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# THE House of Assembly Debates

## (OFFICIAL REPORT)

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FIRST SESSION 1994 – 99

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### HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

*Monday, March 18, 1996.*

Pursuant to the adjournment, the House of Assembly met at 10.15 a.m. o'clock on Monday, March 18, 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. H. deB. FORDE, Q.C., M.A., LL.B.  
Mr. B. M. TAITT, B.A. (Hons.), M.P.A., LL.B.  
(Hons.)

Mr. L. A. WEEKES, G.C.M., J.P.  
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 (Parliamentary Secretary,  
Ministry of Public Works, Transport and Housing)

Mr. J. M. EDGHILL

Mr. F. J. STUART, B.A., LL.M.

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

Mr. H. F. LASHLEY

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

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN

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

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

*Prayers were led by Rev. Ivan Harewood.*

Mr. SPEAKER: The House is in Session. Minutes of  
this Honourable House of March 12, 1996.

#### MINUTES

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 meeting of  
Tuesday, March 12, 1996, which Minutes have been  
circulated be taken as read.

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

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

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

Mr. SPEAKER: I am to report that I am in receipt of the Report on the Audit of the Accounts of the Sugar Industry and Research and Development Fund for the year ended December 31, 1994.

## PAPERS

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I am commanded to lay the Annual Report and Statement of Accounts of the Insurance Corporation of Barbados for the year 1994.

## SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS

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

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

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

## ORDER NO. 1 – SECOND READING OF APPROPRIATION BILL, 1996

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I rise to initiate a debate on the budgetary process for this country, a budgetary process that, as has been the case in the past, will take the form of 2 separate initiatives. The endeavour on which we are embarked is provided for under the Constitution of Barbados, sections 108 and 109, and in due course, sometime later in the year, I will introduce budgetary proposals and a financial statement.

Mr. Speaker, I would like at the outset of this debate to trust that we can have a full, a spirited and a constructive debate on all aspects of the Estimates that are today being discussed in this Parliament pursuant to sections 108 and 109 of the Constitution. My contribution today will flow from 3 sets of considerations.

First of all, I would want to set the Estimates of Expenditure today on Government's overall economic policy, within the framework of the development of this country and within a framework that analyses where we have recently come from and the trends in the economy, within the context of the general policies adumbrated by Government for the general development of this society.

Thereafter, Mr. Speaker, I would wish to focus on the Estimates of Expenditure as estimates and analyse them

with reference to what they say as an intention of Government's financial management. Thereafter, I would want to deal with some of the economic and financial ideas and political issues that these Estimates have excited. My first task therefore is to set the Estimates in their appropriate context. Last year when I brought Estimates to Parliament, those Estimates were brought to Parliament as part of an exercise to lay the basis for stable and sure foundations upon which the economic recovery of this country should be founded.

The country, Sir, had recently come through a fairly punishing economic adjustment and stabilisation programme characterised by a fairly substantial fall in the level of economic activity generally, a steep increase in the level of unemployment and last year the country was just clawing its way out of the abyss of economic disorder. There was a need last year to lay a stable and secure foundation upon which economic recovery would rest. Last year's Estimates of Expenditure were also conceived of and executed against a background of a situation where there were a large number of arrears, many of them stretching back to previous financial years, that had to be brought to account and the bringing into account of those arrears. The correction of the financial disorder that was inherited obviously would have been a constraint on the extent to which fiscal expansion could have been pursued as a management and development option.

Last year's Estimates were also conceived in the context of a situation where we knew that we were facing an economy whose performance in the first half of the year still was a cause for concern. We inherited an economy in which it was anticipated that sugar output would fall by some 26 per cent in the first half of 1995 because of a drought in the previous year. We inherited an economic situation in which there was some softness in the tourism industry in the first half of the year for a number of reasons not the least being the chaos and the confusion that had obtained in the administration of tourism affairs in the previous 2 years.

We also inherited an economic situation where there was an increase in debt service, particularly in the first quarter of the year, in part arising from the fact that some Japanese investors had called a \$40-million loan well in advance of the time when that loan had to be repaid. There was a need therefore for the Government in the process of trying to lay stable and secure foundations for economic recovery to pay attention to the constraints within which the Estimates were being prepared and to adopt a financial position that reflected prudence and bore a relationship to the objectives obtaining in the economy at the time.

Mr. Speaker, I am satisfied now that stable and secure foundations have been laid for economic recovery in this society.

10.25 a.m.

All of the major productive sectors since the second half of last year have shown renewed vibrancy, and while last year the growth rate was under 2½ per cent or about 2½ per cent, we are anticipating stronger economic growth this year. The projected growth will be far more balanced than it has been in recent times because whereas in the last year the growth was generated in the non-foreign exchange earning sectors, we anticipate that the growth of this economy this year, and for the years to come, will be led by the foreign exchange earning sectors.

We face an economic situation this year as well, Mr. Speaker, where there has been some substantial improvement in our external position. At the close of business on Friday, Barbados' foreign exchange reserves held by the monetary authority were over \$470 million, the highest in history. This is in advance of the receipts of the sugar funds which we are earnestly and eagerly awaiting. Although we are not yet fully out of the woods on the balance of payments side, there has been a substantial improvement in the country's foreign exchange position.

We anticipate, Sir, strong economic growth within the context of low inflation. I am happy to be able to report to the House that the notion of jobless growth that at one stage in the early 1990s seemed to have been the fate to which Barbados was consigned, is something that is receding. Unemployment as well has come down. We have not yet solved it but, at least, we are going in the correct direction where the attack on the problem of unemployment is concerned.

Generally speaking, Mr. Speaker, although the economy is not yet out of the woods, the indices are pointing in the correct direction and it falls to us therefore, having laid stable and secure foundations for economic recovery, to now institute policies that can ensure that there is sustained and sustainable economic growth in this country leading not only to full economic recovery, but to the resolution of the economic and social problems that this country has been confronted with.

These Estimates, therefore, Sir, are intended to assist in allowing for a takeoff of the economy and to make a contribution to the realization of sustained and sustainable economic growth and recovery in the country. The nature of the expenditure contemplated by Government through these Estimates, the composition of the expenditure, the strategies implied by the expenditure, all are reflections and manifestations of the intent of this Government to use this part of fiscal policy, the expenditure part, to contribute to the creation of the conditions in this country for sustained and sustainable economic growth and development in Barbados. The House would do well to focus their discussion of these Estimates on the extent to which they will assist in creating those conditions of which I speak.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I want to spend some time speaking about the Estimates as a representation of Government's financial policy. But I do still feel that before I come to that, I must reiterate that Barbados still has to accept that manageable fiscal deficits, appropriately financed in such a way as not to create a drain on the country's foreign exchange reserves, and appropriately financed in such a way as not to prevent and preempt private sector access to credit accompanied by such financial policies must continue to be the order of the day, and must continue to be the precepts that guide us in dealing with Government expenditure patterns from the point of view of financial management.

We subscribe to the view, Mr. Speaker, that the holding of a fixed exchange rate must be the centrepiece of economic management and development policies in this country. To that extent, we will maintain a fixed exchange rate if we accept the other disciplines that come along with it. Among those is the discipline of ensuring that we do not through unwieldy fiscal deficits so considerably add to domestic spending and purchasing power that the deficit in and of itself becomes the factor that leads to the erosion of our foreign exchange reserves.

In relation to the Estimates, I want to deal with the Estimates of Expenditure for last year, the year ending March 31, 1995 as the back drop against which we analyze the Estimates for the year 1996/97 which are to be debated and approved by Parliament. I want to suggest to the House that if you are to understand what has happened by way of Government's financial management over the course of the last year, you would do well to analyze the way in which the Government has managed the level of expenditure and the composition of the expenditure both in relation to what was forecast and in relation to what the outturn has been.

Last year, Mr. Speaker, I came to Parliament and sought the approval of the House for the Government of Barbados during the course of the financial year 1995-1996 to spend \$1 362 000 000 in both capital and current expenditures. That was the remit we sought from Parliament to allow the Government to spend in the course of the financial year \$1 362 000 000 on the capital and current side. Sir, the best estimates available to us now indicate that in the course of the financial year, supplementaries and all, we are likely to spend \$1.3541 billion or \$8 million less than we asked the House to allow us to spend for the financial year.

I want to reinforce that point, Sir, because it is our view that proper financial management in this country must begin with appropriate management of Government's expenditures. Last year, analyzing the reserve position of the Government, the state of our economic sectors and their prospects, the level of inflation, the level of imports, we thought that the country could only support expenditures

by Government to the extent of \$1.362 billion. We are likely for the full year now to spend \$1.3541 billion, \$8 million less than we set out to spend, or if I may put it in a percentage term, we are likely to depart from our expenditure projection by less than one half of 1 per cent.

Now, Sir, obviously the composition of the expenditure has not been as Parliament had initially conceived it and on that hangs a tale. At the outset of the year we had proposed to spend \$1.193 billion in current expenditure and \$169.4 million in capital. During the course of the financial year it became clear to us that the capital programme as initially conceived was not going to be realized for reasons which I will go into.

10.35 a.m.

We took a conscious decision to restructure some of the capital activities of Government, as well as to allow to be brought on stream certain small programmes that had not been allowed initially during the Estimates of Expenditure.

At the same time, Mr. Speaker, it became clear that because the economy was performing stronger than had been forecasted by the Central Bank in March, the growth in revenue was going to be higher than the \$1.106 billion that the Government had projected. In the light of a slower than expected capital execution and, in the face of an increase in revenue beyond what we had forecast, we allowed certain things to be undertaken, while keeping within the overall limit of expenditure that the Government had initially been authorised to incur.

As a result, we now anticipate that whereas we had projected to realize a \$1.106 billion in revenues, we will realize, for the full financial year, \$1.1489 billion in revenue for the year to end in March. That current expenditure which was set at \$1.193 billion is now going to be \$1.232 billion. That includes the full payment for public servants. It includes as well the amount allowed to the BNB to refinance its loans. On the capital side, Mr. Speaker, we anticipate capital expenditures of \$121.6 million rather than \$169.4 million that was initially forecast.

As a result of a better than anticipated revenue performance and a slower than anticipated capital programme, even in spite of our bringing to account the back pay and the wage increases to public servants and meeting the expenditures at Weston, St. James and other supplementary expenditures, we anticipate ending the financial year with a fiscal deficit of \$205 million, a lower deficit than we had forecasted when we started the financial year. You would recall that last year, this Parliament agreed that the overall fiscal deficit that the government should have incurred for the full financial year, in all of our circumstances was some \$256 million.

I want to say to the House, Sir, that in spite of the supplementaries and in spite of our paying the wage increases and paying the back pay, in spite of our having to carry the burden of meeting arrears from a previous Administration, we have kept expenditures under the limit of what the House witnessed last year. We have brought in a lower fiscal deficit than what we initially thought.

The House will obviously debate the question of Government's supplementaries, whether we should have supplementaries or not and, in particular, the question of the capital programme.

I want to touch on the question of the slow rate of execution of the capital programme, if only because the House has to be convinced about the credibility of the Estimates that the Government is presenting this year. The key to this year's Estimates, as I would explain shortly, is the intention of Government to hold a line on current expenditures and to increase its capital programme from \$121 million in spending this year to \$235 million in spending in the year to come. The House, obviously, has to be satisfied that what we are projecting by way of a financial programme is realistic having regard to the recent experience.

For that reason, the House is entitled to an explanation as to why the capital programme for the financial year ending March 31 is somewhat below the capital programme that was initially conceived. In many respects, it has to do with difficulties that continue to be experienced by this Administration in meeting some of the policies attached to loans for capital projects that were entered into by the previous Administration.

That is one part of it, Sir. The previous Administration entered into arrangements with the World Bank for a Human Resource Development Project. We believe that the Human Resource Development policies in this country are vital and that they should be supported. But we cannot support them at all costs and, particularly so, Mr. Speaker, we cannot support them if one of the conditions for executing a Human Resource Development Project in this country is that we must charge fees to Barbadian students at the University of the West Indies.

Members on the other side who now have convenient memories are telling us that they did not know of any conditions attaching to any loan entered into by the Democratic Labour Party that had the charging of fees at the University of the West Indies as a condition.

But it is a reality that one of the conditions attaching to the Human Resource Development Project for which provision was made last year by the Government was the condition that the Government of Barbados should

charge fees to students attending the University of the West Indies. One of the reasons why we have not been able to move the funds is precisely because we have been in discussions with the World Bank about the particular matter. The previous side not only agreed to the charging of fees but the World Bank also secured a Japanese grant to carry out a study not to determine whether fees should have been charged but the structure of the loan programme and the structure of the cost recovery programme that should have been put in place as contingent upon a Government of Barbados introducing fees at the University of the West Indies.

*Aside.*

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Speaker, Sir, that was the condition attached to the Human Resource Development Project, Sir. We have told the World Bank that it is not the policy of this Administration to charge fees at the Samuel Jackman Prescod Polytechnic or at the Barbados Community College or at the University of the West Indies.

The reality is that an \$18-million project that would otherwise be used to assist us in Human Resource Development has languished and perhaps continues to languish. We have invited the World Bank to send a mission to this country in April to discuss their reaction to our very clear decision that we are not going to be charging fees to university students. If they want to abandon the project, so be it. But this Government is not going to indulge in the social backwardness of the previous Administration in kicking down the door of opportunity to a large number of small poor black people in this country who have to look to the University of the West Indies for their tertiary education.

*Asides.*

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: ...and discover you.

*Aside.*

Mr. SPEAKER: Order, please.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Speaker, Sir, a similar set of considerations obtain in relation to the Government's ability to move on with the World Bank Finance Road Maintenance and Road Rehabilitation Project. That project has also been constrained by a number of policies entered into by the Democratic Labour Party that have to do with the structure of the Transport Board and the structure of fares to be charged by the Transport Board, Sir, and we have found great difficulty in moving forward projects of that nature where such draconian conditions never disclosed

by the Democratic Labour Party to the public were a part of the conditionalities for disbursement.

Another difficulty that we have faced, Mr. Speaker, is that what we are in fact in the process of rectifying, once and for all, was the problem of the lack of a project implementation and execution capacity in most of the line Ministries of this country.

Mr. Speaker, it is not by chance that the Oistin Complex or the Bridgetown Fishing Complex was built. Those were built because high quality public servants were assigned the responsibility of the day of being project managers and being responsible for the execution and management of projects.

I remember in those days, the Ministry of Agriculture had a Special Assignments Unit headed by a Major Sam Headley and with project staff. Their only responsibility in the Ministry of Agriculture was to develop and implement projects. People were assigned to that particular project, Sir.  
10.45 a.m.

We assumed office in September 1994 to find no project unit set up in the Ministry of Agriculture, none whatsoever, and that project management was something that civil servants dealt with, if they so cared, as part of their other administrative responsibilities. A similar thing obtained in relation to Tourism. They had a large number of project ideas floating about but no project institution in the Ministry, no people assigned the clear responsibility of project institution in the Ministry.

Sir, we have required that a project unit be established in the Ministry of Agriculture and for a person at the level of Deputy Permanent Secretary to be responsible for all of the projects in the Ministry of Agriculture. There are a large number of projects that have to be executed by the Ministry of Tourism to do with heritage tourism. The Ministry of the Civil Service has now approved, since February, a slate of posts to constitute a project development and implementation unit to see after the redevelopment of Speightstown and St. Lawrence Gap, to deal with projects in the area of heritage tourism, to have an overview and make sure that plans for the expansion of the port and the airport bear relationship to this. The administration of the day had project thoughts about developing new activity in tourism but without a commensurate project executing capability at the level of the Ministry.

In the area of Health, Mr. Speaker, the intention last year was to execute a number of important projects and I must say, even as I speak, Sir, we are now having

to search for project managers to assign between very critical projects that are executed in the Ministry of Health because one person and one person alone has to date been responsible for project management for the South Coast Sewerage Project which is almost a \$100-million project, the land fill project which is going to cost between \$10 million to \$20 million and to do work on the West Coast project. We have determined, Mr. Speaker, that each of those projects must have a separate project manager, even if at the end of the day there is somebody in the Ministry of Health responsible for project coordination as a special coordinator. But we have this ridiculous situation where, in line Ministries, the refusal to put appropriate project management capabilities in place was a significant factor that caused projects to be inadequately undertaken.

We must also recognise and concede to the House that we have had difficulties putting down, in accordance with schedule, all of the contractual agreements that have been entered into between the Government and lending institutions on some of these critical projects. You will record, Mr. Speaker, that last year's project was the South Coast Sewerage Project which required us to negotiate 4 different contracts in order to carry out four different components of the work. I really must stress that point, Sir, because we inherited an administration where there have been thoughts of having a South Coast Sewerage Project for years but contracts have not been drawn and last year, Mr. Speaker, a lot of the efforts were devoted to negotiating the contracts to be able to carry out the work of the four different subprograms that constitute the project.

We have difficulty, Mr. Speaker, Sir, in pinning down some of those contracts for reasons which I will explain to the House. The methodologies of these lending institutions require, Sir, that people have to post bonds in order to be able to qualify to carry out works for these institutions. Sometimes the size of the bonds that contractors are required to post is too large for local people. Very often the only people who bid for the contracts sponsored and financed by multilateral institutions are international companies outside the region. In the case of the South Coast, Sir, one company bid for one of the contracts but came in at a price that was about US\$4 million over what was voted for the contract because no local company was in a position to meet the bond requirement and the Government of Barbados would have had to **carry** that additional cost on its own account. We said that rather than carry that we would rather go back out to tender and that explains, Sir, why there has been some of the delay in relation to the execution of the project.

I am now, Sir, in a position to tell the House that this year, when we are asking for moneys to be voted for things like the South Coast Project because they are vital projects, we can give the House the assurance that the work is going

to take place because all of the contracts for these **projects** have now been entered into.

Last year there was that problem of arriving at contracts that satisfied the conditions established in the loan agreements and met the methodologies of the international institutions while fitting within the financial profiles of the projects as established by the Government of **Barbados**,

Sir, I **want** to say that in relation to most of the major projects, whether it be the expansion of **the Port**, or the expansion of the Airport, or the Sewerage Projects or the Greenland Project, Sir, we are now in a position to give the House the assurance that the capital activities that we propose will take place upon the basis of the **funds** to be voted by Parliament will take place because the **contractual** arrangements have now been put in place after much negotiations and much to-ing and fro-ing. I am also to say to the House, Sir, that there is a greater **likelihood** of their taking place because it is the **policy** of **this** administration that for each major project there must be a **separate** project scheme unit properly staffed to carry out the work assigned to them, rather than the situation we have **inherited**, Mr. Speaker, of projects being left to be **carried** out as part of other **people's** routine administrative requirement as if project management is not a specialist activity.

Sir, the truth of the matter is therefore that we have, as well as that administration, to go in and deal with a large number of procedural and administrative, sometimes even conceptual problems surrounding the design of projects that we have inherited. In many instances, Sir, we have to be renegotiating the conditions attached to projects. Sometimes we have succeeded. Other times, Sir, we have not, as in the case of the Human Resources Development Project and those, Sir, are the concerns and the conditions that explain the difference between the capital programme as conceived and the **outturn**, Sir, that was realised.

I would like to say, Sir, that when people speak in terms of the Estimates this year creating more jobs, one of the key areas in which jobs are being created, Sir, is precisely in relation to project development and during the course of these Estimates, Sir, we are going to be asking the House and moving to make sure that those posts that have been approved for the Ministry of Tourism to establish project development capacity are supported by this Parliament.

Sir, I would really like to give the House...

*Aside.*

10.55 a.m.

Sir, I would like to give the House a more exact account of expected revenue and expenditure patterns for this financial year to its end. We expect, Sir, that

Current Revenue is likely to be **6.2** per cent or **\$66.9** million more created for the financial year **1995-96** than it was for the financial year **1994-95**. Among the salient features of this growth in Current Revenue for **1995-96** was the relatively strong vote in some main revenue **earners** particularly taxes on Incomes and Profits and taxes on Goods and Services. Taxes on Goods and Services for the year are anticipated to increase by some **12.2** per cent but Income Taxes and Corporation Taxes for the year **1995-96** are expected to make significant contributions to the growth of revenue increasing by **13** per cent and **14.6** per cent respectively.

Sir, in relation to Income Tax, one has to read with care without divulging any information which is of a proprietary nature because the House needs to know, if you are going to analyze the Income Tax receipts Government **did** benefit from a windfall gain of about **\$6.5** million accruing from one company and one company alone. So we have to be careful how we treat the Income Tax because obviously that is a one-shot gain that should not be allowed to dispute our understanding of the income tax base.

There was also, Mr. Speaker, a **\$10** million increase in the receipts from Land Tax. I truly must record the strong appreciation of this administration for the very sterling work that was done by the previous administration and particularly the Honourable Member for St. Michael South who regrettably is not in his place today for making this a reality. I am anxious as anybody else for the debate on Land Tax has been brought by Private Members' Resolution to be debated in this Parliament. But it has to be said, Sir, that we are now reaping the benefits of a programme that was conceived of in all of its dimensions and developed and left in place for us by the previous administration. The House will recall, Sir, that in the early 1990's the previous administration declared an amnesty in response to calls by the Member for St. Thomas and told the public that those persons who were responsible enough and civic minded enough to seek to settle their Land Tax could do so by way of special arrangements put in place with the Commissioner of Land Tax and would be entitled to an ease of the arrears. But it was made clear at the time that all those who were in arrears of Land Tax and who did not respond to the amnesty declared would thereafter have to meet the full burden of the tax payments. That programme was conceived by the Democratic Labour Party. They put the amnesty in place and, when I became the Minister of Finance, among the briefs that I was presented with by the Commissioner of Land Tax was this brief that had computerized all of the arrears. That brief gave me the programme for collection that had been conceived, structured and was ready to be put in place. Because the Government was satisfied with giving an amnesty with sufficient time for people to bring their Land Tax up to date, it was only fair that those who were not

civic minded enough and who did not respond to the amnesty within which they could have **gotten** an ease on their penalty would have to pay. It was all neatly classified, Sir, in terms of who owed, not by names but categories, and a programme for collection as conceived by the previous administration was put before me and I thought it was a reasonable programme.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: I do not wish to interrupt the Honourable Member in his stride. I regret very much. No such tax collection programme was ever placed before me or approved by me, conceived, endorsed or in any way designed by me as Minister of Finance during the period when I served. Therefore, it was a new programme and the Honourable Member if he did not agree with it could have stopped it.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Speaker, Sir, we will hear from time to time about people agreeing to things and not agreeing to things. We heard from the other side that nobody in the Democratic Labour Party Cabinet agreed to any conditionalities whatsoever that say we should have to pay university fees. We heard, Sir, that there was never any Casino Gambling Commission set up in this **country** and that there was never a commitment given to investors that after the election campaign people would be allowed to establish casinos in this country. Sir, we heard all of this but I want to say to the House that among my briefs was the brief from the Commissioner of Land Tax bringing the information to my attention. That is a fact. Mr. Speaker, I am accepting the responsibility for the execution of the programme because I believe, Sir, that if people were given the chance to deal with the arrears and penalties of the arrears under an amnesty that was publicized...

*Aside.*

Mr. SPEAKER: Order, please.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Member for St. John has now found his voice again and he is taunting me across the floor quite wrongfully saying that I have called for the abolition of all Land Tax in the country. I wish that the Member who has suffered his blows in the last few months will not now try to take out his beef on me in saying that he has never made such statements whatsoever, Mr. Speaker. But I want to come back to my point, Sir.

