwide in the area of our knowledge industries. More and more, Sir, wealth is not defined in terms of natural resources, the resources of the sea, mines, forests, or whatever, but is defined more in terms of the wealth of knowledge that is available to people. More and more what will determine the success of competition in this modern world will be the quality of the educational system of any particular country.

Now, I want to throw one or two cautions to the Minister and this relates to the question of what do you do with the many ideas and views that are thrown at you from every corner. An Honourable Member said already in this debate that education is the business of everybody. It is also the one area of human endeavour where everybody is an expert. Therefore, the Minister would be inundated with a great deal of views coming from every direction and the views coming from the Honourable Member for St. Michael South. Other Members gave their views. I have some regard for the views of the Honourable Member for St. Michael South and that is why I singled him out, although he seemed surprised at that. But views will come from every direction and I would want the Minister to understand that she will have to do a clever act of sifting out the ideas she wants because you cannot have educational policies with mathematical precision. If you are dealing with educational reform and educational policy, you do not have to deal with the precision of mathematics. It was Cicero who said: "*Quot homines tot sententiae.*"

Aside.

Mr. L. R. TULL: You would not know that. "Many men, many minds." We have heard **as** many views of what should be done in education here this afternoon **as** the

number of persons who have spoken. I am going to caution the Minister to listen, but there **are** some things for which you have **to** rely on the wisdom of the ages and also **on** your **predecessors**, those who have gone through the mill.

Aside.

Mr. L. R. TULL: I **am** very glad, Mr. **Speaker**, that I **am** impressing the Honourable Member for St. John.

I was saying, Mr. Speaker, that one has to be careful in sifting through all these ideas. I listened intermittently during the day and I have heard **all kinds of** recommendations on what should be on a curriculum and if you accept everything that you heard, you would have to send the children to school 7 days a week, 12 hours a day to take it **all** in.

We also have, Mr. Speaker, the views expressed as to whether education should be for work. This is an old debate. This debate is as old as education itself, whether we should be educating people for work or whether we should be educating them for the refinement of the mind. Now the politician philosopher who spoke earlier today, the Honourable Member for St. **Philip** South, leans in the direction of educating for the refinement of the mind. Many others in the debate proposed the view that we should educate people for work.

Now, I do not intend, Mr. Speaker, to come down on one side or the other. There is a lot of merit in the argument that one should **refine** the mind, that if you train the mind it can carry through the necessary gymnastics in the future to adjust to any situation.

9.10 p.m.

But there is an equally compelling reason why education should be for work. The people who are unemployed in Barbados **are** substantially the people of the low economic groups. Those **are** the persons that many of the changes in the educational system should be looking towards. We have to give them an equal opportunity to have a share in whatever economic advantages come out of education.

Week after week, day after day, I see people who come to me either at my home or in my office enquiring about jobs. I could say with absolute certainty that...

Aside.

Mr. L. R. TULL: You better believe it ...over 90% of those who come to me and enquire about jobs are persons of the low economic groups and persons who are **ill**-educated.

Aside,

Mr. L. R. TULL: I offer them hope. Mr. Speaker, Sir, the educational system in Barbados has to be reformed in a way that would bring those people through their training, education, whatever name you put to it, Sir, **and** enable them to come into the mainstream of economic living in this country.

That is why I am pleased to hear the Honourable Minister state today that education is seen by the Government as no longer in the social sector but in the economic sector. That it has an economic life of its own which is played out in human development and that is why so much effort is being placed on human resources development, in this country. But I have to continue to caution, Sir, that we have to adjust to a system to take into consideration that the vast majority of the people in this country who are unemployed are people at the lower socio-economic round.

I want, very quickly, because I said I was not going to speak very long, to mention two other things. One relates to this question of teacher empowerment. If we are to have a progressive and modern educational system, it is important that we have the teachers, those who deliver education in the classroom brought in a position in which their views are treated with the utmost respect. I know that over the years, the role of the teacher, the importance of the teacher in our society, the respect for the teacher in the society has gradually been diminishing.

We cannot succeed in reform in our educational system, unless we bring the teachers into full partnership in the development of that system. I do not myself, Mr. Speaker, propose to say what should be done in terms of pay and other financial attractions. I am not getting into that. But certainly there must be some way worked out in which the teachers can have a greater say in what happens in the schools and what kind of education and teaching they should deliver to the children who are in their charge.

Quickly, Sir, on this question of university fees. In the last Parliament, before the elections of 1994, I, on more than one occasion, on the Floor of Parliament sought to elicit from the then Government, its position on cost recovery. The Government published a development plan in which it referred to cost recovery at least 7 times in relation to education. It talked about cost recovery in relation to the Teachers' Training College at Erdiston and in respect of the Samuel Jackman Prescod Polytechnic, the Community College and the University. All through the last General Election campaign repeatedly, night after night, I charged that the Government had intended to introduce fees for university students at Cave Hill from September, 1996.

At no point, either **on** the Floor of Parliament, during **the** last Parliament, nor during the election **campaign did** the Government of the **day** meet head on this question of cost.

I say **that**, Sir, not to set us up one against **the** other but just as so many persons have been asking **that there** must **try** to develop some common cause between political parties **and** that the whole question of education should be taken beyond partisanship, if **that** is possible.

I think it is only reasonable that any Government or any political party in Government should level with the people on something as important as this. Why the Government of the Democratic **Labour Party** shied away from opening up to the people and start **an** honest **and** straightforward debate on the questions as whether our children should have to pay tuition fees for the university, Community College and the Polytechnic, I can never understand.

They have to **bear** some responsibility for the anxiety that has been caused by students at the university who were concerned, for a very long time, about whether they would have been able to continue their education or not.

I know and I will wind up because it is getting late. I am going to make one final point in relation to the Student Revolving Loan Fund. The Student Revolving Loan Fund became operational in 1977, I think it was and it has formed an outstanding service in assisting Barbadians of lower income groups to have the resources to have tertiary education.

I have often wondered to what extent an expansion of the Student Revolving Loan Fund will go towards meeting the aspiration - I said it no higher than that - of the Government to increase by 30% or 40% in the next 5 years, the number of Barbadian high school graduates who go to the university. We have one of the lowest rates of high school graduates to attend university of anywhere in the world. We **are** lower than North America. We are lower than Europe. We **are** lower than Asia and we are lower than much of southern Africa. We have a very low percentage of our high school graduates who go to university.

I believe that it has a lot to do with lack of resources. Wherever there is a question of lack of resources, Mr. Speaker, we are talking about a certain section of Barbadian society that is constantly the ones who are disadvantaged. I should like to see - I do not take the White Paper **as** the end of educational thought in the Ministry of Education. I have every confidence that it is a document that deals very well with the issues in education today. It is dynamic. It is not static and I know that the Ministry will continue to build on the things set out in this document.

I **am** appealing, as I said in my final statement, Sir, for the Minister of Education to take a very close look at those who are not **benefitting** from the opportunities for post-secondary education.

Aside.

Mr. L. R. TULL: I do not care who looks. Somebody has to look. Because it cannot be that in a country that has boasted for all of this century to be in the vanguard of educational achievement should **find** itself at the latter end of this century among the countries that provide the least opportunities for their high school graduates for tertiary education.

This certainly is inconsistent with the stated policy of Government. to move Barbados towards the knowledge based industries and to use our own resources and the resources of the mind to make Barbados highly competitive internationally. We cannot achieve that unless we make an aggressive assault on the circumstances that make us the least successful in training our students for post-secondary education. I am grateful to you, Mr. Speaker.
9.20 p.m.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Mr. Speaker, I would like to join this debate at this time, Sir, but first I must make a couple corrections. **Correction No.1** is that the Honourable **Member** for St. James North said that he was in Bridgetown one night about 11.00 o'clock and he saw someone from St. Lucy under a box. I would like it to be known, Sir, that the culture of St. Lucy is such, Sir, that no matter where you are you will head home. That person could not have been from St. Lucy.