*Aside.*

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: His heart is very light. I have to be very careful with him. But, Sir, I want to

press on. As a result, there was a beneficial impact on the revenue arising from the Land **Tax**. If the Honourable Member will look at the Manifesto of the Barbados Labour Party, there is no reference whatsoever in the Manifesto of the Barbados Labour Party 1994 that gives any commitment to the removal of Land **Tax**. There is no commitment in the 1994 Barbados Labour Party Manifesto and that is our current policy.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, the wages and salaries for the year 1995-96 are also projected to rise by 6 per cent and this increase in Personal Emoluments reflects the basic increase as well as some moderate expansion in employment in the public sector. I will in due course, Sir, speak to that. I have already explained the pattern in relation to Capital Expenditure by indicating that Capital Expenditures were less than projected precisely because of difficulties in meeting loan conditions and difficulties experienced in pinning down agreements with the institutions.

In relation to the financing of the deficit, Sir, for 1995-96 it is anticipated that \$102 million of the deficit will be financed from domestic sources and \$102.7 million from foreign sources of which \$12.7 million will take the form of loan financing.

Mr. Speaker, I now come on to deal with the projections for the year 1996-97. Our overall fiscal programme for the year is predicated on the assumption that the economy is going to grow for the year between 3.5 and 4 per cent, that the inflation rate will be about 2 per cent, that the growth in GDP, nominal growth, not real growth, will be 6% and growth in retained earnings will be about 9%.

11.05 a.m.

Current Revenue is projected to grow by 6.2%, or in line with Current Revenue for the last financial year. It is a relatively modest and conservative estimate of revenue and the pattern in the Ministry of Finance historically is that you use conservative estimates of revenue because it is better that you under-estimate your revenue than you over-estimate your revenue. The reality is that last year the economy, which grew by 2.5%, gave rise to a 6% growth in revenue. Next year we anticipate that revenue will rise by 6.2% because we recognise that part of the growth in revenue for the year to end in March had to do with the settlement of some arrears. As I said, in relation to the income **tax** one company alone was responsible for the payment of \$6.5 million in arrears, so we have to be careful as to how we assess the taxable base of the economy, but the House will understand that a 6.2% growth in revenue in the context of an economy that is scheduled to grow by 3½% or 4% is not the kind of estimate that is likely to over-estimate revenue and cause a fiscal problem.

Current Expenditure, Mr. Speaker, is scheduled to grow by some 2.6%, and I really want to stress that point. Government is trying to control the growth of expenditure for current and housekeeping purposes. I have made the point that for the financial year ending 1995-96 Government's overall expenditure of \$1 354 million was \$8 million less than what we set out at the start of the year to spend for the whole year, despite supplementaries. We feel we should continue to hold a line on current expenditures, so that we are projecting that current expenditures will be some 2.6% higher than the **outturn** for the fiscal year to end in March 1996, although there will be a 6.3% increase in personal emoluments which will rise from some \$421 million to \$450 million, reflecting the 3% increase across the board payment for 1996-97, but some modest increase in public service employment.

Expenditure on goods and services is expected to rise by only 1%. Current transfers are scheduled to fall. I want to say that the fall in current transfers to institutions has to do with the fact that some of the \$24 million in supplementary appropriation for current transfers last year, which increases Capital Expenditure, was really in the nature of one-shot expenditures which very often declare outstanding arrears and could not therefore be treated as the real base against which current transfers should be analysed.

Debt Service, Mr. Speaker, is projected to total some \$372.4 million in 1996-97, an increase of 1.3% or \$4 million over 1995-96. We anticipate that while domestic amortisation is projected to increase, foreign amortisation is projected to decline due to the absence of any major foreign payments in the year.

The financial management strategy of Government for the year to come is that we will bring the wage increase to account. We will honour the obligations of Government and we will fully provide for the running of the social services of this country, but the increase in Government expenditure for the year to come will take the form, not of an increase for housekeeping or bureaucratic purposes, but of an increase in Capital spending from \$121 million to \$235 million. That reflects the intention of Government, now that we have sorted out a lot of the financial disorder that has been in the system since 1991, now that we have established a secure and stable foundation for economic growth, and now that the economy is growing on all cylinders, it is intended to be Government's contribution to sustaining the growth of the recovery and to making it much more broad-based and much more enduring than would ordinarily be the case. There is going to be an overall increase in Government expenditure this year, Sir, but that overall increase is going to be in large part not an increase generated for current purposes, but an increase for income and employment generating purposes and designed in particular, Mr. Speaker, to address strategic

investments in this economy that will eventually lead to the creation of a **stronger** society, a better trained society and a society capable of generating more income, employment and foreign exchange.

I want to spend a bit of time dealing with the strategic emphases of Government's intended Capital programme. Mr. Speaker, it is a matter of necessity that Barbados must find the funds to provide sewerage facilities throughout this society. The health and well-being of Barbadians and visitors to this country will be put at risk the longer we delay in having sewerage facilities erected. The Government is satisfied that we can now accelerate spending on the construction of sewerage facilities, because we now have the agreements in place, the contracts for the carrying out of the work for all four phases of the South Coast Sewerage Plant. The largest component of Government's Capital Programme this year is in relation to the South Coast Sewerage Plant, where some **\$42.5** million in Capital Expenditure is intended to be undertaken.

We have also decided that we must fast track the feasibility studies and the **final** designs for the West Coast Sewerage Project, because in that hotel-intensive part of Barbados the need for sewerage facilities is extremely urgent. As a result **we are** proposing to spend **\$2.6** million this financial year to have the work for the feasibility studies and the design for the West Coast Sewerage Project undertaken simultaneously with the construction work on the south coast, on the understanding that as soon as one phase of construction of sewerage facilities is finished on the south coast we will have feasibility studies already prepared and the designs ready for the west coast and that one process of construction will lead to the other.

**Aside.**

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: It means also that we now have to go out and make sure that we get **separate project** management personnel for the west coast project, because the same person who is responsible for the south is now responsible for the west, and that has to stop.

In addition, Mr. Speaker, we are putting up funds this year for the starting of a new **landfill**. That is a new Capital Project in this year's Estimates and **\$7** million has been earmarked for that particular purpose.

The Coastal Conservation Project, which has yielded such valuable beach protection work across Barbados, is to have its second phase in the amount of **\$4.6** million. The Ministry of Health, therefore, has a fairly substantial Capital programme. In the area of construction of sewerage facilities, the planning of a new West Coast Sewerage Facility, the construction of a new **landfill** at Greenland and the continuation of the work on coastal conservation, all of

which are vital, all, if I may say so, command financial support from abroad.

The Ministry of Education this year will also have a very large Capital programme. The Barbados Labour Party inherited Government and had to deal with the financial haemorrhage ensuing from having two large projects, for which no loan funds had been negotiated, in an incomplete state. I am speaking in relation to the St. Thomas Secondary School and the Ministry of Education's headquarters. In the course of the last **18** months we have undertaken comprehensive negotiations with the Chinese Government. We also inherited a situation where a soft loan from China had been earmarked to build a new exercise hall at the gymnasium.

**11.15 a.m.**

This Government determined that the month to month financial haemorrhage that ensued from our having to meet the cost of security, maintenance, utilities and other contractual costs at the Ministry of Education Headquarters and the St. Thomas School, despite nothing happening, had to stop. It was our calculation that if you allowed them to stay idle for an extended period of time the amount of money that would be incurred in keeping them idle would be the equivalent to what it would cost for construction. We therefore approached the Caribbean Development Bank and have managed to secure a loan to provide full funding for the completion of the St. Thomas School.

The Caribbean Development Bank has agreed to treat the amount spent on the St. Thomas School to date as Government's counterpart input into the project and therefore **\$8.4** million in new expenditure this year will take place on the finishing of the St. Thomas Secondary School, work on which will begin in July and the intention is obviously to move the St. **Leonard's** Girls' School but the Minister of Education will speak to aspects of it in due course.

Sir, this is **\$8.4** million in new financing, but the important point is that we can bring it into account this year because **all** of the financing will be fully supported by a loan from the CDB and, while this expenditure will obviously increase the deficit, it will have no impact whatsoever on our foreign exchange position because it is going to be fully funded by the Caribbean Development Bank.

The Government has also determined that it is a waste of taxpayers funds to keep spending money month after month on the Ministry of Education Headquarters and that we are spending **\$4.6** million this year to complete the Ministry of Education Headquarters. We are also going to continue the primary education school building programme that was started, admittedly by the other side, and an amount of **\$7.4** million is here allocated in this

year's capital expenditure. Again, Sir, it is supported by a draw-down from the Inter-American Development Bank to carry out those projects.

I am happy to report, Sir, that one of those projects is in my constituency and that it will not involve the project that was conceived by the Democratic Labour Party. The Democratic Labour Party conceived the amalgamation of All Saints Boys' and All Saints Girls'. I have no difficulty with it, Sir and I can say that inside this House and outside of this House. We have revised the project, Sir, because we have also determined that Indian Ground School has not been growing, the cost of maintaining it has been horrendous and therefore there will be an amalgamation of All Saints Boys' and All Saints Girls' and Indian Ground Girls'. We have revised the project as conceived by the Democratic Labour Party of having the amalgamation of the 2 schools take place at All Saints Girls' School. All Saints Boys' and All Saints Girls' and Indian Ground Girls' will now be amalgamated at the site of the All Saints Boys' School which is **equi-distant**, and those who know St. Peter know where Indian Ground is. It is at the centre of the catchment area.

I have to make that point, Sir, because I am agreeing in this House with the Minister of Education that schools in my constituency should be amalgamated. I feel I must make that caveat because there are those who come to this House and agree with the Minister of Education to amalgamate schools in their constituencies and then go to their constituencies and say something else. But there will be an amalgamation of All Saints Boys' and All Saints Girls' and Indian Ground Girls' as part of this.

**\$2.7** million will also be spent on the Hospitality Institute and we will also be spending **\$1.5** million on the maintenance of school property. I want, Sir, to serve notice at this early stage that this Government is concerned about the state of the dilapidation of not only the primary but the secondary schools in the country and just as we have had projects financed by international institutions for the maintenance of roads we believe that the maintenance needs of our schools, both primary and secondary, should be put in the form of a project for which financing as a separate project activity should be sought.

The Ministry of Education has been given the mandate to prepare and collate all of the maintenance needs of all of the schools, primary and secondary, and we anticipate that that will constitute a main project in the future, because there is no point in spending a lot of money on building schools and then let them deteriorate and the situation in some of the secondary schools in particular is now reaching a situation and such a crisis that we may have, during the course of this year, to look at dealing with some of them where the case is urgent. That matter is being addressed.

The Ministry of Public Works will also have a fairly large capital programme. We will complete Highway **2A** this year and we will **carry** out the road rehabilitation phase 2 part of the road rehabilitation and maintenance project that has been agreed to with the **World** Bank. We are now in a position to give the House the assurance, after discussion with the World Bank and the clarification of a number of the terms and the conditions that had attended that particular project, that the work will continue.

Mr. Speaker, one important project that will come on stream this year is the undertaking of the works **pertain**ing to the Bridgetown By-pass. This work started under the previous Administration and it is funded by the **Inter-American** Development Bank. It is intended...

#### **Aside.**

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: If a road goes through your office, the office will perhaps be put to good use for the **first** time in its history.

Sir, there is an urgent need for the road network of Bridgetown to be substantially improved to relieve the congestion that now obtains on Bridgetown roads even at normal hours. Some **\$9.1** million in expenditure is anticipated to be spent this year on the Bridgetown By-pass Road and that is to be funded by the Inter-American Development Bank.

I must also stress, Sir, that beyond those major projects in those 3 sectors a large number of other projects will be undertaken. We believe that the time has come for a serious onslaught on the problems of land slippage in the Scotland District and increased funds are being allocated for that, Sir. We believe that the problems of urban poverty and **rural** underdevelopment must continue to be addressed and these Estimates provide for the allocation for the Rural Development Project to move from **\$3** million last year to **\$4** million this year, and for the first time we will be making a provision for an urban renewal project to the extent of **\$1.2** million.

**11.25 a.m.**

I want to tell the House, Mr. Speaker, that the Government of Barbados has decided to put the Urban Renewal Project which had been under preparation by the Ministry of Housing over the course of the last 18 months, the Rural Development Project, as well as the entire Tenancies Road programme of the Ministry of Public Works together as one project and to seek financing for it from a friendly Government. It is therefore to be understood that the **\$4** million that is provided from Government's cash this year and the **\$1.2** million for improvement in urban areas, represent Government's **upfront** cash contribution to the relief of poverty in

those areas and that they will be supplemented soon and in the years to come by substantial funds realized from putting these activities on a project basis and separate loans secured for them.

Mr. Speaker, in the Ministry of Agriculture we are also going to undertake work on the Cheapside Market. When we took over the administration of this country's economic affairs, the Government had on its books a loan with the Chinese Government that it was intending to use for development of an exercise centre and the provision, I think, of squash courts. We have renegotiated the terms of that loan. We got the Chinese Government to agree that...

*Aside.*

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Sir, we have renegotiated the use of the Chinese funds for the purposes as initially conceived. The Chinese Government has now agreed that rather than use the funds to build an exercise centre they can properly be used to rehabilitate the Cheapside market. In the course of this year \$4 million will be used to rehabilitate the Cheapside market for the benefit of vendors. That, Mr. Speaker, is part and parcel of the spirit of this administration. We have had to spend a lot of time renegotiating things that had been decided by the Democratic Labour Party but they now have the parameters of our own capital programme as conceived by us in place for execution.

I want to say to the House, Sir, that, in relation to **financing** the deficit, we anticipate this year incurring a larger deficit than had been incurred last year. Last year we thought we were going to have a deficit of \$256 million. We propose to have one this year of \$279 million.

But, Mr. Speaker, I want to stress the point that the largest components by far of Government's capital programme for the year to come take the form of fairly large projects that are socially necessary for which funding has already been secured from international lending institutions and for which the contracts have now been drawn. The House will therefore note that, in support of an expanding capital programme, \$103 million in project financing is anticipated to be raised this year.

We anticipate as well, Mr. Speaker, having access to \$30 million in financing through the Investment Sector Loan which has now been concluded to support the Government's financial programme and that we will draw \$57 million in new commercial loans to help underwrite the deficit.

The point I am coming to is simply this, that the way in which a Government of a country finances its deficit is a critical part of its financial management programme. The manner of financing proposed for this year's deficit compares favourably with the manner of financing for last

year's deficit to such an extent that we are perfectly satisfied that the larger deficit will not give rise to a balance of payments problem precisely because of the manner in which it is going to be financed.

We are also satisfied, Mr. Speaker, that the larger deficit is not going to create problems in relation to private sector access to domestic credit again because of the manner in which the deficit is going to be financed. I would like quickly to explain to the House why this is the case. We anticipate, as I said, to expand capital programmes but to have at the core of the capital programme projects that have already procured long-term concessional financing from abroad. Therefore, of the deficit of over \$270 million, \$103 million is project financing, \$30 million is investment sector loans and \$57 million is new commercial loans.

I want the House to understand the significance of that, Sir. We are seeking this year, despite a larger deficit, to reduce the amount that Government is going to borrow commercially to support its activity because, as you will recall, Sir, in the last two financial years, 1994 and 1995, the Government borrowed \$99 million commercially to help finance its deficit. Last year it borrowed \$80 million. We are seeking to reduce the amount Government **borrow**s on the commercial market to finance its operations. Although there is a larger deficit, it will give rise to less new commercial debt, hence there will be no long-term debt problem ensuing from this. We will also draw down the Investment Sector Loan to support the project loans and we will use less commercial debt than we did last year.

It is also important that the House understand that over the course of the last two years \$102 million in domestic financing has in each year been used to support the deficits. This year we are going to have a larger deficit but it is intended that domestic financing of the deficit should decline from \$102 million to \$88 million for the next financial year. So, Sir, I have set criteria by which financing of the deficit should be judged. If we are going to have an increased deficit, it should be financed by greater access to project soft loans. We should mitigate the borrowing through commercial loans and prevent a foreign debt service problem and, in the context of a situation where there has in recent times been tight liquidity in the local banking system, the Government should not be seeking to expand its recourse to domestic financing at this time.

Our proposed financing for the year, Sir, and I want to stress this point because it is at the centre of our financial strategy for the year, our strategy is that we are going to have a larger capital programme. We are going to have a larger overall fiscal deficit but we will be giving priority to project financing of the deficit. We will be drawing down on the IADB Investment Sector Loan. We will be using less expensive foreign commercial debt

and we will be using less domestic financing to create the conditions under which the private sector of the country can have continued access to enlarged resources so they can expand their own investments simultaneously with the Government's expanding powers.

Now, Sir, it is in the financing of the estimates that we are sure that what we are proposing will give rise to sustainable economic growth and recovery. We are not indulging in luxury projects for which financing has not been secured. If you would peruse the Estimates, Sir, you will find that we have taken projects that had been conceived before for which financing had been identified and, in some instances, have restructured the projects. We have restructured the financing and we are now putting in place a capital programme for which foreign financing is secure and for which agreements are in place.

As I said, Sir, we are trying to temper how much we need to borrow abroad, despite the fact that the deficit is increasing and we are also seeking to temper how much we have to borrow locally to meet a larger deficit because we recognise that Government should not preempt private sector access to domestic credit. We feel that, given the manner in which our financing is conceived, you can have a simultaneous expansion of private capital expenditure and public capital expenditure in the country leading to increased general economic activity without a balance of payments crisis, without a foreign debt crisis and without crowding out the private sector.

I am **commending** these Estimates to the House, Sir, because this is my conception of how we should approach this matter. I am encouraging the House, with all the politics aside, to let us look at this because in many respects some of these projects we are executing **are** projects we have inherited from a previous administration and are supporting, for example, the sewerage project, because they are necessary for the health of the country.

We are also, Sir, providing funds for the expansion of the airport and the seaport. The airport, I think, is going to take about \$10 million in funding this year and nobody who is concerned about Barbados' economic circumstances now and in the future could be opposed to our spending funds this year to complete the feasibility study and the designs for the expansion of the Grantley **Adams** Airport and the expansion of the seaport. Those **are** some of the projects that explain why our capital programme is to expand from \$121 million to some \$235 million, and explains why our overall spending will rise from \$1.354 billion to just \$1.500 billion.

11.35 a.m.

I am urging to the House that this represents financial prudence. It takes into account the best interests of this country. The proposed expenditure is not intended

to finance an expansion of the bureaucracy. We **are** making strategic investments in the key sectors of this society where the investments **are** needed. We are now being judicious in how we are financing it. Mr. Speaker, Sir, we now have the contracts in place. We **are** ready to move. We have the project units in place and I can commend these things to Parliament on the grounds that the framework is in place for us to make these moves at this time. That, Sir, covers my evaluation of the financial parts of these Estimates of Expenditure.

But I have to deal with some of the issues that have been forecast, particularly by the Opposition, as they bear upon Government's intention. I really must say that the Estimates of Expenditure are the only **part** of the budgetary process that is required, by the Constitution, to be undertaken. There is no requirement in the Constitution that a Minister of Finance must have a Budget in the sense in which an ordinary man understands the Budget to mean presentation of Budgetary Proposals. But the Constitution of Barbados requires that Estimates must be laid in this Parliament and that the Minister of Finance must bring an Appropriation Bill to ask for authority to spend funds on things other than statutory activities. We should like to bring them together.

But the point I am making, Sir, is that it has been customary in the past, because we **are** involved in a constitutional process, a process **defined** by the Constitution, for us to contain our debate on the Estimates in this Parliament. I notice that the Member for St. Michael South Central who likes to speak at length understands the propriety.

I have never heard **him** before speak about the Estimates in advance because this is something which is required by the Constitution. But we have now had a very interesting situation where the Estimates have been judged, in advance, and have become the centre of a Press conference as if it is not something that the Constitution says to do in here.

I have, Mr. Speaker, Sir, to react to some of the issues that have been cited by the Opposition as representing their position. The first issue is that these Estimates will lead to a creation of jobs. To that, I am pleased to plead "guilty". Last year, you will recall, Sir, the Democratic Labour Party sought to take us to task on the grounds that we had said that job number one was jobs and that we had brought to this House Estimates in which there was no provision for jobs at all.

Indeed, a young economist who serves in **the** Other Place went on record as saying that the Estimates of Expenditure would lead to massive lay-offs, because he had seen that, under one Head, the Ministry of the

Civil Service, we had cut the allocation for Other Personal Emoluments. He did not understand however that we had transferred them to other posts. Last year the word was no jobs from the Barbados Labour Party's Estimates.

This year, we **are** being charged with creating jobs. I **thank** you for charging us for creating jobs. I want to plead guilty.

*Aside.*

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Who did it, Sir? The Honourable Member for St. Lucy asked me, "Who did it?" There is a young economist who has "submerged" to the top in the Democratic Labour Party. He used to function in an obscure section of the Central Bank dealing with fiscal issues. But he has suddenly become the expert on all matters.

Last year he advised the Honourable Member for St. John to say...

*Aside,*

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Speaker, Sir, last year he went on record as saying that if we were to remove duties on manufactured commodities and agriculture that it was going to lead to a collapse of manufacturing, that you had to keep on duties on manufacturing inputs because, by forcing them not to be able to sell on the local market, they would have to export. Sir, my grandmother would call any such person "a foolish fellow".

I would want to say, on this occasion, if ever I have a wayward or retarded son, Sir, I would call him Clyde Mascoll.

*Aside.*

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: The fact is that, year by year, before we can come to this House and discuss these Estimates, we are bombarded with foolishness.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Mr. Speaker, Sir, on a point of order. I believe the Honourable Member has moved way out of the bounds of propriety in terms of parliamentary language and also in terms of reflecting on a person who holds the honour of sitting in the other Chamber. I think it is a disgusting display, Mr. Speaker, Sir, and that the Honourable Member should be asked to withdraw those comments to keep the standard of this debate high and have them struck from the record.

Hon. Sir HAROLD St. JOHN: On a point of order, Sir. My point of order arises out of the point of order raised by the Honourable Member.

The use of the words, "disgusting display" is offensive. So that while the Honourable Member can charge the Prime Minister and ask Your Honour to rule on the conduct of the Prime Minister, I have no problem with that. But I do have a problem with a statement from the Leader of the Opposition where he says that an Honourable Member has indulged in a disgusting display.

Mr. SPEAKER: Let us proceed, please. May I remind Honourable Members to use language to suit the dignity of the House. Proceed, please.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Sir, the fact is that the Government's expenditures...

Rt. Hon. L. E. SANDIFORD: On a point of order, Sir. I would wish to indicate that, on reflection, the Prime Minister would wish to withdraw his remarks relating to retarded children. It is insensitive to the people of this country and to our outlook for the health of all Barbadians.

I am sure that, on reflection, he would wish to withdraw the statement.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Sir, I withdraw the remarks. I want to proceed, Sir.

Last year even before the Estimates came to the House, the public was being told that, despite the fact that there was increased provision under the Other Personal Emoluments vote for the payment of wages and salaries to the temporary staff of Government, we were being told that the Estimates were going to lead to a massive number of lay-offs in the public sector. We were held up to unreasonable strictures, when a little analysis by a professional economist would have led him to a different conclusion, they were held up to the public ridicule that having promised to increase jobs, we had brought Estimates to the House that were going to lead to massive lay-offs. That was the pre-Estimates commentary by the Democratic Labour Party.