Hon. R. C. **EASTMOND**: On a point of order, Sir, even though it is true that the person under the box was not the Honourable Member, the truth about it is that I knew the child and I was very concerned. He did in fact come from that parish.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Mr. Speaker, I cannot **challenge** that. He said he **knows the** child. Seeing that he knows the child I cannot dispute what he knows of the child.

Mr. SPEAKER: Let us move on, please.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Mr. Speaker, on two occasions in this Assembly I have stated that there is a need for an expansion of the Community College and I have said previously that the time is right for there to be another Community College somewhere in the north of this country. I would not necessarily say I prefer it to be in St. Lucy, it could be in St. Peter or St. Lucy.

Sir, when I look at the White Paper on page 94 it tells me, Sir, that the capacity of the Community College is 650. Then it says the total intake of the sixth form level is therefore some 900 students annually. 650 plus 250 from the other secondary schools make it 900. It is not my error, Sir, it is the error of this White Paper. Then it goes on to state, Sir, that there is an additional 500 to 600 students and the **first** 500 are students who took the CXC examination and got 5 'O' levels or 4 'O' levels at **any** one time. This additional 500 to 600 are the ones who took it in two chances. What they are saying is that in any one year there are 1100 students trying to get into Community College and there are only 650 places for those students. I say, Sir, there is room for between an additional 350 to 450 places. I **am** saying there is a good argument for another tertiary institution to be built somewhere in the north.

Aside.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Mr. Speaker, now that you are saying that the DEMS should have built one, we have already identified the Naval Base facility ...

Aside.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: I was not going to push that but if you want me to push it I can **push** it now because we have buildings down there that you can use as another tertiary institution.

Mr. Speaker, I am convinced in my mind that there is no difference between partial zoning and what we have right now. If at the end of the day anyone could show me the difference in school placements in partial zoning and the system we have right now, I am prepared to sit down. I will say this, Mr. Speaker, I would go for zoning but in order for you to go for zoning there are several things that you have to do first and that is, Sir, the infrastructure must be in place. You cannot talk about flexible transfers, zoning and you do not have the school capacity. I will tell you why, Sir. If you go for flexible transfers, what you are going to get is a situation, that let us say the total school capacity is say 1 000, and you allow children to take the exam before their time and let us say there are 40 of them, you are actually asking 40 students to take the place of 40 older students. I am saying that in order for that not to happen what you will have to have is over capacity so that you can allow this practice without affecting the system.

Mr. Speaker, we also have to look at it another way. If we are going to have a White Paper on Education Reform, in some way this White Paper must show you how children coming out of school must be able to create their own jobs or be affiliated to places to get jobs. I think right now the most important thing that any White Paper can do for any student in any school is to show that person how

to get a job. I have a simple way, Sir. There must be a relationship, Sir, between the school and the business sector. You can talk about lunch money and bus fares or whatever you want to call it, Mr. Speaker, but I am saying the schools should have some situation where they can build up a relationship with the private sector. Sir, not the traditional private sector because we know that the interest of the traditional private sector and the interest of the private sector as I would see it are quite different. The private sector as I would see it is a private sector that has an interest in the person who is coming out of school. I am saying, Sir, that that relationship should be such so that the school can build a relationship with the private sector as I know it so you would be able to get students coming and learning business so that when they leave school they would have a business knowledge and they would know what to do. If they go to work with someone else they would have had experience already, Sir.

Sir, you would have a situation in this country where the traditional business sector would not want to see those people because the traditional business sector would see those people as competitive. The normal business sector as I see it would see those people as comrades and we have to learn in this country to bring along our brothers and sisters and that is the whole problem in this country. We do not bring along our brothers and sisters. We believe that if we find ourselves in a sector that we protect ourselves and deprive our brothers and sisters when we could give them an opportunity to come and learn. We should also encourage those people on how to get into business and create jobs for themselves.

9.30 p.m.

Mr. Speaker, if we have a situation where we can teach people how to create jobs for themselves, automatically they will create jobs for other people. But there is a group of people in this country who are so selfish that they believe that everything belongs to them. This is our White Paper, Mr. Speaker, and this is what a White Paper should be, to show people how to develop employment and develop the minds of people.

Mr. Speaker, we have a situation where there are people who are protected in this country and the Honourable Member for the City knows this. When they come to deal with certain business people, they have one agenda and, when they come to deal with many business people, they have another agenda. Do you know what happened, Sir? They have people in Barbados, and this White Paper should have addressed this, who would encourage people to go and trade with other people outside of Barbados when they should be trading with people in Barbados to generate employment.

Aside.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: That is not true. Do you want me to call the name of Banks Breweries? But I would not do that.

Aside.

Mr. SPEAKER: Let us keep it orderly, please.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Mr. Speaker, we have another situation. On many occasions we hear about paying for tertiary education, paying higher bus fares and paying higher rents and people on the other side behaved as if it is right for international institutions to squeeze Governments into trying to come to a particular policy. That is wrong, Sir. There is no way you can get me in this House of Assembly supporting any international institution in trying to pressurize Government. And to serve what? Their own doings, Sir? We over here have been accused of not signing certain agreements with international institutions and we have been accused of not getting loans because we did not sign certain agreements over bus fares and rents. You want me to believe that we would sign an agreement about paying fees for tertiary education when we refused to pay on bus fares and house rents. No way, Mr. Speaker, because the same way we refused to sign the agreement for bus fares and rents, we will refuse on tertiary education for the simple reason that we believe strongly in promoting the masses of this country. In 1961, it was this Government that promoted the interest of the masses. So how can we fall back on a promise like that? No way will we fall back on a promise like that, Mr. Speaker.

As you know, Sir, we also believe in places like the 'O' Level Institute. We believe there is a role for that in education. We would make sure also that the subsidies that you receive from this Government will continue and they will be increased. Yes, we believe that they should be increased now too. Let me tell you why. If you want to have the total places in education, the 'O' Level Institute must be added to that group.

Mr. Speaker, honestly, how can we have a White Paper and it says nothing about the land use policy in this country?

Aside.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: That is the knowledge of the other side.

Mr. SPEAKER: Please, please. Order please. Is this the school ground or something like it now?

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: No, no, Mr. Speaker. This is much higher than that. You see, Mr. Speaker, in order to place schools, you must have the population and there

is enough evidence that when the Rural Development Plan is put in place as enunciated by me that there will be a movement of people from urban Barbados to **rural** Barbados and this White Paper has not taken this into account. When the Honourable Prime Minister and Honourable Member for St. Peter said he has plans for the North and everybody flocks to the North and everybody wants primary school places, there will be no primary school places. Are you **telling** me that this could not relate to land use policy, Sir?

Aside.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order, please. Let us hear the Honourable Member.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: It is regrettable that Government cannot **see** the connection between a White Paper and any land use policy.

Mr. Speaker, another problem with this White Paper is this. The Honourable Minister stated that **all** Sixth Form schools in the zones, and I remember this well because when she said that it clicked, all the students would have to take one bus. Do you remember saying that? Mr. Speaker, that is not correct because in Zone One, and that should be of interest to myself and the Honourable Member for St. Peter and my friend for St. James North, **the** Sixth Form school is Queens College. As the Honourable Member for St. Peter would know, you would have to take a bus to Bridgetown and then a bus from Bridgetown to Queens College. So what I am suggesting, Sir, is very easy. Remove Queens College from Zone One and put **Harrison** College and you will solve your problem. One bus.