This year the tack is different. The tack now is we are now creating jobs. The Government is to be condemned for creating jobs. The Democratic Labour Party has to decide if it has a policy and if it has a clear position on the question as to whether jobs can be created or not.

I do not apologize, Mr. Speaker, for the nature of the jobs to be created on both the current and the capital account as a result of the expenditures this year, Sir.

We are, for example, creating jobs by the establishment of a training unit and that is one of the new lines of expenditure in these Estimates. We all speak in terms of the need to relieve Barbados from the problems

of flooding. One of the areas in which new jobs will be created, Sir, is by Government creating a new drainage unit that would involve 90 people being employed, not when the rains are about to fall but on an ongoing, permanent basis assisting us in relieving the problem of flooding in this country. I do not and will not apologize for creating jobs for that purpose.

One of the major areas in which increased employment is being created in these Estimates is, as Members who if they wish would appreciate, is in the National Insurance Department where the increase in the Other Personal Emoluments is some eight hundred odd thousand dollars to staff a seriously understaffed department. We are also creating new project units where none have existed and where the absence of project units has held up the discharge of Government projects. There is another increase, Mr. Speaker, as well in the Other Personal Emoluments Vote because this year, for the first time since 1992, people employed at the NCC and all of the other Government departments who were on a 3-day week will be put back on a 5-day week.  
11.45 a.m.

I do not apologise to the Democratic Labour Party for restoring those two extra days for persons who were the victims of their stabilisation measures. I cannot.

Mr. Speaker, in the Ministry of Economic Affairs as well, we have strengthened the project management capabilities to the point where we can now even send some of the staff of Economic Affairs who are trained in project management to other Ministries to allow staff in the other Ministries to get on with their task. Those are the areas in which the jobs have been created. We have secured the jobs of people at the NCC but it is a cheap form of politics to come one year and accuse the Government of having Estimates that do not deal with job creation and the next year to come in the context of an unemployment situation in this country and try to hold a Government up to ridicule because the Government has been able to put in place a programme of job creation that coincides with financial prudence and bears relationship to what is the best development of the country.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, I really had to speak in this manner because we have made a valiant effort to deal with the problem of employment creation in the 18 months in which we have assumed office in this country. We have been judged by a standard that would say that we had to create 30 000 jobs in a flash. We have refrained from crash programmes. Mr. Speaker, Sir, we have brought back some of those persons who were laid off by the Democratic Labour Party, especially in the Ministry of the Public Works but the important point is that we now have a programme of capital investment in both the public and the

private sectors that will allow the level of employment in this country to be substantially reduced. Sir, I really must say this for the benefit of the Member for St. Michael East because he has been the harshest critic of Government where job creation is concerned. I remember, Sir, that he is an expert on this matter because I remember, Sir, I saw him once at your school and I remember there was an essay he was asked to write: To what extent is the unemployment problem in your country a population problem? He came up with the answer, Sir, that whereas the unemployment problem is not a population problem, had there been no population there would have been no unemployment.

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order, the Honourable Member is on record as saying that he is going to tell two lies on me. That is one.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: I want to repeat it, Sir. It was a long essay, Sir, the substance was that whereas unemployment is not basically a population problem, had there been no population there would have been no unemployment.

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I would like to ask that that be struck from the record. It is a lie. It is unfortunate that the Honourable Prime Minister would indulge in that kind of behaviour but it should be struck from the record.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Speaker, Sir, it is a matter of record that I got it from the O'Level Institute.

Mr. SPEAKER: Mr. Prime Minister, the Honourable Member for St. Michael East is objecting. You are stating that it is a point of fact. I did not hear whether the Honourable Member is disputing that but would the Prime Minister withdraw please?

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Speaker, I really cannot withdraw, because it is not only a matter of fact but the Member for St. Michael East has a very defective memory because I remember him once coming here and saying that champagne was served at a meeting of the Public Accounts Committee. He said so on the Floor of this House and I cannot trust him now and I could not trust him then.

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: On a point of order. I did not say that champagne was used at a Public Accounts Committee Meeting. I said that after the meeting it was used downstairs in the then Leader of the Opposition's Chambers. That is all I said. I did not say it was used at the meeting, but the champagne was used.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Speaker, Sir...

Mr. SPEAKER: Order, please.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. I represent the constituency in which resides the O'Level Institute. It is an institution of the highest repute. I feel that the record ought not to show that that sort of behaviour, as outlined by the Prime Minister, could form any part of serious teaching at that institution for which I have responsibility. I believe it should be struck from the record.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Prime Minister, continue please.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Speaker, Sir, the Government has also been charged with having nothing to help the small black businessmen of this country and I really must respond to that because the Estimates for last year, as indeed the Estimates this year, Sir, commit the Government to fully funding, as we have fully funded, a new secretariat on small business associations of this country. In fact, Sir, the President of the Small Business Association welcomed it as water to the lips of a man in the desert.

We have also honoured our commitment to provide \$2 million of financing for a venture capital fund for the Small Business Association and we are now **working** with the Association to make sure that those funds are used appropriately for new investment activities for the benefit of employment creation among the foreign business sector.

The Government of Barbados, Mr. Speaker, has also agreed to a Gems of Barbados Project that would involve a large number of small hoteliers who are in debt to the BDB to constitute a company called Gems of Barbados to give them common management and we are committed, as I said in last year's budget, to allow \$10 million of the Public Enterprises Fund to be used for the purposes of the refurbishment of the small hoteliers on the south coast of Barbados.

We are also **working** with the Small Businessmen's Association. There are some entities that would not want to be part of it. The option is for liquidation and I will come to that too because the Democratic Labour Party, Sir, cannot at one and the same time quarrel with us for wanting to liquidate the properties who owe the BDB and then in the next breath, Mr. Speaker, criticise us for trying to create companies that would make sure that those persons who owe the BDB are not liquidated. They want to have it both ways. So that, Mr. Speaker, Sir, some are objecting to their properties being part of it, and if they are not part of it, Sir, they will have to find a way of settling with the Bank. There are others who are enthusiastic in **working** with the Bank to have common management, common reservation systems, common systems of

management of supplies and so on, and the Government stands committed to providing \$10 million of the Public Enterprises Fund for that purpose. In addition, Mr. Speaker, the Ministry of Economic Affairs is working with the Small Business Association as well to secure funds under the Multilateral Investment Facility of the Inter-American Development Bank to further spur on the development of small businesses in this country. Our commitment to fund the Secretariat of the Small Business Association is in the Estimates again. We have already given the money for the Venture Capital Fund. We are working with them to make sure that the funds are properly used and we are **working** as well, Mr. Speaker, to realize the funding for the refurbishment of the small hotels and increasing funding for **micro-enterprises** through the **Multilateral** Investment Facility.

11.55 a.m.

So that phrase should be recognized as the nonsense that it is from a Party that is in the habit when it has nothing else to say of always accusing the Government of not liking small black people. Mr. Speaker, the most ridiculous charge that has been levelled is that the Government is doing nothing to help those who have been marginalized or dislocated by the structural adjustment policies and the **stabilization** policies of recent years. Sir, for the Democratic Labour Party to accuse this Government of not doing anything to help those who are marginalized or dislocated, who were the victims of their Party, causes one to call to mind the example of an arsonist who immediately after setting fire to a man's house lambastes the Fire Service for arriving at the scene of the fire in too tardy a period. That is the only equation that one can sensibly equate that. It reminds one of an arsonist who burned down a man's house and then lambasted the Fire Service for not coming to the scene of the fire quick enough, because there are large numbers of people in Barbados, Mr. Speaker, who truly were the victims of the DLP Structural Adjustment Programme.

Sir, there were those who were sent home that we have now started to **bring** back at the Public Works, but we are now being lambasted by the Democratic Labour Party because we are increasing public sector employment to try to accommodate some who were sent home by them. There are those, Sir, who were on a 3-day week that we have now put back on a 5-day week but we are being criticized by the Democratic Labour Party for not dealing with those who were marginalized or dislocated by the Structural Adjustment Programme.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, the biggest institution that took perhaps the worst lash from the Structural Adjustment Programme by the Democratic Labour Party was the Queen Elizabeth Hospital. I know the Member for St. Michael West is very often lambasted. But if you were to compare the allocation in 1994-95 of \$58 million with what

was provided before in previous years over \$65 million, you will see that the Queen Elizabeth Hospital and its capacity to discharge its responsibilities to the suffering of this country was one of the areas in which the greatest marginalization and dislocation took place. We have increased expenditure and we are proposing to increase expenditure on the Queen Elizabeth Hospital from \$58 million voted by the Member for St. John in 1994-95 to \$70 million this year to enable the hospital never again to be chronically short of resources as it was made to be under the Member for St. John. I want to stress that, Sir.

*Aside.*

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Well, the Member for St. Michael West obviously was not in a strong enough position then as now to convince the Member for St. John about anything far less the maintenance of adequate levels of resources for the hospital. But, Sir, I want to make this point in general that when you check these Estimates of Expenditures you will find that we have on the Current side provided for increased employment and the payment of wages and increases to those who are now employed. We have increased our allocation to everyone of the institutions that function within the social sector of Barbados, whether it be the Child Care Board, Welfare Department, National Assistance Board, National Training Board, or the Hospital. We have increased our allocation to all of the educational sector. We have, Sir, expanded the allocation by way of payments in cash to Welfare recipients and, as our resources allow, we are surely but incrementally dealing with the problems of those who have been marginalized by the Democratic Labour Party Administration.

Sir, there is one small project that I should like to invite the House's support for in this year's Estimates. It has been a long time since we have visited the structure and the functioning of the social sector of Barbados. We have had the same Welfare Programmes in place for the last 10 years and the time has come for us to have a complete review of the functioning of our social welfare institutions and their complete overhaul. There are funds provided in this year's Estimates to do precisely that. So that we anticipate, within the course of the next 9 months, because the work has already started, that we will have a blueprint for the radical re-ordering of the social sector and its institutions so that we can truly bring to bear new policies and new instruments to meet the needs of the needy in the society.

We have also been lambasted by the Leader of the Opposition on the question of the future of the Barbados Development Bank. Mr. Speaker, even if there was not an Investment Sector Loan in place or conceived, the

Government of Barbados or whichever Government it is would have had to radically restructure the Barbados Development Bank. For sometime now, Sir, the Barbados Development Bank has been trading as an insolvent institution to the extent that its accumulated deficit is far, far in excess of the capital of the institution. The Bank is in no position and has been in no position for sometime now to meet its financial obligations to its creditors. It has been in no position to raise new loans and indeed, Sir, so extreme has the situation been that, far from any Government of Barbados being able to inject new capital into the Bank, one of the obligations of the Government of Barbados as we will see shortly in the course of the next week is that we have in part to assume some of the responsibilities for meeting the obligations of the BDB to its creditors and repayment of its debts. So that the argument for the need of restructuring the BDB is not in doubt. The institution has been insolvent for sometime and it cannot continue to trade as an insolvent institution which is unable to meet its financial obligations. Nobody is going to put new loans in an institution whose accumulated deficit so far exceeds its capital. As I said, Sir, the Government now has the responsibility of having to inject funds, not to allow it to lend more, but to now pay the creditors of the BDB now.

12.05 p.m.

Now, Sir, I am charging that the Democratic Labour Party before it left office, or persons representative of the Government of Barbados under the Democratic Labour Party administration, agreed with the Inter-American Development Bank that the Barbados Development Bank should cease lending operations and that it should be liquidated within a year. I say that, Mr. Speaker, without fear of contradiction. A team from the Inter-American Development Bank visited Barbados on June 7, 1994 and it left an *aide-memoire*. I know the Democratic Labour Party's officials like to say that *aides-memoire* are things agreed to between Government officials and institutions, but the evidence is that even the Right Honourable Member for St. Michael South, who has gone on record in this House previously saying that he did not see any *aides-memoire*, used to see the *aides-memoire*. They used to be submitted to him and he used to approve them.

Rt. Hon. L. E. SANDIFORD: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. Each Member who makes a statement in here is responsible for the veracity of that statement. The Prime Minister has just said that I said I never used to see *aides-memoire* and I do not recall ever making that statement. Unless the Prime Minister can supply information where I said that, he should withdraw the statement. I am asking you to ask him either to supply the information when I said it or... I do not recall ever making that statement, Sir, because I have seen some *aides-memoire*. I have never said that, Sir.

*Aside.*

Rt. Hon. L. E. SANDIFORD: But he has said I am telling lies. Every time he gets up to speak he says I am telling lies, and he has just said that again by implication. Mr. Speaker, I have said on more than one occasion that you have to protect the rights of Members. I am not going to allow anyone, least of all the Prime Minister, to continue to say I am telling lies.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Speaker, it is like the sugar industry. It is like the Human Resource Development Loan. Coming out of the 1991 election campaign two *aides-memoire* that were drawn up between the World Bank and the Government of Barbados, were disclosed, that committed the Government of Barbados to a number of structural adjustment policies. The Honourable Members for Christ Church West and Christ Church South spoke on them in here and the Right Honourable Member for St. Michael South got on the Floor of this Parliament and said it had nothing to do with him, that those *aides-memoire* were drawn up between the institutions and junior members of the Central Bank. That is in the record of Parliament. We were in here. Can't you remember?

Rt. Hon. L. E. SANDIFORD: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. I have asked the Prime Minister to supply information, as he stated quite patently and transparently that I said I never used to see *aides-memoire*. What he has just delivered himself of is no supply of information and it has nothing to do with his original statement. He has said that I said that I did not see *aides-memoire*. I have said I have never made that statement and what he has come up with now is some kind of tendentious statement, some kind of tendentious comment, which bears nothing to the point I have raised. He is saying that I am a liar and I am not going to allow him to get away with that, because he has done that on a number of occasions.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Speaker...

Mr. SPEAKER: The Honourable Prime Minister, please. Do not let us get embroiled in any matters of semantics. You heard the Right Honourable Member.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Speaker, I cannot say he is a liar because I cannot read his mind so well, but I am going to stand on this, because this was one of the chief debates that took place in this House after the 1991 elections, how much the Honourable Member for St. Michael South knew before the election of the state of the economy and what he had agreed to. He came to this House, challenged by the Honourable Member for Christ Church West and the Honourable Member for Christ Church South, and said that all the *aides-memoire* that had been drawn between the World Bank and the IADB were

drawn between those two institutions and junior officers of the Central Bank of Barbados. He said that on the Floor of this House.

Mr. SPEAKER: The Right Honourable Prime Minister, please.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: He can't change now, Sir. He said that.

Mr. SPEAKER: The Right Honourable Prime Minister. The point you just referred to, what the Right Honourable Member is stating is that earlier you said that he had stated that he did not see any, and you are saying now that according to the records of the House he did see a particular one. Of course, what the Right Honourable Member is saying is that your original statement which stated that he had stated that he did not see any is incorrect. You are saying that your statement, which refers to the record of the House, and your statement which is referring to a particular statement or matter in the House is supportive of the first statement.

*Aside.*

Mr. SPEAKER: Please, Mr. Prime Minister. What I am suggesting to you is that the original statement you had made is not supported by the second one. I am not asking you to withdraw the second one, because the records of the House are there and we could ask that the record be checked, but the first statement, Mr. Prime Minister, where you stated that the Right Honourable Member had stated that he had not seen, that is the one I am asking you to withdraw.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Speaker, if you want me to withdraw it, I will withdraw it, but I will stick to my statement. I want to say that all of the *aides-memoire* that were drawn up under the Democratic Labour Party's administration, we had been led to believe, were drawn up between international institutions and junior Government officials, as once stated on the Floor of this House by a Prime Minister, were *aides-memoire* that were all seen by the Ministers involved. I am also charging that when the Right Honourable Member for St. Michael South said that the *aides-memoire* with the World Bank were something left to the province of officials, between the World Bank and the junior officers of the Central Bank as he said in here before, that it was not true.

I have warned them that I have now carefully searched all of the files dealing with the Government of Barbados' negotiations with the World Bank and the IMF, because we had been led to believe that the *aides-memoire* were just between officials and that the Ministers were not involved. He knows what I am coming to do, but I

have warned him. He knows of a letter of June 2, 1992 written to the Chief of the Caribbean Division of Latin America and the Caribbean Region of the World Bank, signed by a Mr. L. E. Sandiford thanking for the prompt submission of an *aide-memoire* to him, that was supposed to have been a transaction only between the junior officers of the Central Bank...

Rt. Hon. L. E. SANDIFORD: What the Prime Minister is saying, he has not withdrawn graciously, he made some comment, if he has to withdraw he will withdraw. That is not a gracious withdrawal, Sir, and I do not think it complies with your ruling that he should withdraw it. Patently he should withdraw the words and pass on and continue then to prove that I was not a liar. I have never said that I never saw *aides-memoire*, and what he is now quoting corroborates what I said. He is quoting something to say that I saw an *aide-memoire*. He is confused in his thinking, Sir, very confused.

Mr. SPEAKER: The Right Honourable Member, the Prime Minister has withdrawn. Could we proceed, please?

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Speaker, I am carefully laying a case. No officers of the Government of Barbados, under this administration or any other previous administration, could go and commit policies on behalf of the Government of Barbados without the knowledge and the full support of the Ministers.

*Aside.*

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: The Honourable Member for St. Michael West says that is what I think. He is saying that again because the impression was left to be drawn that all of the *aides-memoire* with the World Bank were things that the Government of the day was not aware of, that junior officers had gone and got themselves involved with them. That was the defence by the Right Honourable Member for St. Michael South when he was charged by the Honourable Members for Christ Church West and Christ Church South that he knew in advance everything that was happening with the World Bank.  
12.15 p.m.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I am dealing with the BDB, and I am saying as well that the previous Administration was party to a meeting in June of 1994 between officials of the Inter-American Development Bank and that an *Aide-Memoire* representing undertakings given at the meeting was drawn. The *Aide-Memoire* says:

"Representatives of the Government of Barbados agree that the Government should divest its interests in both institutions namely the BDB and the BNB as soon as possible. Owing to the different conditions facing the 2 banks the time frame to accomplish each would be different.

(A) The BDB would cease operations immediately and be liquidated within one year."

Sir, this was agreed to by the representatives of the Government of Barbados and the Inter-American Development Bank at a meeting in June of 1994.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. The first point I want to make is that nobody on this side ever said that the Democratic Labour Party did not agree to the closure of the BDB. The point that is being made is that the Cabinet of Barbados said that the BDB must not be closed unless an alternative institution is put in place immediately to save those businesses and provide a window of opportunity for new businesses in Barbados. That is the decision which the Cabinet of Barbados took. No IADB representative sits in the Cabinet of the sovereign Government of Barbados. So you can read all you want. That is not relevant to decisions which we took on this side.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I am not even going to ask for the statement to be withdrawn, because I just want to chronicle this matter. The Member for St. John was the Minister of the Cabinet who was authorised to be responsible for the financial sector knowing it formed part of the negotiations with the Inter-American Development Bank, he more than anybody else in Barbados. As the point man in Cabinet, he was familiar with all of the discussions that went on with the IADB since 1992 in relation to the future of the BDB and the BNB.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Mr. Speaker, I want the Honourable Member to make that document a document of the House so that it is available, and so that the full contents of that document including the alternative proposals which were put to the Government of Barbados are made available to the public.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Speaker, Sir, the public is now being led to believe, arising from the statements of the Leader of the Opposition, that he never agreed to the closure of the BDB. I am glad he has spoken, Sir, because the Democratic Labour Party agreed to the closure of the BDB. I will also agree that since 1992 the discussion about the closure of the BDB...

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: On a point of order. The Honourable Member if he is going to make that statement must produce the evidence that the Cabinet of Barbados agreed at that point prior to the conclusion of the negotiations to the closure of the BDB without putting in place immediately an alternative institution to cater to the needs of those people serviced by the BDB.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Speaker, a large number of options were being discussed without a conclusion being made in relation to what would happen to the portfolio of the BDB. Mr. Speaker, it was decided that the Bank would be closed that it would cease operations, but the Democratic Labour Party never made up its mind.

*Aside.*

Mr. SPEAKER: Order, please!

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Speaker, by June 1994, a series of options were still being discussed.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Mr. Speaker, I draw to Your Honour's attention page 382 of Erskine May's Parliamentary Practice which states:

"A Minister of the Crown may not read or quote from a despatch or other State Paper not before the House unless he is prepared to lay it upon the Table."

I bring it to Your Honour's attention. Unless the Honourable Member is prepared...

Mr. SPEAKER: Please. Honourable Member, I thank you for bringing such to my attention but the Honourable Member is still continuing and I didn't get the impression that it was his intention not to lay it.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Speaker, I am going to lay the case very carefully. The Democratic Labour Party agreed to a number of things, that operations should cease immediately, that the Bank should be liquidated within a year and that a number of options should also be considered; but they were in the process, the matter having been started in 1992, and in 1992 the Member for St. John was put in charge of the financial sector programme and the options were still being considered.

At one stage, he was considering amalgamating the BNB with the BDB. They were also of the view that the loan should be auctioned off and we came in and found those things still up in the air and the document that I will make a document of the House will confirm that discussions were still continuing as to what they would do. We have come in and we have made the decision.

*Aside.*

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: He is causing the public to feel that the decisions we have made are not decisions that allow successive entities to arise out of the old BDB and that is what I have to correct.

*Asides.*

Mr. SPEAKER: Please! Please! Do not shout across the Floor, please. Don't forget I have the Rules here and they make sure that I have the power that this House will be conducted with the dignity it should have.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I want to put the case very carefully and I will do so despite all the interruptions from that side.

From 1992 the Member for St. John had to do with a situation where the BDB was recognised to be insolvent and they agreed to close the BDB. As of 1992 he was flirting around with a large number of options to deal with it. He is now charging that we have closed the BDB without putting anything in place to assist persons who may want to have a development fund and I am saying that is the misconception that I need to correct. I need to say to the House, Sir, that we have agreed that, rather than liquidate all the loans of the small hoteliers on the South Coast who owe the BDB money, we have engaged the services of consultants and they have prepared a new proposal under which a new company will be formed called the Gems of Barbados and that the small hoteliers who owe the BDB will be allowed to commit their properties as part of equity to BDB, that we will help to convert some of the loans owed to the BDB as equity in the enterprise and that we will also commit \$10 million to assist those small hoteliers to refurbish their plants. We have done that since 1994.

In my Budget of last year I also indicated that that part of the BDB portfolio that was in the nature of current and performing loans would be the subject of a study with a view to our forming a new development finance institution.  
12.25 p.m.

I want to report to this House that, arising out of that undertaking, we would not let the BDB die without creating some successor institution. We approached the Caribbean Development Bank for funding to assist with a study for the transfer of...

*Aside.*

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: This is not old talk. The CDB provided us with funds. We have undertaken a study with a view to having the performing loans of the BDB together with new injections from the Government put into a new development institution as I said in last year's Budget.

*Aside.*

Mr. SPEAKER: Please. The Honourable Member for St. John.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: He had 1992 to 1994 to deal with the matter. He was the Minister of Finance required by his Prime Minister to solve the problem and he left without solving the problem. I have taken decisive action.

*Aside.*

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Come and talk about it in here.

*Aside.*

Mr. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member, please. Order, please. Both members, please.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Speaker, he can go to a Press Conference and make wild statements but let him come in here and say it.

We have also taken undertakings that were falling outside the area of the hotel sectors but are in the nature of non-performing loans and have determined that we are going to set up a loan work out on the equity, write down some of the value of those loans and work with the people who owe the Government to try to make the enterprises become viable again. Government would have an arrangement in place to convert some of the debt into equity as far as the loan work out agreement is concerned.