Aside.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: What is elitist about that? You are angry because I am representing my people's pockets because it is two bus fares. I cannot allow that. I have to look after the interest of my constituents and also my friend, the Honourable Member for St. Peter's constituents too. Mr. Speaker, people tend to believe that as you talk about land use policy it has nothing to do with the placing of schools, the placing of industries and the placing of other things. If you are going to deal with Education, you have got to relate it to the land use policy. I do not understand the nonsense that these people are getting on in here with.

The next thing that I would like to see, Mr. Speaker, is the teachers having the power to correct students at the form level again. You see there is a connection. Anyone in here that has a young child will tell you, Mr. Speaker, that the power of the teacher is very important. When you are speaking to that child, he or she will tell you that I was

told by my teacher and everything that is said by that teacher is correct. So it means that if that child does something and it is not corrected by that teacher, it means that the child has not done anything wrong. So I want to see the power going back to the teachers so they can correct that child. I know the Honourable Member for St. **George** South will agree with that and he will also agree with the point on partial zoning.

Mr. Speaker, if we are going to go into any zoning, my suggestion is that you should go into full zoning but not before you have adequate places for the total students and even a surplus so that you could then interact with the flexible transfer.

I thank you very much.

Mr. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for the City.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Mr. Speaker, I **am** pleased to speak in this debate. I wish to congratulate the Honourable Minister of Education for many things, not least of which is the fact that she in 18 months has brought this White Paper before this Honourable House of Assembly. It is years overdue and I congratulate her and those who have worked with her. I **am** pleased to read in the Foreword that the decisions arrived at were achieved after extensive meetings with students and with teachers. The Honourable Minister tells me she met with no less than 300 teachers in a series of meetings, with principals of primary and secondary schools, with the unions, the Church and all of the other interest groups and stakeholders in education. So this is a document of **the** consultative process, and I congratulate her on it.
9.40 p.m.

I believe that her proposals for **educational** reform in Barbados will constitute a great leap forward as we approach the 21st century. I regret, Mr. Speaker, the 8 years of DLP Administration which I view as the lost years in respect to educational policy. I remember the wilful and the **unreasoned** reversal of policies in respect to partial zoning, in respect of the Common Entrance and **the** social studies component therein that that side when in government reversed simply because we had put it in place before 1986. I give credit to the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East that she would see fit to bring it back to **its** rightful place. Those 8 years were wasted years. They did nothing when in government over the last 8 years to take the process forward.

Unlike the Honourable Member for St. **Philip** South, I like the idea that education would be competitive in nature. Competition need not necessarily be negative. I believe that competition breeds growth. It encourages

people to stretch themselves to their full potential. Co-operation does not necessarily **allow** that to happen. Sometimes co-operation may breed **mediocrity**; but then on this side we associate mediocrity with the Democratic **Labour** Party. Mr. Speaker, Sir, that has been the hallmark not only of their education policy but of all of their policies.

I have in my hand a document which is already a document of the House, the Barbados **Labour** Party's 1994 Manifesto. On page 19, under Health and Education it pleases me greatly that the Honourable Minister of Education has fulfilled so much of what appears on that page:

"The thrust of our educational policy will be towards making the Barbadian competitive in all areas of human endeavour."

It speaks, Mr. Speaker, Sir, of flexible approach for examinations:

"The Common Entrance Examination will be continued and children will be allowed to sit it when they are ready."

These are promises delivered, promises performed. It goes on to speak of special education teaching needs and I am pleased to see the attention paid at page 52 for those who want to look at it to special education. An Advisory Committee is set up. Look at page 56 and you will see how it is composed.

I gather from the Honourable Minister that this Committee is hard at work and about to deliver an interim report. **The** Government is **co:nnitted** to main streaming children with special needs. It is all in this Manifesto and all in the process of delivery. It goes on to say in respect of the schools' curriculum that

"we will decentralise the system so that schools' curricula may develop in a variety of ways and the institutions themselves can develop into centres of excellence in different fields of study."

All of that is in the White Paper. It speaks of the University of the West **Indies**:

"We remain firmly committed to financing tertiary and other levels of education. To accommodate the skills requirements of our society, and especially to achieve our aim of making this society a services centre of excellence we will expand the support we at present provide for the **UWI**."

Mr. Speaker, the other side may scream and shout as much as they like. They are not fooling anybody in

Barbados. It is known that they were disposed to charge fees called user fees in respect of the Samuel **Jackman Prescod** Polytechnic, in respect of the Barbados Community College and in respect of the University of the West **Indies**. It was a difficult bullet to bite and they were afraid to bite it. They agreed that they would fund 90% and that the students would have to pay the other 10%. We on this side have decided, led by the Minister of Education and the Minister of Finance, that we would bite the bullet because we are so committed to human resource development. It is the most important thing that we can do especially in this age of new technology and especially as we are coming to the end of one millennium and approaching another. So all of these things please me, Mr. Speaker, Sir.

It also pleases me to hear from a mouth other than mine in this Chamber that the social sectors are regarded now as productive and economic sectors. For years I have been saying it in here and people on that side would rag me and shout at me and tell me that all I know are the social sectors because I was formerly a Minister of Health and a Minister of Education, and that they are the soft sectors and those are the Ministries that you give to women. Those, Mr. Speaker, are the sectors that underpin the productive sectors in this country.

We are not going to service our economy in terms of tourism, manufacturing or agriculture without a well-educated, healthy and appropriately trained population. That is what this White Paper is also about. That pleases me greatly, Sir. I would want to say – I don't want to be long on this. The hour is late and I know the Minister has to wind up – that at this stage I have heard Members on the other side speak and nobody there has really addressed the White Paper. People have **gotten** up and spoken about their ideas on education. They have not addressed the White Paper. I believe that many of them have not read it and do not truly understand the import of it.

We, Sir, are beyond the stage where received ideas and contrived wisdom will try us. We are in the process of paring the Barbados educational system to the needs of the early 21st century. I congratulate the Minister warmly upon it. I wish her well in her implementation of much of what is in this document. This is not a document for now. As she herself has said, this is a living, dynamic document.

With those few words, Mr. Speaker, Sir, I would add my support to this most important Resolution.
9.50 p.m.

Mr. J. O. **TUDOR**: Mr. Speaker, the hour is late, as the Leader of the House just indicated, but this is the time of the evening that I usually get warmed up. It is interesting that I have picked this time to rebut probably the worst speech that was made in the entire debate by

the last speaker. This debate is regrettable, to some extent, because I had hoped as a Member of Parliament, having been thrown into the Opposition, that by now the Government who took over the reins of power in 1994 would have been by today at least presenting a White Paper on the provision of jobs for the **young people** of this **country**. What we have is a document which, to some extent, was an amalgamation of some of the **information** that was collected during the reign of the Democratic Labour Party and I applaud all of those persons who have **been** involved in the process of **seeking** to reform the education system, a process which started under the Democratic Labour Party and was picked up by the new Minister and put into the form of a White Paper.

Asides.

Mr. SPEAKER: Please, order, please.

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: Mr. Speaker, I do not have to state any specific examples. The Minister knows there are several areas within the document that are *ad idem* with positions we hold within the Democratic Labour Party.

Asides.

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: I do not have to identify any one of them.

Mr. SPEAKER: Please, could we hear the Honourable Member? Have you concluded, Sir?

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: I thought she was on a point of order.

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

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: The debate in essence today, Mr. Speaker, we heard a lot of suggestions about minor changes in flexible transfer, zoning, some minor reforms with teachers, *et cetera*. At the end of the day Honourable Members in this House recognise that the educational system in Barbados over the last 30 to 35 years has been **successful** in producing a **large** number of intelligent Barbadians many of them we boast and brag even in our **tourism** slogans that we have almost 100 per cent literacy in Barbados so what we have done over the years has clearly worked.