I must also stress that last year in the Budget I brought to this House a proposal to allow...

*Aside.*

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Do not talk about the bomb shell. I have a bomb shell to drop upon you.

*Aside.*

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Not after lunch, but in the Budget.

*Aside.*

Mr. SPEAKER: Will the Honourable Prime Minister address the Chair, please?

#### SUSPENSION OF SITTING

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that this sitting be suspended until 1.30 o'clock in the afternoon.

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

*The question that the sitting be suspended until 1.30 o'clock in the afternoon was put and was resolved in the affirmative without division. Mr. SPEAKER suspended the sitting accordingly.*

12.30 p.m.

#### RESUMPTION

Mr. SPEAKER: This sitting is resumed.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Speaker, I was on the point of dealing with a number of issues raised on the structure and content of this year's Estimates of Expenditure. The Government of Barbados is under an obligation to provide resources to deal with the needs of the Barbados Development Bank in settling its obligations to creditors. I would just like to say that the restructuring of the Barbados Development Bank is a necessary but difficult exercise.

I want to repeat, Sir, that whether or not there was an investment sector loan, the Bank would have had to be restructured because it was bankrupt. The point of my intervention was really to correct what could have been a misconception, that this administration is seeking to close the Bank without putting successor institutions in its place.

I do believe, Mr. Speaker, that I have satisfied the purpose of establishing that the last administration left office agreeing to close the bank but without settling any of the options it had under discussion since 1992. That, Sir, is all contained in this *aide-memoire* which I am pleased to make a document of the House because that is the point. The establishment and agreement on successor institutions to the BDB is not something you can just do overnight. It is something that a previous Minister of Finance had under consideration for two years. It was the subject of a number of studies. A number of alternatives were discussed. We have inherited the problem and we have substantially moved the process forward by fixing our solutions rather than just discussing the options. The House needs to be made aware that there will be successor institutions to the Barbados Development Bank to allow for continued funding to the small business class of this country and not only will there be successor institutions, but we are also assisting the small business class directly by providing funding for its venture capital facilities.

Mr. Speaker, I want to move off because I intend soon to close my speech on this second reading. One broad issue that obviously has to be addressed is the extent to which these Estimates have been influenced or not by the work of multilateral institutions and, in particular, by the relationship between these Estimates of Expenditure and other things agreed to by the Government of Barbados in its discussions with multilateral lending institutions. Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition

unfortunately continues to try to create the most sinister connotations about the nature of Government's Investment Sector Loan with the Inter-American Development Bank.

I want to make a number of general points before I come to the specific issue I want to raise this afternoon. It is my belief, Mr. Speaker, that the Inter-American Development Bank means Barbados well. The President of the Inter-American Development Bank was a Minister of Finance of another developing country in Latin America. I must put on record the very clear position of the Government of Barbados that we have had only the most productive relationship between officials of the Government of Barbados and officials of the Inter-American Development Bank both in Barbados and abroad.

It is also my view, Mr. Speaker, and it is just my view, that were it not for the circumstances surrounding the termination of the previous administration's standby arrangement with the IMF, and were it not for a perception of the central controlling entity in Barbados responsible for setting economic policies, it might have been possible for the previous administration to have put in place an investment sector loan with the Inter-American Development Bank.

The previous administration must, however, remember that a lot of its difficulties with the IADB in arriving at their investment sector loan were in concluding a programme with the International Monetary Fund without giving effect to fundamental conditionalities that had been agreed to and then not subsequently honoured. The IADB was drawn into a form of relationship with this country that had at its core, if not mistrust, concern about the ability of the then administration to give effect to policy conditions and policy agreements in the absence of a formal programme.  
1.40 p.m.

I am satisfied, Mr. Speaker, and I say this not in flattery of any member on the other side, that if somebody else had been in charge of economic policy on the other side, Sir, it could have been possible for an investment sector loan to have been put in place. That is a fact. That is my perception, Sir. It is not something represented to me by anybody else.

But a hard decision came to be taken by the institutions precisely because undertakings were given by the Leader of the Democratic Labour Party at the time, and people said they had to hold Barbados to a harsh programme. Mr. Speaker, I do not speak idly in these matters.

The Inter-American Development Bank means Barbados well. They have been very flexible in the

conditions that they have allowed for the investment sector loan that the Government of Barbados has entered into recently. I would also want to say, Sir, that the macro-economic framework that the Leader of the Opposition keeps calling for is a rolling plan that we are updating. It is an internal working document. There are no quarterly targets to be met. In point of fact I can say categorically to the House that if there were a set of targets to be met quarterly, they would have been in the hands of the Leader of the Opposition long ago, given the nature of this small society, and they would have been made public long ago by the Leader of the Opposition.

But it is a flexible document in which there are only 2 specific conditions that have to be met by the Government of Barbados. One is that we would continue the tariff reduction programme as is built into our undertaking to execute a revised Common External Tariff, and we are doing that. The next is that we are obligated to give effect to the Incomes Policy Protocol that we have put in place with the social partners and we are giving effect to that as well.

But there are no other conditionalities in terms of putting new targets that have been agreed to. It is a flexible framework. It is not a financial programme in the sense of an IMF programme. The proof of it, Mr. Speaker, is that we are in the process, even now, of updating and changing the macro-economic framework in the light of changed circumstances.

Sir, the Democratic Labour Party through its spokesmen have made the point that there is no essential difference between the Investment Sector Loan as agreed to by us and the Investment Sector Loan that was being negotiated between the Democratic Labour Party Administration and the Inter-American Development Bank.

I have not made a lot of this issue today. But there is one fundamental matter that made all of the difference to us, and that was that we were not prepared to accept a programme, any Investment Sector Loan with the Inter-American Development Bank which had, as a pre-condition, that there had to be an enhanced surveillance facility programme in place between the Government of Barbados and the IADB as a basis for that programme.

On the face of it, Mr. Speaker, that might seem to be a small point, but you would understand how serious it is, Sir, when I make the following disclosure to this Parliament. The Democratic Labour Party was in the process of negotiating an Investment Sector Loan with the Inter-American Development Bank that had, as a pre-condition, that there should have been an enhanced surveillance programme in place.

Mr. Speaker, a lot of discussions took place between the Government of Barbados of the day and the IADB and reports were sent to Cabinet. I cannot make Cabinet Papers documents of the House, but I can say, without fear of contradiction, that in October, 1993, the then Minister of Finance reported to the Cabinet on discussions that had taken place the previous day with the visiting International Monetary Fund. It was reported that there had been some slippage in complying with the current IMF programme...

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I am rising on a point of order. I would be insisting that that document be made a document of the House.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I said that I cannot make a Cabinet Paper a document of the House, Sir, but I am reporting to this Parliament that on October 29 a report was made to Parliament. I am reporting what was done, Sir.

*Aside.*

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: I said I cannot make a Cabinet document a document of the House, but it is germane to this House as to whether or not Barbados should have entered into an Investment Sector Loan that had, as a conditionality, that they should have an enhanced surveillance programme with the IMF.

I just want to go on. It was a Cabinet decision.

*Aside.*

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: But I have said ~~that~~ I cannot make a Cabinet Paper a document of the House.

I am advised that a Report was made to Cabinet under the Democratic Labour Party's Administration on discussions between the then Administration and the IMF about an enhanced surveillance programme. I am also advised that the Cabinet submission stated that, among the matters discussed, was the recent performance of the economy, the IMF drew reference to certain financial slippage and among the matters discussed was an enhanced surveillance programme.

I am also advised that, among the matters raised in the Cabinet Paper on October 29, 1993, was the conclusion that the IMF officials had indicated that, in relation to the enhanced surveillance programme, the conditions that would apply to Barbados under such a programme would be even more onerous than under a stand-by arrangement. Mr. Speaker, Sir, I want to repeat that point. Because one of the essential differences between this Administration and the previous Administration was our insistence that we would not have entered into any investment sector loan

programme with the Inter-American Development Bank if one of the conditions of that programme was our having in place an enhanced surveillance programme with the IMF.

The previous Administration...

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I am rising on a point of order because it must be made clear ~~that~~, at no point, were the parameters of any enhanced surveillance programme put to me. Therefore I was in no position to judge whether it would be any more or **any** less onerous. We have not even **gotten** to that stage. It is academic.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Speaker, Sir, this is a point of very serious principle. One of the fundamental differences between the programme, as conceived and implemented by us and as was in the process of being implemented by the Democratic Labour Party was the question as to whether or not we are going to have an enhanced surveillance programme in place. I made it clear, from the outset, that we were not prepared to enter any investment sector loan, if a condition was that an enhanced surveillance programme had to be in place.

The Democratic Labour Party's Administration was in the process of dealing with an investment sector loan, in the context of a situation where the International Monetary Fund had already indicated to them that the conditions to be set out under any enhanced surveillance programme would have been even more onerous **than** the conditions that were set out in the 1991 stand-by arrangement. That is a fact.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, what are we here **talking** about? We are here talking about a Government that was prepared to have an enhanced **surveillance** programme with the IMF, as a condition for an investment sector loan that would have had conditions that were more onerous than those that led to the sending home of 3 000 workers from the public service, conditions that were more onerous than the cut of civil servants' salaries by 8%, and more onerous than **all** of the various aspects of a structural adjustment programme that we are now being told by the Democratic Labour Party led to the marginalization and dislocation of such a large section of this society.

That therefore has to be brought to the attention, not only of this House, but of the public, that we have saved Barbados by our negotiations from an investment sector loan programme that would have included an enhanced **surveillance** programme with the International Monetary Fund, that would have been, as far as the fund was concerned, more onerous than the **standby** arrangement. And that is a fact, Sir.

1.50 p.m.

When the Leader of the Opposition therefore tells the public of Barbados that nothing has changed in the nature of our discussions and conclusions with the Inter-American Development Bank he is misleading the public. Our getting the bank to agree that there should be no enhanced surveillance programme is a fundamental change.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: On a point of order, the Honourable Member is misleading the House. I have never said that in relation to the IDB nothing has changed. I said in relation to these Estimates, it is warmed over cold soup and nothing has changed.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I am saying that something very fundamental has changed. What has changed, Sir, is the fact that were the investment sector loans to have been concluded by the Democratic Labour Party there would have been an enhanced surveillance programme in place in Barbados...

#### *Asides.*

Mr. SPEAKER: Order, please. Honourable Members, please let us hear the Honourable Member who is on his feet.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Speaker, Sir, the Member for St. John gets very low and very personal when he comes under attack. Mr. Speaker, I am saying this to make the point that a lot of aspersions have been cast about the intentions of this present administration's investment sector loan programme with the Inter-American Development Bank. I just want, Sir, to state for the record that we have saved Barbados from having another bout of IMF medicine imposed upon it that would have involved an enhanced surveillance programme and entailed policies that were more onerous than those in the original *standby* agreement. The question, Sir, must necessarily arise, if the Democratic Labour Party were advised by the IMF that an enhanced surveillance programme would have entailed policies that were more onerous than the original *standby* arrangement, why would they have wanted to continue discussions with the International Monetary Fund on an enhanced surveillance programme knowing that the nature of the programme would be more draconian than the *standby* arrangement.

Mr. Speaker, when the Member for St. John rises to speak these days on the Inter-American Development Bank and the macro-economic framework I just want to say that I feel that I have, and my entire Cabinet feels that we have discharged our responsibility faithfully in saving Barbados from another bout of very draconian policies. The substitution of a macro-economic framework that has only as the conditions that we have to meet the implementation

of a tariff schedule and to carry out the purposes of an incomes policy, Sir, is far more beneficial to this country than the enhanced surveillance programme which would have entailed policies more onerous than the *standby* arrangement in the first instance. I give the House the assurance, Sir, that as the macro-economic framework is updated year by year, Members of Parliament who would like to see copies of them, Sir – because it is just a working document of the Ministry of Finance – are going to be entitled to see copies of it because it is a rolling macro-economic plan that has nothing whatsoever in it to hide.

I believe that the Member for St. John has a responsibility to tell this Parliament and the people of Barbados the conditions that were under discussion with the International Monetary Fund as part of an enhanced surveillance programme that caused the officials of the Fund to tell the Government of Barbados that an enhanced surveillance programme would be more onerous than a *standby* arrangement. I believe that we are going to carry out successfully the purposes of the investment sector loan and that the conditions for sustained economic growth have been established in this country.

I want, Sir, to speak to one final issue before I close. It has to do with the question of the introduction of a VAT into this country. Mr. Speaker, Sir, the Honourable Member for St. John cannot take any criticism from any source without getting very low and personal and he is there trying to...

Sir, I want to speak to the question of the introduction of a VAT. Mr. Speaker this will be the last year in which the Estimates of Expenditure will show revenues to be collected by law from things like consumption tax and certain other indirect taxes. We have now had detailed impact studies done of the VAT because contrary to popular perception, a lot of detailed analysis was not undertaken to truly measure the tax base against which a VAT would be applied, the incidence of the VAT on the respective sectors of the economy and generally, Mr. Speaker, to satisfy the Government that all of the issues raised about the yield of revenue from the VAT, its impact on the competitiveness of various sectors, its impact on prices and other key matters that have to be resolved, and those matters were not properly dealt with during the process of preparation for the VAT.

We have not had the benefit of assistance from the Fiscal Affairs Department of the International Monetary Fund and studies are being concluded, Mr. Speaker, that would allow us to be able, with greater levels of probability, accurately to measure the tax base against which the VAT will be applied and to measure its likely incidence on the respective sectors.

I should also make the point, the point that the intention from the outset was that some of the revenues that would be given up by the removal of consumption tax and stamp duty would have been recouped by the imposition of excises on certain commodities, but systematic work has not been done to measure the nature of the excises that would have to be applied against the commodities to make sure that the VAT yielded revenue equivalent to that which is now being raised by taxes that it was intended to replace.

We have now, Mr. Speaker, Sir, come to the point where most of the empirical matters regarding the yield of the VAT and its incidence on sectors has taken place, but more especially, Sir, that systematic work on the excise necessary to supplement the VAT, to create the revenue necessary to allow us to introduce the VAT, has been done. The VAT is going to be introduced during the course of this financial year for sure but I am saying that a lot of doubt still remains about the rate as proposed, and I am very serious about this, now that they have been able to measure systematically the tax base, a lot of doubt remains as to whether the VAT at the rate proposed and the excise in the manner as initially proposed would have yielded the revenue equivalent to the taxes to be given up. We might have, not to deal with the rate of the change of the VAT, but to deal with the structuring of the excise where a lot of work had not been done to be able to be sure that we can proceed without there being any sudden financial alarms arising on the VAT being introduced.

2.00 p.m.

Mr. Speaker, I think that I have successfully set these Estimates in the context of the Government's policy. These Estimates will allow us to underwrite a sustained economy of the Barbados economy. These Estimates are an embodiment of fiscal prudence. They reflect a deficit that will be financed without creating pressures on our country's reserves, that will not crowd out the private sector and will not lead to a savage increase in foreign debt. They are Estimates, Mr. Speaker, that have to be read in conjunction with the extent to which they will be a catalyst for the expansion of the private economy and we are satisfied that they will so do. Just as last year I was proud to be able to present Estimates that I thought were going to be instruments in helping us lay a stable foundation for this economy, Sir, I am now proud to commend to this House these Estimates as instruments that will allow us to be able to underwrite the sustainable development of this country. In that spirit, I beg to commend these Estimates to this House and I beg to move that this Bill be now read a second time.

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

Mr. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for St. John.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I want to begin this year's Estimates debate by looking at a few of the features of the 1995-96 performance of the economy and then go on to some of the features of this year's Estimates which may require my commentary.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, as we find in the pulpit every Sunday, the Officiating Minister normally takes his text from a part of the Bible. I do not want to be accused of sacrilege. I am not quoting from the Bible, but I want to take my text today from page 4427 of the Hansard for the session 1991-96 which, as you know, was cut short in 1994 and I am reading from the words of Mr. O. S. Arthur speaking in 1994. I want to read quite extensively from these passages because I want the full weight of the doctrinal changes which the Honourable Member for St. Peter has undergone in the space of 2 years to take effect. The difference in time between the Old Testament and the New Testament was many years. It took a long time for those final changes to take place. I must say that the Honourable Member for St. Peter has scored a record in that his doctrines, theories and philosophy have gone through such a dramatic change in a short period of time, Mr. Speaker, that it is almost unbelievable that the human mind can make such dramatic somersault.

I want to start on page 4427 and, Mr. Speaker, Sir, this is where I begin and I want you to reflect on these words when comparing the performance of the economy last year and particularly the information which is contained at the beginning of the Estimates and I quote:

"In the course of the last two Estimates, Mr. Speaker, the financing of Government's deficit was to be undertaken largely by the draw-down we were told of funds from the IADB, the World Bank and other lending institutions. We know what came out of that adventure. These Estimates are based again on the same precept that the Government this year is going to rely largely on access to funding from the multilateral institutions, in the case of the IADB by as much as \$73 million, to finance the Government's deficit. In the absence of a very clear statement from the Minister of Finance in relation to the present status of Government's negotiations with those institutions, Sir, we have no *prima facie* basis on which to say that these Estimates are different from those of the two previous years which had therefore reliance upon those institutions for the financing of Government's deficit.

I also want to make the point, Mr. Speaker, that in my judgment these Estimates are not likely to galvanize public sector activity. This is

largely because when we read the Estimates scrupulously most of the activity that will have a direct bearing upon the productive sectors still take the form of pre-investment studies or sector studies as is the Case of a sector study again undertaken in the tourism industry. This in of itself must be telling the House that Government has not yet made up its mind and agreed upon critical aspects of the adjustment programme to be executed at the level of the productive sectors which could improve the performance of the private economy of Barbados."

I want to go on now to deal with this issue of capital expenditure.

"Mr. Speaker, I have tried carefully to probe the Government's capital programme to find those elements of projected capital expenditure which in my judgment could serve as the foundation for galvanizing private sector activity and I must confess and I stand to be guided by the Minister of Finance and to be corrected on this point that a lot of the capital expenditure is capital expenditure to support projects that have been in the planning stage for many years. The road rehabilitation, the sewerage plant..."

Did you hear about them today? Sir, I want to quote. I do not want to **interrupt** my quotation with any parenthesis or **editorializing**. I quote:

"The road rehabilitation, the sewerage plant which we welcome and we support, but in terms of new, imaginative capital activity that can enhance private sector activity at this time and create the basis upon which the economy can move from stabilization to growth and adjustment, one examines these Estimates carefully but without seeing any serious commitment to such lines of economic activity."

*Aside.*

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Do I need to go on, Mr. Speaker, Sir?

"The Minister of Finance will also agree, in fact, he has said that one is presented here with these Estimates that indicate a very tight fiscal programme. Government is in fact not intending to spend on the current side in nominal or in real terms anything more than it spent last year. The critical point I am making is this. If you are constraining expenditure on the current side and if on the capital side you are making the execution of your capital programme dependent, as it was in the course of the last two years on your ability to access funds from the World Bank and the IADB, given what you know about

your relationship with those two institutions, you can possibly have overall fiscal contraction. You are faced also with the stock possibility as well of continued contraction on the capital side in the absence of a very clear statement from the Minister of Finance that all arrangements have been satisfactorily concluded to make sure that what has happened over the course of the last few years does not occur again. Therefore, Mr. Speaker, I say that if you are looking for these Estimates to galvanize and provide the basis upon which the Government can contribute to the improving of public sector activity, one will look in vain for them."

Then he said, "the second criteria as specified is what guided me in evaluating the Estimates is the question as to whether these Estimates addressed themselves to one of the burning questions facing Barbados at this time." I don't want to read more, I want to tell Barbadians that if you were to pick up a copy of the Estimates debate in 1994, you would see that speech there.

2.10 p.m.

I want to deal with this idea of financing and knowing whether funds were coming in from the IADB or not. At what point does a Minister of Finance know when he is going to access money from the IADB, the World Bank or the IMF? If the Honourable Member has a better judgment on issues like that than do the Ministers of Finance who served in the Democratic Labour Party, why in 1995-96 would our economist Prime Minister, who obviously has developed a wonderful relationship with the institutions and understands them a lot better than previous Ministers, make provision for example for \$44 180 646 in project funds from the IADB, together with \$10.4 million in funds for the ISL from the IADB, together with \$123 973 677 from the World Bank, together with \$200 000 from the People's Republic of China, together with \$3 548 451?

Mr. Speaker, we are not dealing with a Minister of Finance who is as bad as I was. He alleges that he has brought to the Ministry skills in forecasting. He has even added the letters "ed" to the word "forecast" to tell us that he "forecasted" on several occasions what the outcome of his economic actions would be. Mr. Speaker, I did not go to the 'O' Level Institute, but I know that...

Mr. SPEAKER: There is still time.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: ...if I went there you would tell me you don't add an "ed" to "forecast". Let us look at the forecast. He projected \$44 million, he got \$12 million. He projected \$13 million from the World Bank, he got nought. He projected \$200 000 from the Chinese,

he got nought. He projected \$3.5 million from the European Development Fund and he got zero. He projected \$666 000 from other project finance and got zero. He projected \$10.4 million for the Investment Sector Loan and got zero. But the Honourable Member has the temerity to say that the very basis on which he could not support the Democratic Labour Party's estimates in 1994-95 was that we had made provision for financing from international institutions and those funds would not materialise. So we have to reject his forecasting skills, we have to reject the analysis which he applied in 1994 as a basis for determining whether estimates are good or bad. I don't believe the Honourable Member would want me to, but how could I believe that he is going to get \$17.8 million from the Caribbean Development Bank? The People's Republic of China's contract was drawn, not yesterday, the Chinese loan of \$20 million was signed years ago. These are draw downs out of that same loan, there was about \$4 million left, and I am going to get to that, because the House was misled today on that issue of the Cheapside Market. The officials were trying to get us to finish the Education Headquarters project with the money that was left from the Chinese loan. On what basis, Mr. Speaker, could we accept that these Estimates are current?

There are many Ministers of Finance who have had agreements in place. They had one for the ABC Highway too and we saw in the newspaper "In The Bag". The Minister called down here and called all his Minister friends and said: "Man, I come through, I negotiated and everything is signed, sealed and delivered." By the time he got back to Barbados everything had been called off. The Education project was signed for, but the Minister by his own admission said he does not know if he is going to forge ahead in a relationship with the World Bank because he has to discuss it in April. April is next month, but would you believe that provision has been made in these Estimates, even before the meeting, for over \$10 million for that project? The World Bank has not agreed to what he says he wants, and yet he has made provision in this year's Estimates to draw down \$10 million. The only conclusion I can draw is that the World Bank official would be right to come here and believe that this is not a sovereign country, because the Minister of Finance has already said "I am accepting your \$10 million, I have factored it into the Estimates already and therefore I am going to agree with the terms and conditions which you put in place," by the analysis which the Right Honourable Member for St. Peter has put before the people of Barbados.

How could the Honourable Member factor in that \$10 million, based on his own approach to the Estimates? This does not make sense to me, Mr. Speaker. I would like to remind the Honourable Member that he is not running the 1993 Government. That came to an end. He has a fixation with what happened in October, 1993 and April,

1992. That Government was already run and it came to an end in June. It even came to an end before those meetings were held in Washington in June, 1994, in the sense that by then minimalist Government was in place and the instructions I had from the Cabinet were essentially minimalist: We cannot take any bold decisions, we do not have a mandate to undertake any major changes, and that is why when I came back from Washington I explained to the Honourable Member for St. Peter that by then Barbados was suffering from what I would call institutional fatigue. We had already thanked the World Bank and told them our relationship had ended, and they said: "Yes, let us part like friends," and we did. The IMF said: "Either you implement the following things and start to work on the elements of the ESAF, or we will abandon you too." And the IDB said: "This is the position relative to the ISL, we want the IMF involved." That is well known, but the Honourable Member for St. Peter would give you the impression that we had concluded agreements with all of them and he is bound by all of these decisions that were allegedly made as a result of an *aide-memoire*. What is an *aide-memoire*?

An aide-memoire represents essentially the Minutes of a meeting, the decisions taken. That *aide-memoire* has to go to the Minister, if he was not present, for noting. Or the civil servants will indicate the actions that are to be taken pursuant to that *aide-memoire*. What actions were taken pursuant to that *aide-memoire* in June 1994, I want to ask the Honourable Member for St. Peter? The BDB was not in any position to lend anyway to say that lending ceased is nothing big because the Government of Barbados and the Central Bank are the 2 shareholders of the BDB and unless somebody was going to make finance available to the BDB at that time BDB still could not lend. I never gave them any instructions to send in Receivers most of whom go into business and leave them even worse when they come back out. I never tell them to go after recoveries aggressively, particularly against business, and black businesses in this country, for which successive governments have owed them millions of dollars. That is one of the reasons why some of those businesses are collapsing and the Honourable Member for St. Peter knows about that. That is the concern I have, that I am not going to let anybody in Washington pillory us into shutting down those businesses.

2.20 p.m.

The principal concern that one has to have is that many of the people who have loans from BDB may have got them in the 70s and the 80s. Some of them are at age 55 moving on to 60. When the BDB sells out their properties there is no where for them to go in Barbados and it is that concern that I have about the BDB. It is the concern which the then Cabinet had.

All I am saying to the Prime Minister, and I am not responsible for what is reported in the newspaper. I

am responsible for what I said and you had a direct link-up to what I said because you summoned the Press to your office within minutes to respond to what I said. They went to Government Headquarters when they left down here, Mr. Speaker. This is unbelievable. I must congratulate the Honourable Member for St. Peter for that. If the Leader of the Opposition summoned the Press to ask them what the Prime Minister said so that he could respond I could understand; but the Prime Minister summoned the Press to Government Headquarters after my Press conference to ask what I had said so that he can respond to it. I am not running this Government of Barbados.

*Aside.*

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: We have no power in Barbados. Why would a Prime Minister want to bring the full weight of the Press, which his friends control, the state media, on an Opposition leader? Do you mean I am to say nothing in Barbados at all? Mr. Speaker, Sir, on that hangs another tale which needs to be told. There is style and there is style.

I am going to get to the BDB in detail, but I want to move on to some of the issues in this year's Estimates.

Mr. Speaker, let me start at the point of the institutions, because that is very important. The Honourable Member for St. Peter says that the IDB means well for Barbados. I cannot understand why we could not get him to say that in 1994 when we were having such a difficult time with the international institutions. This is what the Honourable Member was saying. This is what makes it so unbelievable. I am quoting from page 4762 of Hansard from Mr. O. S. Arthur who is now Prime Minister and Minister of Finance.

"I want, Mr. Speaker, in a very simple way, to deal with these three issues I believe this House has to focus on during the course of this debate. Have the IMF policies worked to the point where we in Barbados should repose any confidence in the continued adoption of IMF styled policies as the basis for our future economic development? Secondly, what is in it financially for Barbados? Thirdly, given what we know about the content of the reforms proposed as part of the policy agenda of the IMF and IADB, can we not conceive of and conceptualise a different development approach that must and has to be implemented at this juncture, given the glorious opportunities that even now await Barbados as a result of changes that have taken place in the international economy?"

That was the Honourable Member's advice to me and he elected not to take it. He elected to go back to the same

IADB which he characterised almost as a charlatan - later on in this debate and I will go on to deal with that. Page 4764:

"So, Mr. Speaker, the Government is committing this country to a development programme based entirely on IMF styled policies, World Bank styled policies, IADB styled policies that have not worked in return for no more than at the most U.S. \$35m spread over the next three years."

I assume he got more than us. He said we were only getting US\$35 million spread over the course of the next 3 years.

"How has this country been reduced!"

That was the Honourable Member for St. Peter in the Budget of 1994. The US\$35 million could not have referred to the IMF, because they had already lent. The World Bank relationship had ended so he could only have been referring to the IADB which he now says means Barbados well, wants to help Barbados.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, do you understand the nature of the change, the metamorphosis, which the Honourable Member has undergone? Do you know the Incredible Hulk on TV?

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: On a point of order, Sir, nobody then was made aware that all of the project loans as well as access to the multilateral investment facility depended upon there being an investment sector loan in place. If all that was involved was the investment sector loan, that analysis would stand; but we were not aware then that the Inter-American Development Bank had linked all of its loans to the productive sectors as well as access to the multilateral investment facility on which we could get funds for small businesses, even resource development. It was a misrepresentation on the part of the other Government that led to that position.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Mr. Speaker, that is fancy talk. Not even the Incredible Hulk when he is transformed into the Hulk would have come up with that theory. Let's understand what the Prime Minister is now telling this country, that the IADB type policies are acceptable - even though they have not worked elsewhere - since they are follow-on loans which are going to be available. Now I thought that an economist of his standing would look at the policies for what they are worth, not in terms of the money, in terms of the way they will transform the lives of the people he leads. I assume that that is what politics is about. I am not a technician so

I don't look at millions of dollars as the only outcome of a decision.

I thought the central and pivotal concern the Minister of Finance would have...

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Member is misleading the House. I have just spoken and I said in my speech that the Government of Barbados was not going to accept any Inter-American Development Bank that had in place as part of it any programme with the International Monetary Fund. That was our position and we have put in place a programme with the IMF that does not have an enhanced surveillance programme in place.

I have also made known to the House, Sir, that the IMF of the day told the then administration of the DLP that an enhanced surveillance programme would have been more onerous on the people of this country than the stand-by arrangement. So that is the difference in our approach. We will never accept an IADB programme that has an IMF programme in place and that is what we have agreed to.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Mr. Speaker, you said I cannot say sophistry. So I will say that is mamby-pamby. The IADB and the IMF and the World Bank, if they are not sisters, they have to be cousins. For any economist, anybody who functions in the international economic environment, to make a rigid distinction between the IADB without the IMF, if he said without an IMF programme – basically that is what the Honourable Member for St. Peter is saying now. But I was quoting from what he was saying in 1994 and it is always easy to *ex-post* facto rationalise when you are wriggling out of a position you took. You can find any reason to rationalise.

In this speech Mr. Speaker, I don't see the words "enhanced surveillance" appear anywhere. You can read the Honourable Member's speech and other in the early part where he deals on page 4764.

"... the question arises: what is in it for Barbados financially? As I pointed out earlier, the programme that the Government of Barbados proposes to enter into with the International Monetary Fund is a so-called Enhanced Surveillance Programme under which Barbados will get no funds from the International Monetary Fund but will be subject to the policies of the IMF."

His concern, then, was that he would have the IMF policies but not the IMF money. His concern in 1996 is that we

would get the IADB's money and therefore the policies do not matter so much. That is the only deduction that one can make from these somersaults. If the loan is big, take anything. If the loan is small, only US\$35 million, that should not be rammed down the throats of Barbadians.

He went on to say, Mr. Speaker:

"We on this side are also saying to the Government and the people of Barbados as well that the Government cannot expect the producing enterprises of Barbados, many of whom are facing bankruptcy, many of whom have had to **downsize** and send home people, many of whom cannot pay the bank..."

[meaning I assume the BDB and BNB as well],

"... many of whom have lost confidence on the future of this country to endure **anymore** IMF, World Bank, IADB styled policies in return only for U.S. \$35m over the course of the next three years."

I now understand. You see, sometimes you have to read the Member for St. Peter 2 years after he says things, because in this sentence there is a clear indication that if it was more money, if it was not just the little paltry US\$35 million over the next 3 years, you could take the policy; but once it is only US\$35 million the country, as some people would say and I don't refer to him, that you could sell the country for a mess of pottage, no matter how large that contribution.

I now understand the Honourable Member's philosophy on matters of this sort and will not read any further. Anybody who wants to do any further reading on the theories of the Honourable Member can find them in that Budget debate.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, we got no assistance from the Honourable Member for St. Peter. Now today he says that he could not have assisted us anyway because as far as he has now found out – this is two years hence – the enhanced surveillance programme was going to be more onerous than the stabilisation programme.

2.30 p.m.

*Aside.*

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: I do not think you understand what they told me because you were not there. You did not write the Cabinet minute. But I can tell you basically what the IMF said. I am not going to spend time on this. When the IMF came to a programme with Barbados that involved an alternative to an exchange

rate adjustment, the other two institutions gave their technicians a lot of problems. The Honourable Member for St. Peter must know this. The IMF technicians who designed the programme for Barbados without an exchange rate adjustment were pilloried and criticized by the technicians in the other two institutions because they felt Barbados needed fast track adjustment and we needed a devaluation of the Barbados dollar.

What the Fund was essentially saying was this. When you go to negotiate the Enhanced Surveillance Programme, there are two critical issues we want back on the agenda because we are going to be forced to put them on the agenda. One, we have to look at the appropriate exchange rate for Barbados. At any programme you go into with any of the international institutions relative to Barbados they are going to want to put the appropriate exchange rate on the agenda. That comes up first. If you can convince them – and the Honourable Member for St. Peter has been able to make some headway with the IDB because the IDB was very strong on that issue. That is why the IDB had to give themselves cover that if it does not go right the IMF is in there to deal with the macro-economic problems. They do not take responsibility for them.

Now, Mr. Speaker, the second issue which the Honourable Member for St. Peter can find in the files, because it was not hidden, is that the World Bank had funded a consultancy on the size of the public sector. Do not mind what they tell you now. The issues were higher than that. I would never have let anybody discuss with me the sovereign leader of the country just as none of your Ministers should be found outside these shores discussing the appropriateness of who is Prime Minister of this country. You would never find me at any IMF, IDB or World Bank table discussing domestic issues with them. It is none of their business. You may feel one individual is a problem. That is your concern, not mine.

Now, Mr. Speaker, the second issue was the size of the public sector and, as the Honourable Member for St. Peter knows, there was a view prevailing that there should be further downsizing in the public sector. Well, he has found his own way of putting it. In his letter to Mr. Iglesias the Honourable Member for St. Peter said that there would be a review of public sector current and capital expenditures...

Mr. SPEAKER: From what are you quoting?

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Sorry. I am quoting from the economic policy letter written to Enrique V. Iglesias on October 16, 1995.

Mr. SPEAKER: I believe that is already a document of the House.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: It is already a document of the House. It says:

"There will be a review of public sector current and capital expenditures. The programme targeting public sector enterprises for privatization, rehabilitation or liquidation, will continue."

That was the broad programme they had in place. What the World Bank and IMF wanted to do was to pin down the Barbados Government to specific reductions in the public sector.

*Aside.*

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: The Honourable Member for St. Peter can go. **Nobody** has anything to hide. Laying documents in here does not prove any remarkable thing. It proves that the negotiations were difficult. It proves that the country was suffering from institutional fatigue. It proves that the Minister of Finance went to Washington and had to come back obviously without a mandate because by then political events had changed.

When I was heading off to Washington the Honourable Member for St. Peter knows the No-Confidence Motion had already been undertaken.

*Aside.*

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: You would know because you were on the plane. You sat next to me and we had breakfast together. I would not tell anybody what you said to me and I hope you do not tell anybody what I said to you because I do not remember what I said to you judging from the licks in here the night before. But we had a very cordial exchange even though the night before the Honourable Member was at the height of her powers, most critical.

*Aside.*

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: She is helping the system, as she says. She did not get any help from me.

The Honourable Member and I travelled on the same plane and I think she knew that I was really going to do what you would call a mop-up operation, a courtesy call, thank you calls because there was nothing at that stage we could have done to advance the programme.

Now, the Honourable Member for St. Peter keeps coming in here and dropping documents from meetings I held in Washington. Those really have no validity at this stage.

*Aside.*

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: We had meetings on the housing rents again, you know. The files are there.

Mr. Speaker, you know what is remarkable? The Honourable Member brought two little files in here. I kept my files too. I cannot even lift this up now. All of this, all to no avail.

*Aside.*

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: When the Honourable Member for St. Peter comes to that task I hope he will understand what it is all about. We produced a document called the Structural Adjustment Strategy which sets out all of the issues. The same issues which the Honourable Member for St. Peter drops in here as documents and gives the impression he is now finding me out and making me out to the public with this **and that**, this document was laid. I can produce the information on each of them. I do not get into those theatrics because I have no desire to prove the Honourable Member for St. Peter to be a liar and I wish myself that he would get on with the task of running the country and not be sidetracked by the Leader of the Opposition.

*Aside.*

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: It is very good advice. Do not let me sidetrack you.

Mr. Speaker, the real point I want to make is that in the face of those criticisms which the Honourable Member levelled at us, he has made provision for \$10.4 million in these Estimates, that he is going to endure IADB policies for this year of \$30 million and the Honourable Member says they are mild. Now, Mr. Speaker, you know what I believe is unreasonable and unfair about this whole scenario is that the Honourable Member for St. Peter has produced the economic policy document. I asked about the macro-economic strategy framework. The Honourable Member now tells me it is a rolling plan. It must have rolled out of a window because my question was asked on a specific date. The Honourable Member for St. Peter cannot say that he does not know what I want. I want the document which accompanied the design of the ISL and the document which was sent to places other than the IADB for analysis or approval. In other words, the

document that went to the IMF is the document I want to see.

*Aside.*

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: It goes to the IMF. People who have never been to Barbados can see it but the Leader of the Opposition in this country cannot see it. We hear it is an internal working document. It changes every time the technicians meet. But the IMF has seen it and approved it.

*Aside.*

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: If you want to deny that, get up because you like to deny the **IMF's** involvement in things.  
2.40 p.m.

I will sit down if you want to deny it. The IMF has seen it and approved it. I will take my seat if you wish me to. I hope that all those who like to accuse me of distorting the public records... In September 1995 I made two statements in Washington which caused the Prime Minister great discomfort. The **first** is that I said that there was a link between the IMF programme and the IADB programme and that it would require some ...

*Aside.*

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: People put in surveillance. I never said quarterly targets. If you go and read the document you will see what I said. I keep all of my presentations.

The second point I made was that the Government's capital works programme was under executed and would **be** cut. Would you believe that the Honourable Member for St. Peter came in here today and **confirmed**, by laying these documents and by all that he said, that it was essentially cut?

*Asides.*

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Mr. Speaker, Sir, he made provision in the Estimates for capital expenditure of \$169 454 124. The Capital Works Programme came in at \$121 600 000.

*Aside.*

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: That is the revised Estimates.

*Asides.*

Mr. D. J. H. TROMPSON: Because he did not get the foreign financing, Mr. Speaker. That was in yesterday's paper. The Honourable Member just said it here. In the middle of the year he recognized that foreign financing on which the projects were based was not coming through and therefore he made the necessary adjustments on the Capital Works Programme.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. The member is seriously misleading the House. Sir, in relation to the execution of capital projects funds are only drawn down, as the member should know, on a reimbursement basis. The Government does not get a loan and you draw down the loan for a project. The Government executes activity it spends and then the funds are drawn down. So there was no under provision of capital of the loans. If you do not carry out the activity then you cannot get the reimbursement. The loans were not cut, Sir. There was a difficulty in getting contracts placed to tender for the same contracts particularly in relation to the Sewage Project. A project is cut if because of financial problems, Mr. Speaker, you have to say that rather than spend \$15 million you spend \$10 million. But in this instance, Mr. Speaker, there is no cut nor were loans under provided.

The member must not let Mr. Mascoll fool him all the time so. Lord, David! You were a Minister of Finance.

*Asides.*

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Mr. Speaker, as soon as you hear the Honourable Member with those long explanations and dancing around the issues, I know what the facts are. His response to me in September 1995 was, in fact, that far from the capital works programme being under executed, that he was going to bring new projects and there would be major capital works in 1995. \$121 million as against the provision for \$169 million! Capital formation was supposed to be at \$131 million and was revised to \$71.8 million. He has all kinds of arguments now about you only draw back the money later and so on.

But Mr. Speaker, Sir, the Honourable Member cannot fool me. As I said already, I was a Minister of Finance before the Honourable Member for St. Peter. We know that in managing the fiscal deficit there is a tendency to slow down and under execute the Capital Works Programme from time to time. And, Mr. Speaker, Sir, the Honourable Member, as I say, can dance around. The fact is that the Capital Works Programme, at the end of the fiscal year is under executed. This tells us that, unless these figures are

fraudulent and unless what the Honourable Member said in here is fraudulent.

The second point I made was that link between the IADB and the IMF and he started to get hot under the collar. Again he issued a statement from Jamaica which was incomprehensible on the radio, and issued about five different statements on the subject. But the simple point I was making is that the same macro-economic framework which the IMF would approve, which we now cannot see in this Chamber, Mr. Speaker, because it is an internal working document, required their approval and the Honourable Member for St. Peter, even when he revises it, because the IMF revises on a regular basis its targets for countries in programmes. They do not set up a programme at the beginning and force you to keep to all the elements of that programme. There is flexibility once you achieve, certain basic goals.

Anyway, Mr. Speaker, Sir, the Honourable Member for St. Peter wants to fool us again that he designed his own macro-economic programme. It found the approval of the IMF. For that he must get the eternal credit of the world community. As the Prime Minister of a developing country, he designed his own macro-economic programme, sent it to the IMF and they agreed with it. Either it means they abandoned their traditional theology, which is a credit to him, but when they abandoned it for us and decided not to force us to an exchange rate adjustment it wasn't a credit for us. But when he goes and gets his programme approved by the IMF, without an exchange rate adjustment, we can say comfortably it is credit to the Minister of Finance. But no such concession would have been given to the Democratic Labour Party. We were told all three institutions and their policies were injurious to the health of Barbados.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, I don't know but it is unbelievable. This is a sovereign Government and the Honourable Member for St. Peter **needs** to understand that we are happy when the Government of Barbados has the leverage and the clout in the world community, not only on economic matters. I am happy on the few occasions, and they are getting fewer and fewer when I hear the Minister of Foreign Affairs, I don't mean when she is contradicting the Prime Minister, I mean when she is saying something that makes sense about Foreign Affairs issues. I feel good that the country, on the world stage, is making a contribution.

*Aside.*

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: You don't feel good about it, Mr. Speaker? Well if you don't want me to say

that I don't feel good about it! I mean I was trying to give credit but I will withdraw it if you want me.

Mr. SPEAKER: ...words to when to the Honourable Minister says things that make sense.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: As opposed to what, Mr. Speaker, Sir?

*Asides.*

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. The Honourable Member for St. John is definitely misleading this Honourable House in a very serious manner and the words he just used should be withdrawn.

*Asides.*

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Apparently members don't want me to say that the Honourable Member says things that make sense, and therefore I withdraw that and if you want to strike it from the records, Mr. Speaker, Sir, you can. It wouldn't stop our friendship.

*Asides.*

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Mr. Speaker, Sir, do not let it get you down. Page 201. Now, Mr. Speaker, Sir, this gentleman was preferred. He brought major business skills into the Government of Barbados. He was coming from a big family owned public company which has assets, I just saw their report. I cannot remember what it is but the Honourable Member for Christ Church West is a Director of it. It must have assets **and/or** turnover in excess of Bds. \$150 million. He is paid the salary of a Minister, Mr. Speaker, Sir, and would you believe that only on this weekend I discovered that he is managing one of the smallest Ministries ever in the history of this country. Mr. Speaker, Sir, \$4.7 million and he is paid \$80 000 a year. There is no small business with a turnover of \$4.7 million that could afford to pay anybody \$80 000 a year to run it. 2.50 p.m.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, I want you to understand. He was supposed to bring into the affairs of Government, management skills for the operation of Government. He is running an office which, when I was the Minister of Finance, was run by a Permanent Secretary and two officials and we signed tax treaties, we travelled overseas on promotion and we engaged in exactly the same activity which is presently being undertaken. I need to ask why is he in the Cabinet. This is expenditure of the Government's money.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, in 1991 I received a call from the then Prime Minister asking me to serve in the Cabinet.

When I got to Government House to be sworn in he told me, I have chosen a small Ministry for you because you are a young Minister and I want to give you some experience and then you will move on to other activities.

The Child Care Board alone which was in my Ministry had a budget twice the size of this. It is an insult to the Parliament of this country, it is an insult to the people of Barbados. It is a complete example of the level of financial management which the Honourable Member for St. Peter is practising in Barbados today.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, I do not think that Goddards Enterprises could hive off a business small enough. They could not find a small enough interest in a business to put that Honourable Senator to run which would amount to \$4.7 million.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Speaker, Sir, the offshore financial sector is now the second largest earner of foreign exchange in Barbados. Are we to understand that the Member is saying that you can have a Minister of Agriculture to manage an asset that is earning less foreign exchange than the Ministry of International Business and a Ministry of International Business is not justified merely because it does not involve a lot of public expenditure. That is the argument, Mr. Speaker, and it is the most foolish argument I have ever heard in this country.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: When they were trying to justify the tourism salaries which again is going to be expenditure under these Estimates, we were told about the size of the tourism sector. But the offshore sector has not only now become the second biggest business because of the person he brought into the Cabinet. When I was the Minister for it, along with about 18 other departments, it was still then the second highest earner of foreign exchange. So what foolishness am I hearing, that the Honourable Member is going to credit to the new Minister that it has suddenly become the second highest foreign exchange earner in Barbados. The fact that he came to it means it is the second highest. I have never heard such ignorance in my life.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order, please.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: That same argument was applied to the people at the Barbados Tourism Authority, that tourism is the biggest so you have to pay them but it did not become the biggest under them. It was already the biggest so they were reaping the sweets for somebody else.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order, please.

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

*Asides.*

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Members, please... Honourable Member, you may proceed.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Thank you. Mr. Speaker, Sir, you asked me to rephrase it. I will then say that it is clear that the Minister is the hardest working Minister in the Cabinet: that was in the newspaper, and obviously the person who has brought the most skills, which none of the persons on the Back Bench possess. Imagine that this sector was already the Number 2 foreign exchange earning sector. There is nothing that anybody on the Back Bench could have done to stop that. Mr. Speaker, Sir, there is nothing you could do and I do not want to bring you in this debate because what I am speaking is generically. There is nothing any of us could have done to move it to number 3. The private sector together with some assistance from Government had brought it to that point. The mere fact that the Budget for this Ministry is so small tells you that it is an **area** of the economy that is private sector driven so you would not have much to do and I think that it tells me a story about the confidence which the Honourable Member for St. Peter has in the Members of the Barbados Labour Party. But it is not something that should rest lightly in here and I hope it will be taken up in other quarters during the course of the week.

Let us look at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, Mr. Speaker, Sir. The Honourable Member for St. Peter has made great store of this point.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I just want to correct the House about the motive of the Barbados Labour Party. On page 12 of our Manifesto, we said we will establish a new Ministry of International Business. We put it to the people of Barbados and the people of Barbados have voted for it because of the significance that we attach to the **area** of international business **and** not necessarily because of the amount of money that they have to spend through the Treasury to get international business growth. It is a Manifesto position on the part of the Barbados Labour Party. We feel that international business deserves its own Minister and we asked the people of Barbados to vote for that and they have done so.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Mr. Speaker, the holder had a chance for the people to vote for him twice and they did not vote for him.