There was a significant revolution in the early 1960s which was progress by the then Democratic Labour Party, those great men like **Errol** Barrow, Sir Frederick Smith, **Cameron** Tudor and later it was fully supported by one of the best and greatest Ministers of Education Barbados has ever had, Lloyd Erskine Sandiford. That revolution in the

1960s was designed to assist the small working man in this country, many of whom came from labouring class families, to get into **the** mainstream of economic activity without having to labour **day** in and **day** out in the fields around Barbados. That process was successful to the extent that **today** the children of many **labourers** in this country are doctors, lawyers, accountants, policemen, nurses, all of the dignified professions you can find in this country.

Aside.

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: Mr. Speaker, I will not deal with the Honourable Member because he can say what he wants **to**.

Mr. SPEAKER: Just proceed, please. Do not be disrupted. You continue, please.

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: That great process in the 1960s literally pulled approximately 40 per cent of the **mass** base of student population into the mainstream. We have 60 per cent who remained outside **the** mainstream and are today the frustrated youth that **the** Honourable Member for St. Michael South East so eloquently spoke about, and the ones who were addressed in such an eloquent and philosophical manner by the Honourable Member for St. **Philip** South when he sought to **look** at the future and where we have to position the economic system in Barbados to cater to the needs of these 60 per cent of our youth that are disadvantaged.

This debate today, Mr. Speaker, as I said, I see as another public relations exercise by the Barbados **Labour** Party. They have not come to the people of this country with their programme for jobs. They canvassed the population and said they were going to provide jobs, jobs, jobs. We are 18 months down the road. There is still no White Paper. There is still nothing to suggest this is the road we are going down for jobs, yet we are today debating a White Paper that really will have no impact whatsoever on the creation of jobs which will help the social development of our people. It may correct a few minor flaws in the system and may correct some anomalies here or there but at the end of **the** day it has little **or** no **impact** on the wider society.

It is important for the Barbados Labour Party in their public relations exercise to bring these kinds of **working** documents to this House, and I will tell you why. In the 1960s they bitterly criticized the introduction of free secondary education and today they are clever in their public relations approach because they know that the base root and the record of the Democratic Labour Party have always been extremely sound, very sound, when it comes to education because the hallmark of the Democratic Labour Party was the provision of free secondary education.

I **sat** in a Cabinet, Sir, and I **can** tell you **categorically** **that** the Members that sit on my right would have laid **down** their lives if any persons, one single Barbadian had to pay for his education in this country.

Asides.

Mr. SPEAKER: Please, please, let us **hear** him.

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: The Honourable Member for St. Michael South is a gentleman...

Mr. SPEAKER: Order, order, please.

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: It is important for this Paper to be **here today because the Barbados Labour Party** is on to a continuous public relations **exercise** trying to garner support **among the masses of people in this country. This Paper has nothing** to do with the creation of **jobs** in this country.

Aside.

Mr. SPEAKER: Continue, please.

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: Today, Mr. Speaker, I attended a **funeral** of a young **man** who was shot in this country at point blank range over bread money, a very **tearful** and **devastating** situation. He was one of my **constituents**. We have **reached the** point where there **are** so many frustrated **educated** Barbadians who cannot find their way into the system. I have from time to time had many conversations sitting by Shorty's Shop in Licorish **Village** sitting on a bench having a **drink** with some of the most articulate, bright Barbadians that I believe are more than capable of becoming very good entrepreneurs in this country; but yet they are sitting on a bench in Licorish Village, or St. Barnabas, or in the Ivy without an opportunity, so we have an education system that has **already** thrown out a **significant** number of educated people in this country and yet today we are looking at a system to create a bigger cadre of educated persons all with nothing to do. I believe that in 1996, our focus today on both sides, should be dealing with the process of trying to marry those persons we have already trained and those persons to be trained into the **economic** system.

We heard a lot of palaver about **somebody** teaching **grammar**...

Mr. SPEAKER: Please, the Honourable Member, I would not accept what the Honourable Members would have said today as palaver.

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: Palaver is a good word, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. SPEAKER: I know it is a good word but surely you would not want to refer to it as you are also one of the

Honourable Members who **are** referring to the White Paper. 10.00 p.m.

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: I was not referring to anybody in a pejorative sense.

Mr. SPEAKER: It is not what you **are** saying then?

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: I **am** just saying that the debate today, Mr. Speaker, could have been useful if we were at **the** stage where we were determining how **are** we as a Government going to marry the persons we have educated into the main economic stream of life?

Do you know, Mr. Speaker, how frustrating it is for a person who has gone to the university and is sitting at home trained, very well qualified and cannot find capital? There **are** many young people who I believe, should be able to go with that kind of background and pick up a formula to **create**, let us say for argument's sake, toothpaste. We import **toothpaste** into this country that people use every day. Yet, we do not have the wherewithal to take the bright Barbadians, use their skills, put the capital base at their feet and tell them go and research some formulas, have a system, set up a plant so that they can become employers of people using their brains. There is no sense in the educational system progressing to this point and further frustrating the wider Barbadian society. These **are** the kinds of problems that I have. When I see today that we have reached the stage where young people can lose their lives, something has gone radically wrong. I **am** not seeking to lay blame at the feet of this Administration or that Administration. I believe that we, in 1996 going into the **Twenty-first** century have to recreate the revolution that was created by the great men of the 1960s.

I seriously believe – and I **am** not offended by the work that the Minister has done; I understand that it is part **of** the **mandate** of her Administration and she is trying to correct a few anomalies in the system and that is fair, I believe that that is what she is mandated to do – that we, as a **Government** and as a people, have a wider responsibility. They **are** my genuine concerns.

Mr. Speaker, I would have some difficulty in supporting the White Paper because I do not believe that the Paper itself has been properly ventilated in the public. I think that this document is rushed. I can see no real advantage in forcing a White Paper or having it debated in the House. I think it is a document that really allows the Government to filibuster and play for some time. I believe that many of the teachers that will be affected by this White Paper are concerned that the strictures within this White Paper may have a serious impact on their ability

to be promoted and they may in fact be **frustrated** as a result of the introduction of this White Paper if we adopt it and it becomes the policy of the country.

There are serious concerns within the Paper itself. I think that the Government should slow down a little bit, have wider debate on the matter, put it back out in the town halls. Let people talk about it. It is not a document that is going to create any jobs.

Aside.

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: It is **not** a document that is going to create any jobs.

Mr. SPEAKER: Please, please.

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: It is a talking document. I have no difficulty with it being the subject of a debate or discussion. I **see** nothing wrong with ~~that~~. If the debate progresses from here, fine. But to make it a policy that we are hooked on, I think is **premature**. I would caution the **Government** to abandon the public relations exercise. Accept that the Democratic Labour Party has **secured** a life **interest** in the educational process in this **country**. There is nobody who can take that **track** record away from the Democratic Labour Party. Do not even try in a subtle way or any other way, as the Honourable Minister of Education tried today in a smart and clever way, to seize the initiative of the educational process in this country which was **so** magnificently laid by the Democratic Labour Party.

I accept that the process has to be continued. I accept that the process has to be widened to include people. But I really believe our **strongest** focus should be to include, in a meaningful manner, those people who have been left out of the system. **Thank** you, Mr. Speaker.

Aside.

Hon. Miss M. A. **MOTTLEY**: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I rise in this debate to wind up what has been a long day of debate and what has seen many interesting comments. It has been a long day for the viewers at home **too**, Sir. We offered the Opposition that we would only televise the two main speeches.

Mr. SPEAKER: Please, let us not go into that.