Mr. SPEAKER: Could we proceed?

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Sir, the Manifesto of the Barbados Labour Party never said who was going to be

appointed into the Cabinet. We have a responsibility, in this Chamber, to ensure that the public is getting value for money. Mr. Speaker, Sir, if I am dealing with a Ministry which is the smallest Ministry in the Estimates, I am entitled to determine..

*Aside.*

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: It is the Ministers who are called to account in the Estimates, not anybody else, so nobody can tell me that I cannot deal with the performance of Ministers. That is what the Estimates is about. What foolishness am I hearing? All throughout my career people have been able to come in here and pillory and attack me for my performance as a Minister of Finance and now I am dealing with the smallest Ministry in the history of this country and a Minister earning \$80 000 a year to run a \$4.7 million Ministry, a person who has talents which could be deployed elsewhere, I assume, and Mr. Speaker, Sir, this is what passes for economic management in 1996. That tells me a story. I cannot tell you what message it sends to anybody else in here. I can tell you what I suspect is the message it would send to all of the persons who are not now in the Cabinet. I can tell you what message it would send to the young people in this country. I can tell you the message it sends to professionals. I can tell you the message it sends to me. I can tell you the message it sends to civil servants: that before 3 civil servants could get the offshore sector, together with the private sector, to this stage and now we are hearing the justification for hiving off a paltry little Ministry with a budget of \$4.7 million is because it is the second highest foreign exchange earner, to be put in the hands of a **man** who is not elected in this Chamber.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, that is what our complaint is about because it only struck me when I read through these Estimates. Mr. Speaker, Sir, let us go on to the Queen Elizabeth Hospital.  
3.00 p.m.

The Honourable Member for St. Peter came in here today and said that I provided \$57 million in 1994-95 Revised Estimates the actual expenditure was \$64 760 000.

*Aside.*

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary by and large which the Honourable Member brought was inescapable expenditure. The Honourable Member for St. Peter himself outlined that it was for inescapable expenditure. Therefore, any Minister of Finance would have had to bring that supplementary unless he

wanted to shut down the hospital. Do you know what is remarkable in 1996-97 that the Honourable Member for St. Peter said in moving the budget for the hospital? He said that he is giving us \$70 million. Now last year's Revised Estimates were \$67 124 839. So he is really giving them slightly over \$3 million.

Mr. Speaker, do you **know** what was cut? Not Personal Emoluments because we had a salary increase so you would expect that you have to pay a little more in the hospital. But look at Structures - 1996-97. He gives them \$700 000. For 1995-96, they got \$1.02 million. Well, let us go to Supplies and Materials. You always need them. That is \$7.5 million, Mr. Speaker. Maintenance of Property - \$1.7 million and it was \$1.93 million in Approved Estimates and \$1.831 million in Revised Estimates for 1995-96. If you look at Supplies and Materials, Revised Estimates \$7.7 million. He is giving them \$7.52 million.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, when I hear all of this pretty **talk** of \$3 million more for the hospital and if it was \$3 million that could have addressed the problems - that is something one needs to get to - then the Honourable Member for St. Peter had no problem. When you look at the philosophy which informs these Estimates and all of this **talk** about the social programmes, people in Barbados were having severe problems at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital. Mr. Speaker, none of that moved the Honourable Member for St. Peter into action. It was when the vote book did not correspond. Do you remember that? There was a problem in the accounting procedures and the vote book did not correspond. That galvanized the Minister of Finance into action. He stopped his trip overseas. He held a big Press Conference because the vote book did not correspond with the expenditure which the QEH was undertaking. The only conclusion that I come to, Mr. Speaker, is that more people could have been falling out of bed, bed pans could have been withheld, no more operations could have been **taking** place and none of that would have moved the Minister of Finance.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Sir, on a point of order. The Member is misleading the House. A large number of meetings concerning the management of the hospital in matters other than the management of the vote book were held during the course of the year. A number of meetings concerning the management structure at the hospital and the operation of the hospital in areas other than the vote book were held and also held under my chairmanship during the course of the year. It is totally misleading, Sir, for the Member to try to cast the impression that what has happened in the hospital arose out of some vote book. It is nonsense. It is irresponsible. It is wrong.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: I **am** saying this that the Honourable Member for St. Peter is interested in the

bottom line. That is his basic concern that the financial management is what propelled him into action. The human suffering did not propel him before. He never took any big tour of the hospital to see what was happening on the wards and so on. This is what precipitated the problem that the Queen Elizabeth Hospital needed a supplementary and the Minister discovered that it was more than what the vote book said and the Minister of Finance went haywire according to what was in the papers. He hit the roof or flew threw the roof and he went wild on the civil servants and summoned them to a meeting and read the Riot Act. He got rid of 4 people and sent them on Special Leave which will cost the taxpayers of Barbados every month until they are reassigned together with the people in New York who are being paid to stay home and a whole set of other people in Public Service who he has taken similar action against.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. I have not sent any public servants on Special Leave. The Services Commission of Barbados **has agreed** that public officers **can** be put on Special Leave on the advice rendered by the Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Health. I want the reference to the fact that I have sent anybody on Special Leave struck from the record because the Prime Minister and Minister of Finance has no authority to send any public servant on Special Leave. Sir, I am asking that reference be struck from the record.

*Aside.*

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Yes, I heard him.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Speaker, I am asking you to rule.

*Aside.*

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: The Government sent officers on Special Leave...

*Aside.*

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: I withdraw them, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Which ones, Sir?

Mr. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for St. John said that the Honourable Member sent public servants on Special Leave. **Please** proceed.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: On a point of order, Sir. It has been reported widely in Barbados...

*Aside.*

Mr. SPEAKER: Let us hear the Honourable Member.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: It has been reported widely in Barbados in the popular Press that the Prime Minister of Barbados had taken the bull by the horns and through the machinery of the Public Service had sent the 4 people on Special Leave. That is what has been reported. Furthermore, he is the Minister responsible for the Civil Service.

3.10 p.m.

Mr. SPEAKER: Please, that is no point.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: The Honourable Member now denies all the credit which the newspaper gave him for moving in and cleaning up the Q.E.H. "The Surgery." He decapitated it and now he is saying it wasn't he who did it. Mr. Speaker, Sir, this is unbelievable. Do you know what I am now hearing, that it was not the Prime Minister who cleaned up the QEHS? It is somebody else.

*Aside.*

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: I hope that he will continue to clean up the Head and he will get enough power when he is ready to clean them out too, because if that is the way they are going now and Ministers don't have any power, then they have the power to send them home on special leave. A Minister of the Barbados Labour Party sent home a head of a department since September 1994 on special leave and the Service Commission had to intervene in the matter. She is now back at work.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: On a point of order, Sir, the Honourable Member is misleading the Chamber. There has been no Minister of this Government that sent home anybody.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Mr. Speaker, the Minister purported to send home somebody on special leave. Let's move on.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order, please!

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Mr. Speaker, I look at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital and I see reductions over the revised Estimates for 1995-96 and I gave the 3 critical areas of need in the Queen Elizabeth Hospital.

I am not surprised at all that the Honourable Member for St. Peter comes in here on the defensive as if he is on the ropes and has to summon the Press to respond to me.

Look at the Rural Development Commission. This is another joke business, Mr. Speaker. Last year the Prime Minister came into this Chamber and said that the \$3 million that he gave the Rural Development Commission was just start-up money and that he would be making major resources available to the Rural Development Commission. Do you know how much he made available this year, Mr. Speaker? \$4 million. He went from \$3 million to \$4 million and that is the Honourable Minister of Finance's assessment of "major".

If I were in St. John now what could \$1 million do in terms of rural development in the constituency? We would give the Prime Minister full support for any effort to mobilise funds for rural Barbados so long as the basis on which it is dispensed is transparent and that raises concerns about the Rural Development Commission but we are not going into that yet. I have already started to send letters to them, because if you say you have a commission in place I want to know what are their plans in respect of rural Barbados, inclusive of St. John. As I said, I am going to send a copy of the St. John Development Plan so they can review those parts of it which were not introduced. I will send it to the Honourable Member for St. James North.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, we have to make a point about the treatment that has been meted out to different sectors in this economy. Let me give you an example of what I mean. The Prime Minister breathed fire and brimstone on the public service vehicle operators in the last Budget. He said he was imposing a punitive tax to whip them into discipline. Within days the measures were put in place. The necessary taxes were imposed. They were given short deadlines in which to pay them but they nevertheless complied. Let's come to the duty free sector.

The Rt. Honourable Member put in place a tax on the duty free sector. Mr. Speaker, Sir, I am still waiting to see the legislation. The revenue yield from that would be higher and what is worse is that the Minister of Finance knows that he is losing more money in this country from the illegal activities which are going on in the duty free sector because his own officials have said it where people who are not supposed to benefit from duty free shopping are benefiting.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, those people are immune for the time being. A whole year has passed and we are almost on to the next Budget and nothing else has been heard or done about the privileged duty free sector.

We were being pilloried. We were told that we empowered those people.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: On a point of order, Sir. The legislation to give effect to the fiscal proposal on the duty free sector will be coming to the House. I just want to say, Sir, it will be effective on the day of its implementation. I want to say, Sir, that I find it strange that when I sought to introduce the measure last year the Member for St. John spent the whole Budget lambasting my decision to impose a tax on that sector.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Mr. Speaker, Sir, if that were a point I would accept what the Honourable Member is saying. I have never been in favour of a tax on the duty free sector, but what I am saying is that the Honourable Member for St. Peter is discriminating in imposing a tax on ZR public service vehicles that was introduced almost immediately. All kinds of threats were issued in that sector of the community but in the duty free sector a whole year passes and that is not priority. We passed so many other little bits of legislation that do not have a fraction of the priority of that.

Mr. Chairman, Sir, if they are not paying the tax yet and illegal activities **are** taking place on both counts, the Honourable Member for St. Peter has taken no action. Nobody can come in here and say he is making any tax retroactive unless you bring it within the time provided for by law you have to introduce it as a new policy. I am not agreeing to the validation of it.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: A tax is collected under the provision of the Collection of Taxes Act from the date on which it is imposed. I did not announce a date for the introduction of it because we have to structure the tax. No tax had been collected from the duty free sector so there is no possibility of making it retroactive. None whatsoever. So the member is misleading the House and he misunderstands how the provision for the Collection of Taxes Act relates to the Budgetary process.

If you announce a tax to become effective on the first of April, you have 4 months within which to bring the legislation to validate the collection of income tax.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Mr. Speaker, Sir, the taxes were imposed in the last Budget. The public service vehicles tax was imposed to collect \$2.9 million. The tax on the duty free sector \$3 million. Both were imposed in the same Budget in the full glare and scrutiny of the public of Barbados.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, the minibus and public service vehicle operators don't have any intercessor to go and beg anybody to hold off and give them a chance but the duty

free people were finding their way into the offices of the highest officials of Barbados **making** a case for their imposition to be removed. Mr. Speaker, Sir, I am saying that if a whole year had passed, either the Minister did not want to introduce it and is practising a level of discrimination against sectors in Barbados and that it should have been even more significant, given the level of illegality which took place during the period of the Christmas shopping.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, I am not a policeman. I am not supposed to be the guardian of what is legal and illegal in Barbados. If it is illegal for the people in the duty free sector to be selling goods to people who should not benefit from them, why aren't they receiving the same attention that the minibus people, the ZR people, the ZM people and all of those other people are receiving? Why aren't they receiving the same attention as the vendors who are moved from pillar to post in this country under the direction of the Honourable Member for St. **Andrew**? That is why we had to register our complaint in the last Budget.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, it is crystal clear there **are** those who have found their roots and can receive the ear of the highest officials and there **are** those who cannot. That brings me to the BDB again.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, our concern is very simple. The BDB did its own restructuring proposal. I don't even know if the Prime Minister is aware of that. The BDB did **an** excellent one in terms of financing. It was not acceptable. But in May 1993 they did a proposal.

The BDB did not have resources to lend but what the BDB had was people who had borrowed money from it in the 70s and the 80s and some in the early 90s, although very few. Many of those businesses are 20 years old and we fear Mr. Speaker, in the Democratic Labour Party, that many of those businesses are going to be shut down.

#### **Aside.**

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: ... construction companies, small supermarkets and **m** any of those businesses deadlines have been set for example and I cannot declare an interest because I am not calling any names; but I have one client who was given to March 31, a man who just built a supermarket. In fact the day when the supermarket was opened it was such a strain on him that he collapsed. Mr. Speaker, that is one business which has until March **31st**.

In respect of the BNB, they have an aggressive collection programme. Some of their collections are against construction companies for which Government through

companies like Inversiones and others owe thousands of dollars. What I am concerned about is that there are 2 elements to it and I don't think the Prime Minister should feel that anybody is blaming him. It is part of the reality of what is going to happen if measures are not....

3.20 p.m.

Mr. Speaker, there are several cases of people who owe money to the BDB who are under threat of their properties being sold. I am not *talking* about any one individual case but I can give you several examples - construction companies, supermarkets and some small hotels which are not within the Gems of Barbados grouping. Some of those businesses are only now able to pay salaries and utilities. Many of those businesses are under threat of closure.

The reason why we are raising it is because of our concern about the impact of the closure of those institutions and that the Prime Minister will give some kind of comfort or commitment to assist those persons who will be dislocated. That is the only basis. Nobody is saying that he shut the businesses down but the Prime Minister is always so testy about criticism that he does not understand the point we are *making*. Obviously he believes they should be shut down because up to now he has not given us any plan to tell the BDB to put a hold and let us do an assessment, because they are still writing letters to people. The **BNB** which has had a very bad commercial portfolio, but which has on *its* books some very large businesses which employ hundreds of Barbadians, is also in that position.

Now, Mr. Speaker, there are two concerns we have. The first is that the majority of those businesses are black businesses and it creates a lot of resentment because once those businesses start to shut down the belief in Barbados is going to be that the people in the traditional private sector have access to resources, which is true, and that only one class of businessman in this country is being run out of business. It is that perception that needs urgent attention because unless the average Barbadian feels that he has a stake in this economy, that he has opportunity and that the actions of Government and others by not paying their bills on a timely basis are not going to end up shutting down the businesses of their parents and their grandparents or the business they start, we are going to have a major philosophical divide and social crisis. That is the first point.

The second point is that when we came to the issue of the closing of the BDB precisely this matter is what engaged our attention. It was always felt that the effort to collect would come before the alternative institutions were

put in place. Mr. Speaker, if you have an aggressive collection programme which is going to drive some of these businesses to go to the normal commercial banks in Barbados, or the other commercial banks, they are not going to get refinancing. In the hiatus many of them are going to go under. That is *all* we are saying. We are therefore saying that the Prime Minister needs to intervene to ensure that an alternative development institution is put in place to save those businesses which are worth saving and to provide new opportunities for those entrepreneurs who may wish to go into new business.

Now, Mr. Speaker, the hiatus which is there has already been identified by the Prime Minister. There is clearly a hiatus and we are only drawing this to his attention. The Honourable Member for St. Peter seems to feel that it is some kind of bitter criticism. But in preparation for these Estimates we met with the interest groups and I specifically raised the point with the traditional private sector because I made the point to the Private Sector Agency that at the end of the day they are going to feel the backlash when the perception exists in Barbados that black businesses, because of the closure of the BDB and the collection programme by the BNB, are being closed down and yet other businesses can access resources. I do not understand why it is that the Honourable Member for St. Peter cannot focus on the fact that we are trying to assist in the *process*.

#### *Aside.*

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Having that in writing does not make any difference. That does not mean anything. If I used to take your word or everything that is in writing we would not have anything to debate in here because everything you do is put in writing but when it comes to action it is something else.

I am saying that while the BDB is being closed down and the staff has been sent home that the alternative institution is not yet in place. There is no alternate institution in place right now and yet the BDB staff is already home, so what foolishness am I hearing about, "read the last Budget?" You think I could give it to those people who have been sent home from BDB or that I could carry that document called the Budget to a bank in Bridgetown to help refinance the operation of one of those small businesses? They would have to ask if I am going mad.

Anyway, Mr. Speaker, I raise it for what it is worth. The Honourable Member for St. Peter can take the point. I am saying that the Government needs to have a serious look at this issue and see whether resources can be devoted to that cause.

I am in favour of the \$2 million being given to the SBA. The SBA met with me leading up to the elections and I promised them the same \$2 million. The Honourable Member for St. Peter knows that. It was in the newspaper. What I am concerned about are the arrangements which are being made to disburse that money because it does not seem that many people know what those arrangements are, what is the criterion going to be, where is the money, who are going to be the trustees?

*Aside.*

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: They are being worked on but in the interim, as usual in Barbados, a lot of mistrust and confusion has developed. At the end of the day the Honourable Member for St. Peter will want to put the blame on somebody over here. But where money is involved you know what happens and therefore the Honourable Member for St. Peter needs to be exceedingly careful.

*Aside.*

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: But the individual is only being cautious. I am not in any embarrassing position. I am not any Minister of Finance now.

*Aside.*

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: As an attorney-at-law and if the matters cannot be approved, well so be. Anyway, if you want to get up and put that in the record, put it in. 3.30 p.m.

I am trying to discuss serious matters, Mr. Speaker, Sir. I am trying to discuss the terms and reference by which the \$2 million is going to make itself available! Trustees and things like that and transparent systems. A transparent system in Barbados does not mean that somebody who has had a business, which has failed before, cannot apply. A transparent system ...

*Asides.*

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: A transparent system does not mean that a person who has made an error in life cannot apply. It means that all of those people will be judged and treated with some level of equality, as long as they have good ideas and it looks like they have the ability to develop a sustainable business. A policy needs to be created. That policy needs to have some other elements to it. We agreed in here, and I want to hear the Prime Minister on this point, because he raised it in the 1994 Budget. We have discussed it in here on several occasions.

What is the nature of the arrangements which are going to be put in place to empower the vast majority of Barbadians and to give them a say in the economic decisions and participate in the economic wealth in this country? What is it that is going to be done? We will give our support to any efforts. In our discussions it amazed me, Mr. Speaker, Sir, to hear one of the major interest groups in this country at last telling the Democratic Labour Party that we need an affirmative action programme in Barbados to empower the majority of Barbadians.

*Asides.*

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Mr. Speaker, we need an affirmative programme in Barbados which is going to bring more Barbadians into the economic mainstream. I have already suggested to the Honourable Member for St. Peter that there must be a process by which Government's patronage, if you want to call it that, contracts for services by Government, must find their way into the hands of those small business people, who are capable, to improve their cash flow particularly where the Minister of Finance ...

*Asides.*

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON:... while giving them the opportunities for those contracts, divert their attention towards export earnings and to other kinds of economic activities, to improve the cash flow of the business and give them a head start in life. I am saying that we will support efforts transparently made by the Government to allocate a substantial portion of Government's contracts for services to small new emerging businesses in this country and the Honourable Member for St. Peter will receive our full support and approbation if he can identify that programme and put it in place immediately.

*Aside.*

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: What I am saying is ...

*Asides.*

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON:... I want the Honourable Member for St. Peter to understand the point we are making. We are with the Honourable Member if he is going to do it. The closer you get to certain five-year activities in Barbados, the less likely those things will be done in a transparent way. People will start to believe that it is only political **patronage**. Let us decide now that that programme is going to be identified and let us get it rolling because there is a major threat to those businesses right now. I am appealing to the Honourable Member for St. Peter. Existing ones are under threat and the ideas of young people who want to go into business are not

receiving the attention they should receive and the Honourable Member for St. Peter should be anxious to do this because, by his own definition and I always like to return to his theories, he said in the last Budget, I cannot quote, that he believes that employment creation comes from two sources and two sources only: the expansion of existing enterprises and the creation of new ones. He said that Members of Parliament must begin to focus on how we can create the environment in this country in which enterprises can expand and new ones can be created. He also said later on... I **think** it is a misprint. I do not want to misquote you.

*Asides.*

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: You said, "I do not know of any other way to create sustainable jobs than to have conditions existing in the country for enterprise to expand and new ones to be created." But that tells me something about your job plan because all the evidence, unless you can produce it in the Chamber, you might be able to, suggests that existing businesses are not expanding. They are in fact **downsizing**, restructuring, consolidating, and you have seen it in the Leo **Leacock** purchase. There is a whole set of scenarios with which you can identify it. So existing businesses cannot provide that impetus. What new businesses? I do not know of any new major businesses that have been established.

*Asides.*

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: But I am giving you the opportunity to respond. You have a chance to respond. If it is so, identify those opportunities. So it is difficult for me to understand how, on the Honourable Member's theory and with **the** threat of some businesses being closed in the next few months, this policy is going to function to create more jobs in Barbados. I will not be very long now, Mr. Speaker.

*Asides.*

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Let me get on, Mr. Speaker, Sir, to the issue of Cheapside Market. There was a long battle in the Ministry of Economic Affairs, Mr. Speaker, Sir, about the allocation of the balance of funds from the Chinese loan. The Economic Affairs officials wanted to finish the Ministry of Education Complex and we disagreed. Fundamentally, we said it must go into some kind of economic activity and the then Minister of Economic Affairs, the Honourable Member for St. Michael South, said Cheapside Market. Now he may not have had as elaborate a plan for Cheapside Market, as has been presented here, but it was clear that the balance of the Chinese money was to go towards Cheapside and other markets in Barbados.

Now I do not know what happened after that because, Mr. Speaker, Sir, we demitted office and to the best of my knowledge the issue was never resolved. The principle was that that money was not to go to expand the Gymnasium any further, that the Gymnasium could wait. That was my recollection.

*Asides.*

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Well, it was not to go to the Ministry of Education Complex. A part was to go to Cheapside.

*Aside.*

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Well, Mr. Speaker, Sir, I cannot account for that. What I can account for, because I remember revising this schedule in the Estimates. The Honourable Member for St. Peter will see Cheapside Market. It was not the Estimates but the Development Plan 1993 to 2000, page 267: 1995/96, \$2.5 million for Cheapside and \$1.8 million in 1996/97. You will notice that the Ministry of Education Complex was pushed way down in the priorities and was to be completed between 1998 and the year 2000. That was one of the conscious decisions that the Democratic Labour Party took. The Honourable Member said that he has put it towards Cheapside Market and he is entitled to do that.

I also want to deal with the question, Mr. Speaker, Sir, I think it is very unfortunate that even though we are hearing talk about an Energy White Paper, which was supposed to have been available to Barbadians months ago, according to the Parliamentary Secretary in the Ministry of Finance, unless he was **speaking** out of turn, and he may very well have been, but it is very important. This is 1996, we are moving into 1996/97. The Mobil Agreement ends in the **year** 2000 and the sooner decisions are **made** the better.

The Honourable Member for St. Peter hinged the economic success of this country on a low interest rate and a low energy prices strategy, which the Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central indicates was his original strategy. But it requires immediate attention. I would like to hear from the Minister of Finance what the position is going to be relative to the Mobil Agreement.

*Asides.*

3.40 p.m.

Now I am going to turn to a very serious matter, Sir; which has social implications: gambling. I am looking at the revenue to be realized from gambling in Barbados. Mr. Speaker, Sir, an article in Saturday's paper...

*Aside.*

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Let me deal with it because the present Minister of Finance has to be very careful about what is being put out in the newspaper. The impression was given in an article in Saturday's newspaper that the Minister of Finance is who approves lotteries. I want to make it clear that under the Laws of Barbados there is a Committee which comprises public officers, it has nothing to do with any politician. Nobody had to make any decision in the Ministry of Finance when I was there about a lottery. In fact I did not even know that there was going to be a new lottery until they started to advertise it and so on. The Comptroller of Customs has a Committee...

*Aside.*

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: I would not get to that because I do not think it should form part of the record but there are people who have their misgivings about it, even in the entities that are benefitting.

First of all let me make it clear the Minister of Finance does not approve lotteries. I am appealing to the Honourable Member for St. Peter, a lot of money is leaving this country and a lot of money is going into very few hands as a result of that. I must plead. To be entirely oblivious to it... Gambling does not interest me one way or the other. I have always adopted that stance. But the information which is now available to us tells us that there is something that the Honourable Member, if he has the power, under the Act, needs to do.

I want to say this to you. I have noticed it and I do not know if there is another subculture in this country. You come here on a Saturday, the area around here, the racing pools, the gambling houses, I have an office on Spry Street so I know. Years ago you could not get a park on Spry Street. Do you know you could come to Spry Street anytime now because people park their cars, go in buy a ticket and they leave? So if you remain on Spry Street long enough you can always get a park. The Honourable Member for St. Thomas would know because he owns a premises there which I used to block when I could not get parking before. The point is that it has the whole culture. When I walk from here over to Spry Street, the gambling and other activities that... I will end it there.

I also want to tell the Honourable Member for St. Peter because I think it is important. I am also seeing the women, who the child money which the fathers have, is being put into lotto and olympio and they have to hang around here on Fridays to try and hold on to some of that money before it goes into the machines. It is causing a

major problem in Barbados. I want to make the position very clear that the Honourable Member for St. Peter will have our fullest cooperation with any steps that he takes to reduce and mitigate the impact of gambling. We have noticed it and we are extremely concerned about it.

Let us move on land **taxes**. I have nothing to respond to because I have already made my response but I know that I never approved any programme for the aggressive collection of land taxes. We gave an amnesty as part of the IMF target. The Honourable Member for St. Peter will always know that collection of arrears formed a large component but there was never any major attempt to go out there and collect arrears. That is a new programme entirely undertaken by the Honourable Member for St. Peter. But the Barbados Labour Party has promised to abolish land taxes. If you want to deny, get up and deny it.

*Aside.*

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: But you were the leader when they wanted to abolish it. 1986 Manifesto. Well somebody else wrote the Manifesto other than the two of you all and I would be ashamed to think that that is so although it was a losing Manifesto and you can always opt out of it now.

*Asides.*

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: In 1991. I apologise. Upwards and Onwards.

*At this point Mr. SPEAKER left the Chair and Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER assumed the Chair.*

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: The shadow Minister of Finance then was the Honourable Member for St. Peter. The economic spokesman was the Honourable Member for St. Peter. The economic architect was the Honourable Member for St. Peter and has been since then and on page 9 of the Manifesto it says: "With immediate effect, abolish land tax on residential properties with a value not exceeding \$150 000. There will be a phased abolition of the tax on costlier residences". I thought this was a philosophical document. The Honourable Member, after the Barbados Labour Party told us they would abolish land taxes, now you are hearing that the Honourable Member for St. Peter, consciously, with all of his mental powers and faculties, approved a programme to increase the collection of arrears and it has brought significant impact because the Land Tax Department will not admit that it has had problems keeping records.

*Aside.*

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: It does? Well I **am** glad to see they **have** softened. But as you know, the onus is on the taxpayer to show that it was paid. I had to bring a Resolution because they were really humbugging. I have a case where I had sought tax relief for a pensioner in St. John from 1987. They have just sent her a Notice of Arrears, for years for which I had already obtained tax relief. So that their record keeping system needs to be improved and updated.

I do not know how much the Honourable Member has collected but there are many people who owe money at other levels, land taxes and other imposts to the Government of Barbados. Hold on to some of them too. Do not only unfair the pensioners and the people who have now bought properties and so on. Let us get our hands on some of the money which people who should know better and who earn the money are making. A lot of them get tax relief too. I have information on that.

You have bombshells to drop? If you want bombshells dropped in here I hope you do not get an egg on your face because I have bombshells to drop back. You know me. It is always tit for tat. You have things to say. I have my share of things to say too. What I **am** going to say very clearly is that some of those other persons who have been sheltering under the system, whichever Government is in power, that is the funny thing about it, attention needs to be paid to them.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I want to say at the end of the day that this Estimates Debate has to be seen against a background of the policies which the Honourable Member for St. Peter set out in his economic policy letter. It really concerns me that there are a whole range of issues in this economic policy letter for which the public of Barbados has not yet been given a full unmistakable...

*Aside.*  
3.50 p.m.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Well, you will have a chance to say that. I am asking. For example, what is going to be the nature of the privatization? What enterprises are going to be privatized? What will be rehabilitated and what will be liquidated? What is happening to the workers in those enterprises? What is happening with trade reform? There are a lot of things that have happened since the Government was considering its original trade reform measures. The Honourable Member for St. Peter knows what the position of other Heads of Government has been and many of them are not going to move as fast as Barbados intends to move. Well, I want to know what the position is going to be because it impacts very heavily.

The Honourable Member spoke about the VAT. I want to say this. If, with the concerns that the Honourable

Member presently has, the VAT can be introduced in October, I will have to rake my hat off to him. He told the private sector that it will be introduced before his birthday. I did know when his birthday was and I had to go and read his biography and find out.

*Aside.*

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: I **am** married to a Libran. My mother is a Libran. But I cannot find out what you are. You switch **from** one to another over the years. But we need a debate on these issues. We cannot have an Estimates debate in which the Prime Minister only responds to what I say. We must have a debate on the VAT and trade reform. We must have a debate on those issues and I will expect the Prime Minister even if I am not here to deal with them because I think they are very important for the development of Barbados. I never quarreled about that. I quarreled about the economy of language which we constantly use.

The Financial Sector Reform – The Budget debate is not a long debate. It is not a debate in which you can have an extensive discussion on these issues that are desirable. The Prime Minister has been bringing legislation piece by piece and I know that way the wheels of Government turn there is no other way to do it. But let us get a basic understanding of the inter-linkages between these various pieces of legislation which are being brought. For example, when we were in office, we knew that a Pensions Act would take a long time to enact and the Honourable Member for St. Thomas would know that as part of the Insurance Act we wanted to put in a whole part on pensions. You took it out and a lot has changed since then. But in my view the present interpretation of the Income Tax Act is causing hardship. As you know, I should declare an interest that the workers at BDB retained me, but it is not a political decision. It is an interpretation from the Inland Revenue and I am going to write to the Commissioner on it but I wanted to know what Government's view on the issue is before I do that if Government is going to change it and can make it retroactive. What you are having in Barbados is young, well-trained black professionals working in organizations in which they have no ownership being terminated and being entitled to pension benefits. They have sense. They are not idiots. Years ago people adopted the attitude that every black man who retired wanted all the money in his hands now and he will go and blow it. These people want to invest that money and get the highest yield possible and a lot of them want to invest their money in Government securities which is to Government's advantage.

Do you know what really amazes me and the Honourable Member for St. Peter is going to find this

out? Every time you come up against officials on this matter, they seem to have it in their head that the only thing a black man wants to do is to get the money paid from the plan and lick it out the next day, give it to a woman and buy a motor car. It is unbelievable. You go into meetings with these intelligent people, some of whom have worked in Wall Street, and the people will say, "all we want to do is get the best possible return. There is no reason why any Pension Committee or any group of people at the Mutual know better how to invest our contributions than us." The sooner that the legislation seeks to tailor to their needs the better and you will receive our full support if you can address that issue swiftly. I was going to raise it under the Income Tax but I will get to it again. I want to say some specific things but I did not bring them with me, but it is something that I think needs attention. Now that needs to be linked up with Income Tax policies and how you are going to treat deposit taking companies because the draft that is presently circulating is not going to be able to be introduced in that way. I believe that the volume of deposits from deposit taking companies is so substantial that you are going to have a longer phase out period. You also need to find an instrument which could be convertible and for which those funds can be easily converted. The design for that is something that people can do nowadays quite easily. We need that kind of debate because it is in all of our interest. The people in here do not own the duty free shops...

*Aside.*

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON:... when you are finished with politics and I am finished with it. But when we are finished and not only us, professionals and others, what is it that we have to show? Everybody cannot be an entrepreneur like the Honourable Member for Christ Church South. The Honourable Member for St. Thomas came from a long family history of a black middle class which had respect in the society. There are very few others in here who are the product of that environment. Now you do not have the time to run a business but the additional disposable income that you have when the month comes...

*Aside.*

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: He would not be able to run that. They would shut that down in no time at all and you will contribute substantially to shutting it down. But let us be serious. I want to warn the Honourable Member for St. Peter that the legislation will not be enough. It is going to call for major public relations and advocacy programmes. A lot of younger people may understand what it is about, but those who are not at the point where they have that disposable income to invest are going to be the people that you need to target that programme at. The Central Bank continuously resisted me and they will

continue to resist you. They are not going to devote a cent to promoting the object of saving other than for traditional things such as Government debentures and treasuries. They do not see any other creative way to encourage the public to save. They feel that the commercial banks should be doing that. But why should the commercial banks be doing that when they can give you 4 per cent on a fixed deposit? Basic economic sense will tell you that it will be high class ignorance to expect them to market your products which are more attractive than to market their products. So let us get to the reality on this. There is only one change agent in the financial sector and that is Government. There is no other change agent and the responsibility rests with the Honourable Member for St. Peter and he will receive our support. I am excited about the prospects for this financial reform and legislation. Whatever we can do to **speed** it up, we will help because I believe that it will transform Barbados and we are only in the fledgling stages. We have a lot more to do. But it must be done and Government must lead it.

This document tells us about some of the changes and that framework is broad. Can we get to some specifics at some stage? This debate may not provide the opportunity.

Land Use and Administration – I do not know what is in the back of the IADB's mind now. I know what was in the back of all of the institutions' mind on this issue that land should find highest economic use. Now we have had a big debate about the optimum level of sugar production in Barbados and the Honourable Member for St. Peter said that he stepped in to stop the closure of Bulkeley. You had all of that palaver.

4.00 p.m.

The facts must be clear. I want to know from Government in a clear, succinct way or from the Minister, what is your philosophy on this issue? I will tell you why.. I know that as Minister you will be turning down a lot of applications for developments in the agricultural sector. If you have a policy like that, **fine**. A lot of people come to me to do appeals and I know a lot of people are going to be watching the situation to see the kind of discretion that you exercise. Let us assume that that is so. The Honourable Member for St. Peter must also be aware that there is only going to be one way over time that you can liquidate the substantial sugar **industry** debt.

Where the technicians tell you it is non-arable and the Minister still adopts a rigid policy, that is very important for many of the plantations which exist and are not indebted plantations. Where they have made a major commitment to sugar you have to have a reason for it and you will also find some small holders sandwiched by sugar plantations which will never be back into sugar again with the mechanisation and the other techniques which are being practised.

I hope that thought will be given to that and that we would have a clear and succinct statement from the Minister. I have some questions about Four Square Factory. The Honourable Member will not answer it. The Government owns shares in BSIL. Let me tell you the reason why I ask the question. I see all this PR about Four Square Factory and vendors. I know those old tricks. A leopard does not change his spots. I know him better than you. That is the problem. The Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central and all of us over here know that gentleman better than you. Four Square Factory was owned by BSIL. At the instance of the BACT which now holds the BSIL debt, certain assets were put on the market or out to tender. Four Square Factory was one of them. BACT is the Agricultural Credit Trust which took over the BNB debt. Mr. Seale bid on Four Square. Government had shareholders who owned all the shares in BACT, the BAMC of which he is Chairman, which is a sister company of the BACT, and also shares in BSIL. Therefore, I am asking the Minister of Finance on behalf of the people of Barbados who are the shareholders to give me the facts. In particular, I want to know if the deposit has been paid on Four Square Factory. I am asking the Honourable Member for St. Peter whether that deposit has been paid. Even if it has not yet been transferred, the Government owns shares in BSIL and I want the facts regarding Four Square. I don't want the glossy public relations and I don't want anybody to make me think that they are helping black people as a means of deflecting me from accountability; because we had this story before that when some people are under siege they hold up 4 or 5 people that they helped and try to make the public think. "C'dear! He is a very nice gentleman, helping small black business people." Meanwhile, when you check behind the scenes there is a financial manoeuvre taking place which has the effect of impoverishing others. I want the facts on Four Square.

I am getting back to the Estimates. What is the perceived change in the methodology which is going to be used for Town Planning applications? I want to know if the Minister is of the view that, at the end of the day, in terms of his philosophy of management, that the Minister should be removed altogether from the process or whether the Minister should remain in the process. That is the question. There are different views. The older politicians represent the view that the Minister – not all, most. Those who have had long ministerial experience believe the Minister must have the power. There are more liberal views. Some people would say conservative views because the less they control may be seen as conservative views, that other decision making should be made. We want to know what the Minister's view is on that.

4.05 p.m.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I also want to know what reforms will be undertaken to spur on private sector

investment because the concept of a one-stop shop was also proposed as a means of taking decision making out of the hands of the Minister. I do not know if the Honourable Member knows that. An IADB official wrote a report and said that every conceivable application that has been delayed in Barbados is the Minister's fault. You go and read it for yourself, when, in fact, decisions only used to remain on the Minister's desk for a couple of days maybe. Other people encourage them to believe that, that the delays were not the officials but the Minister's so the conclusion was, remove the Minister from the process and you suddenly have a transparent, efficient process which would advance the interests of the public.

#### *Aside.*

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Precisely. You cannot get a decision out of those institutions in Washington on anything. All the old talk in the world and no decisions so I want to know whether that forms part of the decision. This is what this year's Estimates are about.

Mr. Deputy Speaker finally, the Honourable Member for St. Peter must not believe that because the economy is growing, because statistics show that jobs are being created and the pockets of poverty which exist in Barbados have been eliminated, they are still throughout this country areas in Barbados, in urban and rural Barbados, where poverty does not face citizens every day. There are still school children who cannot go to school because they cannot buy a pair of shoes. Therefore, I do not know whether these allocations are meant to represent serious attempts by Government to eliminate those pockets of poverty.

I would not want anybody to leave here today believing that this Parliament's concerns relate only to the financial environment and so on. There is still a lot of mitigation and redistribution of wealth which needs to take place in Barbados, some of which was postponed in the structural adjustment period and the stabilization period, but the opportunity is now there for Government to carry out a major programme in which redistribution of wealth and the elimination of poverty are at the centre of its agenda because we are seeing a widening of the gap in Barbados between those at the top, those who are involved in the mainstream of economic activity and those at the bottom.

As I say, in our daily rounds as parliamentarians one cannot miss it and one wonders how it is that in a country that was at the top of the human development index, in a country where we have gone through that stabilization period, and we are now, according to the Honourable Member for St. Peter on the point of takeoff, because the reforms have taken root, why are there still those pockets of poverty? There needs to be a major assault on the impact of drugs on our young. It is a serious matter.

I **am** not one for callousness. Sometimes, and in recent times, the Honourable Member for St. Thomas has come over a bit too callous. We have major social problems. We need people to be strong on crime but, as the British Labour Party has come out with a major document in England, we also need to be strong on the causes of crime. A society cannot solve its crime problems simply by saying we are going to hang people. A society cannot solve its problems by adopting tactics which, for those who are already involved in crime, are heavy-handed but is not addressing that large number which is going to move into and get involved.

I want to appeal to the Minister of Culture. I do not get into these matters. I try to stay as far as I can from certain things. I believe that you can only erupt once as a volcano. You know what I mean? You do not keep erupting, and life is funny.

The NCF has been associating itself with some cultural activities at the stadium and elsewhere. I believe that a bit more caution needs to be exercised where a state corporation like that is involved in giving support to those kinds of activities. I am not always satisfied, and it may be a decision of the Board of NCF, I **am** not attributing it to the Minister, but some of the activities that I see under the – I will have to get them – the sponsorship or whatever they call it, of the NCF, there are major concerns.

I believe in developing the talents of the citizens of this country, and the NCF says it is to the Ministry of Culture and the Ministry of Education, but we do not need to aid and abet a subculture which is going haywire. We also need to promote the positive aspects of it. I have noticed that even some of the reggae artists, Buju **Banton** now seemed to have found planet earth. After going haywire he has now recognised the importance ...

*Aside.*

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: That is a comedy show, if that is a major concern for Barbadians. I try to lead a life of example. If I fail then I have to take responsibility. I will get to that.

In my own constituency we have had three people this year who died as a result of direct violence, even cutting with a cutlass. Then the one in **Moore's Land** was a shooting and there was another in the space of three or four months. It has been **shocking**. These are people **killing** their peers. It is not necessarily drugs. I do not know what it is but it causes great concern and it is happening in the places where there is greatest poverty, where there is lack of direction and where, by and large, family life is crumbling.

We focus on the traditional family. The images we have of that family are not the images which people who still live in chattel houses in rural St. John have of family life and everybody is seeking to focus their social programmes on attracting the attention of the people who will support the Lion's Club, the **Kiwanis** and those organizations, meanwhile, at another level in this society attention ...

*Aside.*

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: I **am** not saying you should not support them. They are able to garner the resources of many middle class Barbadians but then those resources are not necessarily pooled and used in a way to give greatest advantage to those who are marginalised by the economic policies which have been pursued over decades. Any economic policy is going to produce some marginalisation. **All** economists know that the Honourable Member for St. Peter must know because when you give benefits to one sector another sector is going to become dislocated or challenged.

We need a strong commitment from Government to identify those pockets of poverty and to make real resources available, to identify a strategy to save those black businesses in Barbados which are on the verge of collapse and to give resources to new businesses, a strategy to mobilize the savings of Barbadians **from all** walks of life so that that money can then be utilized to the development of our country and provide for them a stable retirement when they reach age 65 or later. That to me is what these Estimates should address.

The Honourable Member for St. Peter should not get excited about a sound bite on television or what a reporter comes and tells him about what I said. Our focus is that these Estimates need to be based on that philosophy which you call social engineering which would take the society forward in a post-adjustment period and it is that that we are addressing. The reason why we met with the social groups in Barbados was not to curry favour. It was not to create any problems. It was to find out what their genuine concerns were.

*Aside.*

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: That is true. When we were in Government we met with them so it is just a continuing process. We found out some things about problems in the educational system. We found out about problems in the agricultural sector, the Small Business Association, the unions, the private sector and there was a vibrant discussion in which sometimes the members themselves did not agree. We **are** not coming here to put their views. If we find their views attractive we

respond in here or give them vent but the object is to promote a society in which all of the persons who have to play a role are involved.

It also helps the Honourable Member for St. Peter because very often unrealistic demands are quelled because contrary to what the Honourable Member may feel, we do not go and tell the people, "well, go and ask for more money." We tell them that the reality is that a Minister of Finance may have competing decisions to make and it is your task to elbow some room for yourselves in that decision making process.

There are certain agents in this country on whose behalf we speak. We know what our constituency is in the Democratic Labour Party. Our constituency is workers. It has always been and personalities are not going to affect that. We are still going to have a pivotal access and relationship with the workers' movement and I am glad the Barbados Labour Party is also recovering lost ground. We need to have parties in Barbados which focus on the needs of workers, respect collective bargaining, encourage workers to unite and come together for common causes. That forms part of our philosophy. Nobody is going to break up any relationship between us and organised labour in Barbados. We remain firmly committed to that.

We also remain firmly committed to allocation of substantial resources to the social sector in this country.

*Aside.*

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: It is not any new policy. The Democratic Labour Party introduced many reforms in the education and health sectors in this country. And we will support you wherever you make those allocations. We believe that economic policy and the style of management of a Minister of Finance must not only be propelled by the bottom line. So if the Honourable Member says he has a larger deficit this year, he is not going to find us jumping up and down criticizing him because so long as we feel the end to which those resources are going to be allocated, we will give support to those initiatives.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I believe I have come to the end of my presentation. I look forward to getting to the Heads. We are very anxious to discuss serious issues during this Estimates debate. For too long the debates have been bogged down with not addressing many of the major concerns on financial maners particularly since September 1994. It has been bogged down too much about 1992 and 1993 and all of that. They carried that on the platform. We are ready to advance the country and we want to discuss the substantive issues which form part of the philosophy and direction which the Honourable Member for St. Peter

alleges that he wants to carry this country. That is the debate we look forward to having in this Chamber. It can only rest on Government giving full accounting to the people, making information available and giving Members of the Opposition the opportunity to debate those issues in a serious way and not get bogged down in trivia.  
4.20 p.m.

I cannot commend these Estimates to anybody because there are based on the same theory on which the Honourable Member, himself said that we should not support the Estimates which is that some of the assumptions about financing are unrealistic. As the debate goes on, we will reflect on the stance that we need to take. But we certainly look forward to discussing the elements of this year's Estimates. Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES You will discover, that in due course, certain things. Mr. Deputy Speaker, when I was a boy, when I was a teenager, in the pre-independence era of this country, much of the debate in this House related to the relationship between a pre-independence Chamber in terms of intervening in the economic and social life of Barbados, and a colonial office. So when debates took place in this House, and central to that debate, much of the time related to the attitudes or approaches of different political parties in relation to the colonial office. One of the important aspects of independence was that much of the debate, 99% of the debate that took place in the House in the post-independence period related to what we could do in this Chamber to influence social and economic policy.

Today, Sir, was a remarkable experience, in that probably 90% of the debate, once again, relates to how persons in the Chamber should think or design social and engineering policies in relation to bodies outside of Barbados. Now if this is not remarkable evidence of a persistence ...

*Aside.*

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I came into this House in 1978 and my recollection is that between 1978, apart from the IMF programme in 1981, that the debate in this House of Assembly hardly involved any significant discussion on the intervention on anybody outside of Barbados or any relationship to anybody outside of Barbados in terms of the decisions being taken during Estimates debate or during the debate of an Appropriation Bill. What I am saying is, that this has changed and we are virtually back now, in a sense, to the kind of debate in relation to the newer colonial forces taking place in this House of Assembly. This bothers me considerably because it indicates to me what has happened progressively in Barbados over the years.

Now, Sir, you know when one looks at these Estimates, I want to spend about five to ten minutes on one or two macro-economic aspects of it. All these fables that we hear about good forecasting, good management of the economy, good management of the deficit and all this kind of thing, when you look at the first few pages of these Estimates it tells a very interesting story. That story simply says that last year's Estimates of current revenue were wide off target. Last year's Estimates of current expenditure were wide off target. Last year's actual capital expenditure was wide off target and the only thing that came near to what was projected was, in fact, the overall deficit. This means, Sir, that the total Estimates of last year, both in respect of revenue, in terms of expenditure and in respect of capital expenditure they were all awry. I am not surprised at that when one looks at the large number of supplementaries, which we had to approve in this Honourable House over the past fiscal year. That is what is projected here. That is the first thing that strikes me on the first two pages of the Estimates.

The second thing that smkes me is the fact that our Gross Domestic Product in 1995/96 is hardly significantly different from what it was 15 years ago. Despite all the talk, despite all the debate, despite all the taxes, despite all the borrowing, despite all the maneuvering the reality is that when you look at the economic growth of Barbados over a 15-year period that there has hardly been any significant expansion of the Barbados economy almost at a rate of less than 0.50% or just over .50% per year during a 15-year period. That is the reality.