Hon. Miss M. A. **MOTTLEY**: No, Sir, I am making the point because we owe an apology to the public for...

Asides.

Mr. SPEAKER: Please. Order, please. The Honourable Member for St. Michael North East, what we decided relating to mutual agreement between the two

sides, I do not believe, at this point, there is any need for that. Press on, please.

Hon. Miss M. A. **MOTTLEY**: Sir, I just want to offer an explanation to the public...

Asides.

Hon. Miss M. A. **MOTTLEY**: ...because it has been a long day and, in the circumstances, I believe that it has been necessary to do **so**.

Asides.

Mr. SPEAKER: I am saying...

Asides.

Mr. SPEAKER: Please, please.

Asides.

Mr. SPEAKER: Please. I do not...

Hon. Miss M. A. **MOTTLEY**: Sir, it has been the desire of the Opposition to have it broadcast on television all day and that has **been** done, but in the circumstances, Sir, I should also like to address one or two issues that have arisen in the debate.

Generally speaking, I think it has been a useful debate. There have been persons who have made suggestions that go beyond those contained in the White Paper and there have been persons who have sought to put, in greater perspective, other issues that we have included in this White Paper.

I want to restate two things, Sir, particularly having heard the last speaker who would seek to suggest, at this stage, that we have not had a full consultation process on the White Paper.

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: Mr. Speaker, Sir, on a point of order. I never suggested that there was no full consultation process. I said, quite clearly, that the process started under the reign of the Democratic Labour Party and the Minister continued it.

Asides.

Mr. SPEAKER: Please. No point of order. Let us proceed, please.

Hon. Miss M. A. **MOTTLEY**: Sir, on both points. If I never thought before that the Honourable Member had difficulty in retaining his memory on what he has said,

I now know for certain, because less than 5 minutes ago, Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Member indicated that this was a rushed process, that it was not a full consultative process and I want to address that point.

What is painful about what he has said is that this process **started** one year and one week ago at the Barbados Workers' Union **Labour** College when we brought together all of the departments and the divisions within the Ministry of Education, as well as inviting all of the stakeholders to **start** the road towards the preparation of a document for reform. From the university right back through to the unions, right back through to the principals, right back through to the Ministry itself.

We continued that process and through the months of March and April, I went up and down this country meeting with every single set of school teachers. We met with the primary school principals twice. I have had meetings with the public secondary schools principals on average every six weeks. We have had extensive meetings with the unions. As if that were not enough, Mr. Speaker, this document was laid in this Honourable Chamber in August last year. They had nine months to discuss it. They had more than they had with the Protocol. They had more than they **had** with a whole...

Asides.

Mr. SPEAKER: Please, please. Order, please.

Asides.

10.10 p.m.

Hon. Miss M. A. **MOTTLEY**: Sir, if I were uncharitable I would really **understand** or say that the Honourable Member for St. Michael East is the greatest possible evidence as to why education reform is necessary in Barbados. But since, Sir, I am not uncharitable, I will not say that because what we have seen in here from him tonight has been an accusation that has been baseless in fact, that does not even collide with the facts at any point at all. What is even more so, Sir, is that when he seeks to avoid the reality of seeking to charge fees at University of the West **Indies** it is appalling and perhaps he should stay out of matters of which he has little knowledge.

Now, Sir, I want for the record to restate our position as we end this debate. We have taken a clear decision to pay the tuition fees for students at the university in respect of one full-time degree for the years necessary to complete that degree plus an additional year in case a person may fall ill or whatever. Similarly, in respect of a part-time degree, for the full length of the programme plus one additional year and we would continue the policy in respect of post-graduate training that has been the policy of successive governments.

Sir, we have also taken a decision to renegotiate with the World Bank those terms that constrained the development of human resources projects in this country, particularly terms negotiated by the last Government.

I only want to say before I end this debate, Sir, that our policy seeks to be all encompassing and **seeks** really at the end of the day to address the needs of each and every child in this country. That is why, Sir, when I hear talk about this being an elitist document, Sir, the very theme of this document is that each one must matter. It does not seek to continue the province of a 15% or 20% elite, Sir, that has been the path of some people in this country and I would not go into the fact, Sir, as to how the last Government has sought to preserve that in other areas of governmental activity. But it says that each child in this country must matter and that the educational system must be flexible enough to address the need and development of each child and give the opportunity for which that child is capable and entitled, Sir. If that child needs **special** education, we have set up the Committee to expand our policy basis for special education delivery as well as to take decisions to provide **training** in special education at Erdiston. Or if, Sir, that child is gifted or moves at a normal pace, its needs must be met.

In those circumstances, Sir, I really want to end this debate by restating what I said. I believe that this is a national challenge that must be faced by all three parties in this country, by the church, by families, by everyone participating in the life of this country. I believe, Sir, that in those circumstances we must be prepared to engage in continuing dialogue on specific policy issues contained in this document and I give this Honourable Chamber the commitment that that has been the policy in terms of consultation with this Ministry and will continue to be.

We continue still to receive papers on people's views of the White Paper and we are taking all into consideration but will reserve the right, Sir, when the time comes for implementation of policy, to inform persons before that time of implementation.

I cannot profess, Sir, that all that we do is right or the only way. I can only say to you, Sir, that out of an abundance of caring and out of an abundance, Sir, of wanting to see a strong self-reliant people moving forward with their own destiny, prepared to meet the challenges of the **twenty-first** century, that we believe that this offers a good mix of policies that will help to stimulate the development, not only of the creativity of this country but the development of jobs, given the fact that we are moving on a knowledge base and skills intensive direction in the development of our economy.

I believe, Sir, that it will also move towards the creation of a level of spiritual awareness and cultural awareness

and in the total development of people in this country that would augur well for us.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order, please.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Sir, there may be some problems along **the** way but I have never known problems to stop one from doing what one has committed oneself to do and if those problems arise we will manage them and manage them to the best of our ability. I believe, Sir, that if we do not take this step at this time in **our** history, not necessarily to do things that are revolutionary but to do things that are right and that are capable of improving the lives of people, we would be found wanting.

In those circumstances, Sir, I want to end by **thanking** all of those who have contributed to this debate. I want to end, Sir, by thanking **all** who have contributed positively to **this** debate and all, Sir, who have contributed to the preparation of this document, the thousands of Barbadians who have helped and put forward their views and have brought this to the stage today, Sir, where not only this country, but the world can know the intentions of this Government in terms of its policy for education reform. I want, Sir, to ask all of them to continue in the effort where we can move forward in putting education first, in developing a better life for our people, in developing, Sir, **a stronger** vision of ourselves and the role we can play in the world and ensuring that those structures in our society that are dear to us are capable of continuing to be relevant because we have had the ability, Sir, through the development of our people to make them stronger through **strong** selfexamination and strong self-reliance.

In the circumstances, Sir, I thank those Members, Sir, and commend this Resolution as one worthy of support by this Honourable Chamber. **Thank** you, Mr. Speaker, Sir.

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

Mr. SPEAKER: With the House's permission we will now revert to Government Notices.

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

Mr. SPEAKER: We will now re-commit Government Notices.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, Sir. Mr. Speaker, at the beginning of the day this Resolution was not yet delivered. It now is and I would like to give notice of a Resolution to amend the Explanatory Notes under Head 28 - Ministry of Home Affairs - programme 03 Sub-program 01 - Immigration Department, Item No. 625 - Plant, Equipment and Furniture.

ADJOURNMENT

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I beg to move that this House do now adjourn until Tuesday, 13th day of February, 1996 at **11.00** o'clock in the morning.

Now, Mr. Speaker, Sir, speaking **on the** adjournment. On the last **occasion** that the House met I had given the undertaking that the House would meet **on** Friday next. It turns out that it is really quite impossible for us to do that and I would apologise for any inconvenience caused to Members who would have **made** other arrangements expecting that we would have proceeded on Friday. In the circumstances we cannot meet on Friday and the House will therefore meet next Tuesday the 13th at **11.00** o'clock in the morning. On that occasion we would **hope** to continue and possibly conclude the Prisons Bill. We still have the Police Act and of course the Income **Tax** (Amendment) Act to proceed with and we will start the Insurance Bill on the 20th February. That is **roughly** speaking how the Government's immediate legislative **programme** is looking. It is expected that the debate on the Estimates of Expenditure will start in this Chamber **on** Monday, 18th March, 1996 and proceed as it usually does for the week.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, that is my motion.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Mr. Speaker, I rise to second the motion and speak on the adjournment. I very regrettably have to speak on it, I certainly had not intended to, but I want to draw to the attention of the House a matter which I considered to be, in my view, highly offensive and not in keeping with the traditions which I believe are desirable relative to the consultations which take place between myself and the Leader of the House.

Now, Mr. Speaker, Sir, last Tuesday, 30th January the Leader of the House indicated to me that there was a proposal on her part that only certain speeches on the White Paper should be broadcast. I **promised** to get back to her and the following day I wrote her a letter.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Mr. Speaker, Sir, on a point of order, the proposal was that the **first** two speeches would be televised and also broadcast on radio and that the rest of the debate would be on radio alone. Let me be very clear on that.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Thanks very much. I appreciate very much the Honourable Member's contribution that the first two speeches would be televised and the rest of the debate would be broadcast on radio. I wrote back to the Leader of the House and I should like in view of some comments that were made earlier, to read into the record what I wrote because, Mr. Speaker, Sir,

I would not normally do this because consultation between somebody at the level of Leader of the House with the Leader of the Opposition cannot fall to the discussion by any **other** ...
10.23 p.m.

Mr. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for St. John, I **am** not sure if you were in your seat then but an Honourable **Member** attempted to refer to this matter.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: But I **am** on the adjournment now.

Mr. SPEAKER: I know you are on the adjournment. Please could you just take your sit for one minute? An Honourable Member attempted to refer to this matter. I did not allow the Honourable Member to refer to the matter because I felt, as you were about to say, that matters relating to such matters where there is this consultation going on between the two sides **are** not necessarily matters that should be brought before the House like that. I believe, of course, you **are** free to raise any matter as it relates to the running of the affairs of **the** House. But I have refused a Member **permission** already to raise the matter. I believe at this point, and I appeal for your cooperation in matters like these which you have always given, I **see** no need that this matter be now raised again **because** I made a ruling on it with another Member. In **all** fairness, I do not feel now that it should be proceeded with,

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Mr. Speaker, I **am** speaking **on** the adjournment and for the record I should like to **read** some information relative to the conduct of debate into the record of this House. If you will permit, I would like to proceed.

Mr. SPEAKER: Does this relate to the same matter?

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I am not relating it to anything. I **am** saying that there is a matter relative to consultation between the Leader of the House and myself. I am not relating to anything else anybody **has** said, but I wish the Opposition's position relative to broadcast of debates to be pellucid and therefore I want to read into the record...

Mr. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member, I will not give you permission to read that because, **as** I said, I made a ruling to another Honourable Member about the same matter. The question is...

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I am speaking on the adjournment. I wish, Sir, to request that you give me the opportunity to speak on a matter which relates to the conduct of business in this Chamber. I am very humbly **asking** you to just give me the opportunity to

put the perspective of the Opposition relative to the broadcast of parliamentary debates. I am not relating it to anything anybody has said.

Mr. SPEAKER: What I **am** saying to you, Honourable Member, is that you want to put a position relating to the Opposition. The Chair is not here to decide on a matter relating **to the** Opposition or the Government. A position was raised of an Honourable Member who attempted to raise the identical matter and I stopped the Honourable Member from pursuing the matter. Let me say, the Honourable Member, could you take your seat please? We have established that until a proper policy is decided on broadcasting policy **all** of our broadcasting decisions will be by mutual agreement. It has gone very well so far. There has been very good cooperation between the two sides. There has been no problem whatsoever. I felt that the matter of communication between the two sides on such an issue was not something that should be brought up on the Floor of the House because we have been cooperating. There has been mutual agreement at **all** times and I **am** therefore saying that I will not allow you to raise this matter because I have refused it already.

The question is that this Honourable House be now adjourned...

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I **am** speaking now relative to the question of my ability to speak on **the** motion for the adjournment of the House. Mr. Speaker, Sir, as I understand it, the Standing Order is very clear and I believe, Sir, that this House has to be governed, and I **am** certain that you will agree with me 100 per cent, by the Standing Orders of the House. I have risen and I have not heard anything anybody has said in any previous debate. I **am** now standing on my feet for the **first** time today, Sir. I am speaking without reference to anything anybody **has** said previously in any of these proceedings.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, I therefore wish the opportunity on the motion for the adjournment to raise a matter relative to the broadcast of debates and, Mr. Speaker...

Aside.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: If that is it, the Honourable Member spoke on the adjournment. I assume that three days notice was given for the Honourable Leader of the House to set out the matter which she raised on the adjournment. I am craving your indulgence in the same way **as** the Leader of the House was given it to raise a matter relative to the procedure of the House, a matter that I believe should be brought to your attention and to the attention of Members of the House. Sir, I do not seek to do so in any offensive manner. I am **seeking** only to do

it because I believe the position which we have adopted should be fully explained to the House. Mr. Speaker, I am asking you to give me the opportunity then to basically say that the position which the Opposition is adopting relative to the broadcast of debates is consistent by and large with what you have just **expressed**, that where we can **find** agreement on matters, **fine**. There are occasions, however, where suggestions have been made to vary those arrangements. One such suggestion arose relative to the debate on this White Paper. That suggestion which the Honourable Member for the City has **confirmed** in her presentation was that the two principal speeches should be televised and that the others should be broadcast only on radio.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, all I want to say to the House is this. We cannot determine on this side how many people will speak and therefore it is very fortunate or unfortunate that a debate may go on for a very long time. But the position of the Opposition relative to this matter must be very clear. There is a minority Opposition Member and I believe that the fullest opportunity should be given to **all** of the Members of the Opposition as well as the Member of the minority Opposition to speak. I communicated that position to the Leader of the House. But, Mr. Speaker, I want to go a step further. I am not **speaking** now as Leader of the Opposition. I am speaking now as a Member of this House. I believe that every Member and particularly Members of the back bench – I seek to defend their interest now – they should be given the opportunity to be seen on television by their constituents to demonstrate to the public if they are doing a good job.

Aside.

Mr. SPEAKER. Please. Please.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: On a point of **order**, Sir. I **am** on a point of order.

Mr. SPEAKER: Proceed.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: I wish to draw to the attention of the House, Sir...

Mr. B. M. TAITT: On a point of privilege, Sir. My privileges in this House are about to be trampled, Sir. I draw it to your attention, Mr. Speaker. I **am speaking** as a Member of this House on a point of privilege.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order, please.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER:... Mr. Speaker, Standing Order No. 17.

Aside.

Mr. SPEAKER: Please. Honourable Members, please take your seat. Honourable Members, it is getting a bit late and there is a little problem which we seem to be having and I am sure you would not want me **to** suspend the House at this point.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: But it is important that we get this right.

Mr. SPEAKER: It is important that we obey the rules of the House also.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Mr. Speaker, continuing on the point which I was raising, I fully understand your approach to this matter and I believe you know that I have tried to conform. But until formal arrangements are put in place, and you are right to say so, this is the only position that I can adopt is that it is not for me to regulate what debates are broadcast. Once it is decided that a particular matter is to be broadcast, in my view, any Member who wants his speech broadcast should have that right in this Chamber and I am saying that we make no distinction between the principal speaker for the Opposition or any other backbencher **or** any other Member. Any Member who speaks in a debate which is being broadcast must have the right to have that speech broadcast to the public.
10.33 p.m.

The concept always, as I understood it and I think that my understanding of what you said at the outset was very clear, is that when we are broadcasting a debate except for the fact **that** there would be limited time for the **first** speaker for the opposition time who **would** be limited to the amount of time which the principal speaker of the Government had, and we agreed on that, that other than that the entire debate would be broadcast and I took that to mean broadcast on television and on radio.

The stance of the Opposition is this. **Anytime** a debate is being broadcast, unless a Member says he does not want his speech broadcast everybody should have equal rights except for the limitation imposed by the **first** person to reply on behalf of the Opposition and that is our position. I have not **tried** to inconvenience anybody. I have stood by a principle which as a parliamentarian, not as an opposition parliamentarian, as a Member of this House of almost 9 years standing I believe **firmly** in, and that is the stance I will be adopting.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Speaker, speaking on the adjournment of the House and the matter of the rights of Members to speak during a debate and during adjournment is always an issue here. I just want to say that in relation to the particular matter that it is

exercising the House regarding concerns about the rights of Members to be heard that it has to be balanced by pragmatics.

I have been in this House long enough when there were debates in this House and **all** speeches were not **carried** and therefore it would not be to establish a precedent for **all** speakers not to be **carried**. Mr. Speaker, we can settle this **matter** sensibly. We **are** anxious to have as much of the House's debates broadcast as possible subject to other practical considerations as well. Every time CBC has to televise these debates it **preempts** all **programming** and it is a tremendous cost to CBC. The Management Commission of Parliament is going to have to put money in its vote to pay CBC for the loss incurred when a whole **day** of programming is preempted by Parliament. Therefore, until this matter is resolved fully a sense of pragmatism will have to obtain.

If a member of the Opposition requires that debates be televised we will have a situation where every week CBC will have to give up a full day's revenue. Mr. Speaker, I am saying that I have been in this House on occasions where only some of the speeches have been televised. I have been in this House where a speech that I have given was recorded and televised later in the day and this House has therefore been accustomed to carrying out its business with a view to accommodating all concerns and in this instance equally the concerns of the CBC. The Government has not said that every debate in this House should be televised. There is no such policy position by the Government and I would urge Members of the House to be sensible about **the** matter.

It is also my view that if **the** House itself is not going to come into disrepute, because the public is also listening to these debates and is judging us as well, if this House is not to come into disrepute we may also ourselves as serious people want to manage better what is going out from this House as to the content and length of debate.

I did not speak in this debate, Mr. Speaker, although quite frankly I would have loved to speak but I was very conscious of the time. The Leader of the Opposition did not speak in this debate. What we are therefore having is a situation where some of us are in essence having to exercise a kind of censorship on ourselves so as to be able **to** allow **the** business of the House to proceed. In a sense, therefore, Sir, it is just a logical extension that if we are voluntarily refraining from **speaking**, the House's debate may not go on indefinitely. I think an arrangement can therefore be conceived where we can agree that, if you are going to have a large number of debates and some arrangement is worked out to pay CBC properly, we can have the principal debates televised live and recorded and

some arrangements made so that the backbenchers' speeches can be televised and recorded at some later date.

I have been in this House where that has been the case.

Asides.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: As I said, **Sir**, this is a pragmatic matter. I have been in this House before where some Members' speeches have been televised and others have not been televised. I have been in this House where some Members' speeches have been edited and it would **seem** to me that if we **are** going to proceed in good order with the televising of the debates some concord can be reached in relation to the amount of time that is devoted at a cost to CBC.

I would just want to urge, Sir, that the Management Commission of Parliament should meet at an early date to have this matter dealt with because it is now posing an incredible cost to the CBC and soon will be reflected in a loss. It is a matter that is now being dealt with by certain Members voluntarily not participating in important debates in this House in **the** interest of not having these debates extended over a period of time.

I would have loved to have been part of this debate, Mr. Speaker, and those of us who are volunteering not to speak in the interest of brevity are being taken advantage of in much the same way as an alternative arrangement could affect other Members.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Mr. Speaker, Sir, speaking on the adjournment, I wish to make the point that Standing Order 78 is the only Standing Order that addresses the issue of broadcasting in any form. I read it for easy reference.

"The Speaker may grant a general permission to the representative of any journal or broadcasting or television station to attend the sittings of the House under such rules as he may from time to time prescribe for that purpose. If the rules are contravened or if the journal or broadcasting or television station publishes a report of the proceedings of the House which is, in the opinion of the Speaker, unfair or inaccurate, permission may be revoked."

10.43 p.m.

Mr. SPEAKER: Please, please.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Mr. Speaker, whenever the House reconvenes after there has been an election, there is a procession which goes from this Chamber to the other Chamber and there is a seniority which prevails, and

that is about the only **rank** I know that is accorded in this House. For ease of reference for those Members who might forget, it starts with Mr. Forde, Mr. Sandiford, ...

Aside.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: I have to get it right. The constituency of Christ Church West, the constituency of St. Michael South and right thereafter ...

Aside.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Those two are first and after that it says St. Michael West. I just want to establish that there is no circumstance in which I can even contemplate being a second-class citizen or second-class member and any privilege which **accrues** to any Honourable Member must **accrue** to each Honourable Member in equal proportions.

The Honourable Member suggested something which I am sure must have struck at the heart of anybody **who** has been in this House for longer than a few weeks when he suggested that there might be one kind of arrangement for one set of persons and another set for the rest of us. There will be none of that.

Aside.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Mr. Speaker, you have to give satisfaction to nobody in this House at all. You have to give satisfaction to all of us. You do not have to satisfy a single Honourable Member in here. Even if you rule and the ruling is not perceived to be right by everybody in here, Sir, you are right. I want to make the point, Mr. Speaker. Do not let them hurry you. They cannot hurry me. It is important therefore that there be no person outside this House, and this is the point I want to make, who can hold any member or group of members to ridicule because something has happened inside this House. That is the point, Sir. No one is supposed to get outside this House and suggest that this group on this side is the cause of somebody missing "Days of Our Lives", or any such programme. It is dangerous when that starts to happen, and we will not let it happen.

Asides.

Mr. SPEAKER: Please.

Rt. Hon. L. E. SANDIFORD: Sir, speaking on the adjournment, I do not know where this idea emanated from that only two speeches on this particular item that was before us should be broadcast on television. It was labelled as a very important debate, Sir. It was on education and you have at least three persons who have held the portfolio of Education, including me, and we are not the leading spokespersons for the party for this item. What that

particular proposal would mean is that **there** would have been an attempt to suppress and stifle persons who have had an intimate connection with the **subject**. That would have been the effect of it, Sir, and I think that would ...

Hon. Miss B. A. Miller: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. I would wish to read and make a document of the House, Sir, my letter....

Asides.

Mr. SPEAKER: Please, please. You are on a point of order.

Hon. Miss B. A. **MILLER**: This is in respect of the fact that the Honourable Member for St. Michael South is misleading the House. I wish to put the record straight.

Mr. SPEAKER: Proceed.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: This letter is dated February 2, 1996 and **addressed** to His Honour, Mr. Ishmael **Roett**, Speaker of the House of Assembly, and copied to the Leader of the Opposition.

"Dear Sir:

Re: The Education **White** Paper Debate.

My letter of January 17, **1996** to you refers."

In that letter, Sir, I asked your permission for televising of the debate. The Leader of the Opposition in his letter of January 31, **1996** to me indicated his rejection of the Government's proposal that the first two principal speakers should be televised and all other speakers should be broadcast on radio only.

Aside.

Mr. SPEAKER: Please.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: I am on a point of order.

Mr. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member, please.

Asides.

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

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: This is the critical sentence, Mr. Speaker.

"This was a proposal which was made in deference to the general public having broadcast time **preempted** by parliamentary debate. In all of the

circumstances, the Government will proceed to have the entire **debate** broadcast on radio and television on February 6, 1996."

It was no new plan. There are criticisms of the fact that we are **preempting** broadcast time and that it is costing in terms of advertising to CBC.

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

Asides.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Members, could we have some order, please?

Rt. Hon. L. E. SANDIFORD: I wish, Mr. Speaker, just to be as concise as possible and wherever **the** proposal emanated from ...

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order.

Mr. SPEAKER: Wait...

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: I **am** on a point of order and I regret very much interrupting the Honourable Member for St. Michael South.

Mr. SPEAKER: What is your point of order?

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Mr. Speaker, the point of order is that earlier when I got up to speak you ruled, and perhaps you were quite right to rule **at** that point that I **could** not read the letter I wrote to the Honourable Member for the City. Now the Honourable Member has selectively quoted **from** that letter, but the content of that letter, it is not a long letter, I feel should form part of this debate because it puts precisely, exactly the points I am making. It is not fair, Sir.

Aside.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Now, that letter is dated January ...

Aside.

Rt. Hon. L. E. SANDIFORD: I believe, Sir, that I can now conclude the point I was making, that I hope on important debates there would be no such suggestion that my rights as a representative of the people of St. Michael South would in any way be curtailed, or the rights of other Members not only to be heard but to be seen when the House is making arrangements for telecasting debates.

Aside.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order, please.

Rt. Hon. L. E. SANDIFORD: We **are** only at this point because you made a very tactless speech to interfere with the consensus that was **buiding** up on the motion that was before the House on education. That is why we **are** at this point now.

Aside.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Members, please. Order. I would just like to say that I think it is unfortunate that we have got to this point. What has happened so far relating to all the television broadcasts is we have had very mutual, cordial arrangements. We have never had a problem.

Asides.

Mr. SPEAKER: Please, please. I **am** speaking. There has been no problem with the two sides coming to an arrangement relating to the broadcasts. I believe until a clear policy is stated

Aside.

Mr. SPEAKER: Could you hear me, please?

I still believe that both sides, until a clear policy is decided, on, will continue to cooperate and discuss the matter. Let me make it clear. The Chair is a servant of the House. We have gone very far 'and very good so far relating to this particular issue. There has never been a problem.

10.53 p.m.

I will insist that we continue always to co-operate and have consultation on these matters. The Chair does not believe that this matter can be solved by prolonging this **debate**. I feel that we will continue to have our consultations and I hope that both sides will see it fit to do so. The Honourable Member for St. John.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Thank you, Sir. I am grateful **by** your communication on this matter, Mr. Speaker, Sir, and I will respect the ruling which you provided to me in writing. You were very courteous in doing that. I have never known of a time before in the 9 years that I have been here that the Speaker has written out, very clearly, so that Members can understand his ruling on the matter. I have always been guided by that.

In pursuance of your ruling, I wrote the Leader of the House and, very succinctly, put out the position. It is dated January 31, 1996. She had said I can read it.

Aside.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order, please.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: You can read it but not me.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order, please.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: With regard to the parliamentary broadcast of the debate on the White Paper, Miss Miller and I spoke on January 30, **1996**. After consultation, the proposal to broadcast only the principal speeches on television and the remainder of the debate on radio only had been decided.

Members brought to my attention their strong view of the treatment in the House regarding the broadcasting of their speeches in a particular debate. It was felt that backbench parliamentarians and minority Opposition Members and also the contributions of all other Members of the House should be highlighted.

In the circumstances, the Opposition favours the procedure adopted. That was in keeping with your ruling in **writing** and I **will** abide with that.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Members, you have heard both sides and **you** must agree that there were proper consultations on both sides.

I am suggesting that we continue with these consultations until a policy has been identified.

The question is that...

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Mr. Speaker, Sir, in respect of what Your Honour has just said, I should respectfully request that, in the future, Your Hono'ur would give your ruling in writing and copy it to the Leader of the Opposition. I would prefer that your ruling be given to me, in writing, so that I can put it on this file.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, I should also like to say that Standing Order **17** concerning Adjournment of the House and **76** in respect of Privilege have been grossly breached this evening. I would wish to refer Members to the Standing Orders. We are operating in here now by air, not by the Standing Orders.

Asides.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order, please.

The question that the House do now adjourn until Tuesday, February 13, 1996 at 11.00 a.m. was put and resolved in the affirmative without division and Mr. SPEAKER adjourned the sitting accordingly.
11.03 p.m.

CONTENTS

MINUTES

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER 2294

Confirmation of Minutes of Tuesday,
January 30, 1996 and Friday, February 2,
1996.

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER 2295

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

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

ORDER NO. 1 - RESOLUTION TO WELCOME
THE **WHITE** PAPER AND ENDORSE THE
REFORMS AND POLICIES PROPOSED IN
THAT PAPER **FOR** EDUCATION IN
BARBADOS 2295

Hon. Miss M. A. **Mottley**, 2295, 2303, 2308,
2310, 2360; Mr. F. J. **Stuart**, 2317; Dr. R. C.
Haynes, 2326, 2327, 2330, 2331; Hon. Miss
B. A. Miller, 2356; Hon. R. C. **Eastmond**,
2331, 2332; Rt. Hon. L. E. Sandiford, 2335,
2336, 2337; Mr. W. C. C. Callender, 2338,
2340; Mr. B. M. Taitt, 2342, 2343; Hon.
R. N. Greenidge, 2346, 2349; Mr. H. F.
Lashley, 2349, 2350; Mr. L. R. Tull, 2351,
2352, 2353; Mr. D. St. E. Kellman, 2354,
2355; Mr. J. O. Tudor, 2357.

GOVERNMENT NOTICES

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER ,2362

Resolution to **amend** the Explanatory Notes
under Head 28 - Ministry of Home Affairs,
Program 03, Subprogram **01** - Immigration
Department, Item No. 625 - Plant, Equipment
and Furniture.

SUSPENSIONS 2310, 2346

ADJOURNMENT 2362

Hon. Miss B. A. Miller, 2362, 2368; Mr.
D. J. H. **Thompson**, 2362, 2376; Rt. Hon. O.
S. Arthur, 2364; Mr. B. M. **Taitt**, 2365;
Rt. Hon. L. E. Sandiford, 2366.

SPEAKERS IN THIS ISSUE

ARTHUR, Rt. Hon. **O.** S. (St. Peter)
CALLENDER, Mr. W. C. C. (Christ Church East)
EASTMOND, Hon. R. C. (St. **James** North)
GREENIDGE, Hon. R. N. (St. **Philip** North)
HAYNES, Dr. R. C. (St. **Michael** South Central)
KELLMAN, Mr. D. St. E. (St. Lucy)
LASHLEY, Mr. H. F. (St. Michael South East)
MILLER, Hon. Miss B. A. (City of Bridgetown)
MOTTLEY, Hon. Miss M. A. (St. Michael North East)
SANDIFORD, Rt. Hon. L. E. (St. Michael South)
STUART, Mr. F. J. (St. **Philip** South)
TAITT, Mr. B. M. (**St.** Michael West)
THOMPSON, Mr. D. J. H. (**St.** John)
TUDOR, Mr. J. **O.** (St. Michael East)
TULL, Mr. L. R. (St. George South)