The third thing that struck me very dramatically is the fact that of a gross domestic product of some way in the region of \$3 billion, that the Government is raising somewhere in the region of \$1.148 billion in terms of taxation. When you go on to the second page of the Estimates. I think we are going to see the same pattern again this year. My judgement is that the Estimates of current revenue are again underestimated. If there is a genuine project of 3% to 4% growth when you look back and you see what happened last year, my judgement would be, that there is a significant underestimation of current revenue for fiscal year 1996.

#### *Asides.*

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: They are underestimated against a background of 3% to 4% growth. Also involving that which makes it very difficult for me to comment on a global basis beyond that in terms of Government's revenue yield is the fact that there is...

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: On a point of Order, Sir. The Member must not mislead the House because he just recently gave a statistic that Barbados' GDP to date is at \$3 million odd about the same as it was 15 years ago, Sir. The

truth is, Sir, that in 1982 the GDP at factor cost, which is what we are using Sir, and I have checked the facts, was \$1.78 million. In 1994 it was \$3.1 million, Sir, so to say that is really to start a debate that is based on an inaccuracy and the facts are here Sir, so let us use facts. Barbados' GDP at factor cost has increased substantially over the course of the last 15 years so he must not decry the efforts of those who have helped to bring it up. The thing is sad.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: You have stuck in your mouth what I did not say. You are dealing with GDP at factor cost. I dealt with GDP at factor cost in relation to the level of taxation. I did not deal with GDP at factor cost in relation to the comparisons of 1980. I am very careful in dealing with these.

#### *Asides.*

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: You cannot confuse me. What you have done is you have completely distorted what I said. I dealt with GDP at factor cost only when I was dealing with the amount of taxes raised. That was a separate and distinct point from what I made in relation to output in 1995 compared with 1980. I will get a copy of the 1995 Annual Statistical Digest of the Central Bank of Barbados and we will see exactly what that says.

Now, Sir, in the area of current revenue there is also the additional problem because in the Estimates, of course, we are looking at projected revenue for the tax system as is. But coming on to the end of his speech ...  
4.30 p.m.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I must rise again because a lot of effort has been put into the development of this country by people over the course of the last 15 years. The Member is in no position to say that the country's gross domestic product of last year is the same or virtually the same as it was 15 years ago. Sir, that is absolutely not true. The facts are not bearing it out, Sir. Documents have been laid, Sir. Those remarks must be withdrawn and struck from the records. They are not true and Sir, I am asking you to rule. I am citing the Barbados Economic Report for 1982 that shows what the GDP for Barbados was. We cannot have this kind of debate in this Parliament, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I am asking that those remarks be withdrawn.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: He wants remarks withdrawn, Sir? I would like, Sir, to ask for a copy because this kind of nonsense must stop. I notice you have done this about 10 times today that you have intervened, distorting what other people say and then asking for it to be withdrawn. I never mentioned anything in relation to factor cost when

I was dealing with a comparison between 1995 and 1980. I used factor cost when I was dealing with the GDP in relation to the level of taxation. Anyhow the point, Sir, if I may continue my debate.

There is another complicating problem.

Rt. Hon. L. E. SANDIFORD: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I rise on a point of order. I did not hear the Member for St. Michael South Central say that the GDP at factor cost had not grown but the Prime Minister has said he said so. I believe, Sir, there is further corroborating evidence on GDP at factor cost. These were given in a leading quality document called "The Constituent" which I am happy to make a document of the House, for January 1996 on page 5 which sets out the series from 1980/81 to 1993/94 and I believe this together with the Central Bank series will verify the situation.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, if I may continue, the second problem that arises is that when the Honourable Prime Minister dealt with the issue of the VAT he indicated that during this fiscal year there will be the introduction of VAT and therefore that kind of variable will of course influence one's judgement of the ultimate current revenue yield and I presume that the objective is to ensure that the VAT situation is revenue neutral so I presume that we are operating on that basis and that will of course colour my remark on what I said in relation to the fact that I thought the revenue situation was underestimated somewhat.

The third point I want to make is that it is my firm belief that this year there is an opportunity, first of all, not to raise any new taxation but to seriously look at the whole question of reducing the overall level of taxation on the country. I have a commitment, I am a firm believer that one of the factors which has been holding back the expansion of this economy over the years has been the level of taxation. I look around the world, I look around the Caribbean and I see what is happening and I think that unless we begin to address that problem we are always going to have compromise levels of growth in Barbados.

Whether it be land tax or whatever tax that is your problem. You can deal with that kind of propaganda foolishness. I am concerned with the overall impact of taxation on Barbados and a very simple thing has happened in this place that whatever area the Government has thought it fit and desirable to seek some kind of expansion in the Barbados economy it has always done so through tax concessions, whether it be agriculture, whether it be manufacturing, whether it be the offshore sector, whether it be tourism, over the past 30 to 40 years almost a prerequisite, a pre-condition for the identification of any

area for development, expansion and so on, one of the first things addressed has always been the level of taxation as it affects that particular sector.

Sir, what has happened is that vast sectors of the Barbados economy today enjoy a relatively low level of taxation but the part of the economy which the overwhelming majority of Barbadians operate in that they are the ones that face the heavy levels of taxation and that is the reality in Barbados today. Whether you like it or not that is the case. There is not a single sector to identify in this country, whether it is a broad sector or even if, you take for example, the growth of credit unions in Barbados, it is amazing how that took off as a result of a tax concession. And all the things that one can think about in Barbados that has happened you have seen that they have all taken place in relation to lower levels of taxes. So you can take your pick. You can continue as you are or you can at the same time make sure that the ordinary Barbadian, people who want to invest in Barbados, have an opportunity to invest or you continue to tax people at the rate at which they are taxed. That is a matter of choice. I know what my choice would be and this is no attempt to trivialise a fundamental philosophical position that anyone holds. You believe in it, you go along with it. There is no point trying to trivialise other people's positions.

Now, Sir, there are one or two other areas I want to deal with. I would not have much opportunity. I notice that in the health area that there is talk of one or two projects and so on. I have no problems with that. I understand that there is a major health sector study taking place. I would like to know what kind of money is being spent on that because I understand that a large number of people will be involved in that study. I also want to know what could possibly inform the Government of Barbados into believing that bringing people into Barbados in a critical area like health where there are so many Barbadians with so much information, so much experience, who understand the unique situation in relation to the health services and the institutions of Barbados, if they think they are going to spend that kind of money why it should not be spent on local consultants.

4.40 p.m.

Another point I want to make is this. I have seen and I have witnessed what happened between 1981 and beyond in the economy of Barbados. We went through an IMF Programme. We went through a recession and the Government sought to spend its way out of that recession by committing itself to all sorts of capital projects like the Cement Plant, CARICARGO, Caribbean Airways, BNOC and they have all come to naught. I sincerely hope that in an effort to generate growth in the economy that we are not going to start the same cycle now and at the end of that

cycle that we end up with more and more excessive debt and more and more dependence on the same international institutions. Because I firmly believe that the capital programme that is most relevant to Barbados now is a programme which involves finding jobs for as many people as possible, doing things that are essential for the community whether it is repairs of police stations, maintenance of schools, multiple projects that can feed right down to the community level and I would like to see as much money spent in that way to have many jobs generated. Whereas it is desirable of course to have these big projects like the sewerage projects and so on, they happen to be essentially environmental projects. Just please remember that whilst they may satisfy the requirements of foreign capital inflows with a deficit and so on, they are not going to have any major impact on unemployment dollar for dollar. You must always remember that. It is these multiple small projects that will make the difference and the Government needs not to panic because they may not have a highly visible capital project. But the more important thing is to make sure that vital infrastructure which effects communities and affects the people of Barbados that that is captured in the capital programme as a priority. I believe that this is more important over the next few years for this country.

For example, only last week you had a tree falling on a wooden school in Carrington's Village and I have been trying for 2 years to get those trees cut down. Do you know what MTW told me when I called them again the day when the tree fell down? They do not have any equipment. It is MTW that cuts down those trees and I have called them again and again going back for years now. That brings a major threat not only to the school but also to the houses in the area. I have had 2 fires in my constituency in recent times and you are faced with a situation where their houses have been burned down. Only yesterday there was another problem and ali today I am trying to find a house for someone and I am being told that there are no houses available. We need to pay attention to these things and prioritized this along side these environmental related capital projects as the two main areas in my view for capital expenditure in Barbados.

Sir, I want to make one or two other points on the question of the Queen Elizabeth Hospital. I do not want to deal with the level of expenditure but I want to say this. A considerable amount of injury has been done to the former senior staff of the Queen Elizabeth Hospital and I will tell you why. The Prime Minister held a Press Conference one afternoon and he dealt with issues of fiscal problems. The next day in this House there was talk about corruption. Now this is a serious matter that public servants respond to these charges and I will almost put my head on the block that the former hospital director, even although there may have been problems in his managing the hospital, would

not be involved in any corruption. I think that it is very important.

*Aside.*

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: I am not saying that you said that. I said the Prime Minister addressed the question at a Press Conference of clearly fiscal mismanagement. In this House the next day charges of corruption were made and I happen to know that out there in the public domain that these public officers have been humiliated. What I am saying is that out there in the public domain that has done a lot of damage to people's reputations and that needs to be repaired.

The second point I want to make is this. The same \$6 million at the QEH when you check it out, do you know what it is going to be? It is the same \$6 million that they were coming for year after year going over the past 10 years or before. I remember in 1986 the Queen Elizabeth Hospital has always had a problem of coming to the House for money at the last minute and creating problems for Ministers of Finance. **All** that has happened is that it is the same kind of left-over expenditure situation that has existed for many years and it is not going to stop. I agree with that. That is a fact and that is what has happened. So that I think it is very important whereas there are very legitimate criticisms of the Queen Elizabeth Hospital that we do not go out there and damage people's reputation unnecessarily.

The area of education - I will not have a chance to deal with that today. The area of MTW - Again, I think that we need to focus some of that expenditure this year on projects that have a maximum beneficial effect on people. You take, for example, a place like Bannister Land and Delaware Land. For 3 years now I have been trying to get that road surfaced and resurfaced. All that happened was that they were putting down the gas mains at the time when the St. Michael roads were being done and one had a promise at the time that they will be done as soon as possible. Year after year we just cannot get anything done inside there. Now this kind of thing is quite unacceptable. Sorry.

*Aside.*

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: So in order for me to get anything done I should have stayed with the Dems. Thank you very much indeed. If that is your approach, I will go to the people in Carrington Village and Delaware Land and tell them that is the position so that they will understand and that will be it. Okay.

*Aside.*

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: I am not begging you to do anything for **me**. I am demanding on the floor of this House. This business of my begging a Minister or begging the Prime Minister to do something is nonsense. I am saying the people of St. Michael South Central have a right to some of the allegations of this year. I have asked for one or two very simple things to be done and I expect that something will be done.

Now, Sir, the whole question of the BDB. There is no question about it that it was highly irresponsible to close down the BDB before you had a successor institution. There is no question about it. A lot of people are going to be hurt. A lot of people might well lose their properties and lose their businesses. All I can do is to urge the **Prime Minister** of this country to do something about it as quickly as possible. As far as the small hotels are concerned, Sir, I have been **looking** at a document called "Gems of Barbados" or something like that recommending to rationalize the small hotel sector in Barbados. You are **talking** about only a few hotels which are going to benefit from this new corporate set up. This is a document prepared by one Trade Winds Group who I understand have links with another group in Canada who have been sending experts down here measuring up people's hotels and all this kind of thing. I have no problem with this particular approach. This approach was in fact first recommended by a gentleman called Mr. Harry Russell ten years ago. This was the **first** step taken to come up with some concept to have some **kind** of central management of these hotels. There are only a small number of hotels that would **be** a part of that process, and many of the other hotels, unless they specify a particular standard, have been rejected as not being worthy of inclusion.

4.50 p.m.

*Aside.*

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: Don't tell me it is not true, it is in this document here. They have selected a small number of hotels on the basis of certain criteria. Hotels that have been rejected, hotels owned by small people in Barbados did not have an opportunity to participate in that exercise. Don't tell me it is not true, because I do not want to call any names.

*Aside.*

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: I am not getting timid, I do not believe I should put people in any jeopardy or any problems of that nature.

Sir, the second point I am making is that even in that project, they are thinking of a start up date in December this year, the same thing is happening. Of the \$10 million

earmarked, some being spent on consultants, check out the amount of expenditure already involved.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Deputy Speaker, on a point of order. The Member is misleading the House. The \$10 million that the Government intends to earmark, to which reference is being made, is for the refurbishment of the property. None of the money has yet been allocated from the Public Enterprise Fund and none is going to be spent on any consulting fees. The Member is therefore again misleading the House.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: I said to check and see how much of the money will be disbursed. You check that out and check out the level of expenditure taking place at the moment, the beneficiaries of that expenditure and check out the concerns and the properties which have been selected for participation, whether or not further burdens would not be placed on them. These are the things you will have to check out. I know how these consultancies operate, because people make a lot of money up front and five to ten years from now the owners will be handed back the properties in a worse state. I speak from a position of detailed knowledge in this particular matter.

The next point I am going to raise has to do with gambling. I am very glad that this issue of gambling has been raised on the Floor of this House. I have said publicly that I did not pursue it at the time of the debate on casino gambling, but **looking** at these Estimates, **looking** at the amount of taxation that Government will probably get, and taking the global picture into account, you are probably **looking** at \$100 million a year being taken out of this country by gambling. I am **talking** about the total picture. The newspapers talked about \$56 million recently, but that is only one form of gambling. I am **talking** of over \$100 million, and people like myself have to commit the entertainment allowance, travelling allowance and the salaries or pensions that we get in this House of Assembly to helping out constituents day after day, and it is quite wrong that that **kind** of burden should be placed on us day after **day** to help people whose homes have been devastated by gambling.

You go up Bay Street on any day around 6.00 or 7 o'clock in the morning and check on those outlets with gambling machines in them and you will see what happens from the start of the **day**, then listen during the day to the advertisements on radio and television. If a guy has his last \$5.00 and he **has** a bill for \$20 he will try his luck to see if he can win enough money to pay that bill by gambling away his last \$5.00. I do not know any place in the world where the sole television station day after day, at prime time, is advertising gambling on a publicly owned television station. I suspect that there are more

gambling ads in Barbados on TV and radio and in the Press on a population basis than in Las Vegas. I believe that as legislators we need to respond to this problem, because there is no point coming in here and voting millions of dollars in welfare payments and then a substantial amount of money that we vote for welfare payments will go straight in the pockets of gamblers in Barbados. It is ridiculous and it is time that the Legislature of this country addresses that particular issue.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Honourable Member is asked to wind up please.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: Unfortunately, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I have to wind up, but I would just like to make one point in one second. Estimates of real domestic product 1974 prices, Table II, Annual Statistics Digest 1995 of Barbados. For 1981 a total of 176.8...

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Deputy Speaker, on a point of order, Sir. The Member cited the GDP in the Estimates at factor cost not at ordinary, normal prices. He cannot now go and cite another document citing GDP at real prices. They are two different concepts altogether and it is the kind of trickery that he would like to put this House up to, Sir. If he continues GDP at nominal prices, stay at nominal prices, but he cannot move from nominal to real prices in that fashion because he is comparing apples with cheese. He is displaying his fundamental ignorance of what he is talking about and he is trying to mislead the House.  
5.00 p.m.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: Mr. Deputy Speaker, you may recall that I mentioned GDP in a particular manner in relation to the taxes raised.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The member's time has expired. You can bring that into Committee.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: I will produce the relevant evidence.

Hon. Sir HAROLD St. JOHN: On a point of order. I am not going to allow you to talk anymore. You are out of order.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Deputy Speaker, this House does not allow this member to take advantage of the House. He referred to the Estimates of GDP on page 2 of these Estimates and the Estimates are set out GDP at factor

cost in 1995-96 as 3.01 in nominal prices. He cannot come now and want to dog dance on the matter. He referred to the exact page in the Estimates that he was taking the GDP from so he cannot come with that now, Mr. Deputy Speaker. He is misleading the House and he will have to stand on this particular matter.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: May I have a copy of the record to demonstrate what I said? I contend...

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for St. Michael South Central. Your time has expired. Please take your seat.

### SUSPENSION

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I beg to move that this House be suspended until 5.20 p.m.

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

Mr. B. M. TAITT: On a point of privilege, before the House is suspended, earlier today I raised a matter with Mr. Speaker, I do not know if Mr. Speaker...

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Give me a second, please. Have a seat please.

*Asides.*

*Mr. SPEAKER returned to his seat.*

Mr. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for St. Michael West has brought a matter to my attention and I have given him permission to raise it.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: I am grateful to Your Honour for giving me this opportunity, Sir. Under Standing Order 76, Privilege, I rise, and I promise the House that I will not take very long, to draw to Your Honour's attention and to the House a matter which I believe is of importance to the House.

In the *Sunday Advocate* of March 17, 1996 there is an editorial under the sobriquet or headline "Taïtt Doth Protest". In the course of that editorial which has been referred to legal advisors for other reasons there is a statement paragraph which says and I quote:

"His abusive conduct in Parliament last Tuesday was bad strategy."

Mr. Speaker, under the Rule 76, it is my view, Sir, that this editorial extends beyond the normal bounds of commentary. I do not recall, first of all, behaving in an abusive manner and in any case Your Honour would not have allowed abusive conduct in Parliament and I submit that this is an assault not only on my own character but it is an assault on the House in that it purports to suggest that the Speaker allowed abusive conduct.

I believe, Sir, and it is my personal view, that it makes an unnecessary and perhaps defamatory comment about Mr. Speaker, about the House and certainly about myself. I beg to move, Sir, that this matter be referred to the Committee of Privileges under Rule 76, subsection 3 which says:

(3) "If permission is given by the Speaker under paragraph 2 of this Order, the Member may raise the matter at any time before public business is commenced and move that the matter be referred to the Committee of Privileges."

I so now move.

Hon. Sir HAROLD St. JOHN: I beg to second that.

Mr. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member has made a *prima facie* case and I think this matter will be referred to the Committee of Privilege.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: In the circumstances, I beg to move that this House be suspended until 5.30 p.m.

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

*The question was put and resolved in the affirmative without division and Mr. SPEAKER suspended the House accordingly.*  
5.10 p.m.

#### RESUMPTION

Mr. SPEAKER: This sitting is resumed.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased that the House is anxious to proceed to the Heads. I commend the House for wanting to go onto the Heads because the business of these Estimates is to deal intensively with Government Departments. I therefore want to wind up debate. I have taken note of the comments raised by the members who spoke. I am not going to be in any attacking mood for the winding up.

I just have made a note of the fact that I am able to say that we now have an economy where all of the major sectors are contributing to renewed growth, our foreign reserves are improving, unemployment is coming down, inflation is low, Government finances are within manageable proportions and investment is taking place. We are not yet out of the economic woods. There is an improvement in the Barbados economy we would like to be able to sustain.

I am saying that to make my first point on the quality of the contributions which were made that the two spokesmen on behalf of the two Opposition parties have again become social engineers. The Member for St. John when he came into Parliament ~~was~~ very careful that he was not into the deficits and so on. He was into social engineering, but when he was Minister of Finance there was nobody who was more careful to point to the economic indices than he. I notice now, Sir, that the Budget is not now to be judged on the question of whether there is growth in the economy, whether we can sustain the growth, or whether there is investment, or whether the reserves are improving, or any of these considerations but on the question of whether there is social engineering taking place.

I was particularly fascinated with the contribution of the Member for St. Michael South Central who I will continue to class as a Newt **Gingrich** Republican. He believes that the answer to all our economic problems is to cut taxes and if you just cut taxes, although he starts by recognising that most of the economic activity in Barbados is already largely tax exempted, that a lot of the production in manufacturing, agriculture, tourism and the offshore business is already tax exempted. He acknowledges that and then he goes on to say that the way in which to build the economy is to give even greater tax relief.

I want, Mr. Speaker, to continue to remind the House of the consequences of an **indiscriminate** policy of major cuts in taxation in relation to the kinds of consequential adjustments and expenditure that Ministers of Finance are forced to undertake **as** a result of those cuts in taxes. In 1986 the then Minister of Finance, the Member for St. Michael South Central, cut taxes and a question was raised by the Member for St. Thomas in this House regarding the areas of expenditure that had to be cut in order to accommodate the very generous tax concessions in 1986 that saw the wealthy people of Barbados benefitting in a very serious way.

Sir, these are some of the areas that were cut. in Agriculture, he cut the Rural Development Programme. He cut the Scotland District Programme. This is what was done by the Honourable Member for St. Michael

South Central in 1986/87 in order to accommodate his tax cuts. These are the expenditure cuts, Sir, that he made. He cut Rural Development by \$300 000. He cut the Scotland District Conservation by \$600 563. We can now understand why we have these problems in the Scotland District, Sir. He cut Agriculture in general by \$9.4 million. He cut the allocation for the Police Stations by \$1.4 million.

We have to keep reminding him of these things because when I hear him coming to the House to talk about the need for these small projects for the Police, he must be reminded that in 1986/87 in order to accommodate the tax giveaways he cut the expenditure of Police Stations by \$1.4 million and I must read this into the record. Sir, he cut the provision for the purchase of vehicles, plant and equipment for the Police Force by \$398 000. In relation to the Ministry of Health he cut the Polyclinic Development Programme by \$3.3 million. He cut Education by \$9.3 million. He cut the National Training Board by \$679 000. It went on and on and on. He even reduced the allocation to the Sanitation Service Authority by \$1 million and the allocation to the South and West Coast Sewerage Project by \$1.3 million forcing that project to be very slow in its execution, and it goes on.

He cut the National Housing Corporation allocation by \$2 million bringing the housing programme in this country to a halt and the National Conservation Commission was cut by \$300 000. Sir, we have to be balanced in relation to what we accept as a ruling economic philosophy regarding the utility of massive cuts in taxes in circumstances where you *already* have most of the economic sectors tax exempt and in circumstances where this society wants to institutionalise and continue to enjoy high levels of services.

Now, Sir, I want to react more directly to some of the issues that have been raised and I want to start on the question of duty free. I was a little bit disappointed by the strictures that have been levelled at me as Minister of Finance and at the Government in relation to our actions on the Barbados Development Bank. I want to say I am disappointed because it is a matter of public record that the first member of a statutory board who resigned under this administration was the Chairman of the Recoveries Committee of the Barbados Development Bank, a learned lawyer – I am not going to call the person's name, but this is a fact – who, along with the rest of that Committee had drawn up a recoveries programme to aggressively put people's businesses into receivership and other things. As Minister of Finance I objected to the tone and temper of the programme to be carried out and the Chairman of the Committee resigned in protest.

The Member for St. John and other Members in this House know the things I have gone to within the limits of

discretion to make sure that the question of putting people's businesses in receivership should stop and to stop the BDB from closing down businesses that have a viable chance of succeeding. I give the House the assurance that the statement that was made by me last year that we would have a recoveries' company to try to rehabilitate all of the loans where there is a chance for rehabilitation I give the House the assurance that we will have that policy in place.

There have been a few cases, Mr. Speaker, where judgments have already been issued by the courts in relation to certain companies and the companies involved have been given every opportunity subsequent to the issue of the judgment by the courts to get their businesses back in order but to no avail. The Minister of Finance cannot just intervene in such circumstances without undermining the integrity of the BDB.

Sir, the question of gambling and taxes on gambling was raised. I just want to say that this is a matter on which representation has been made to the Minister of Finance. I am not going to go into details on it but I just want to say this. There was a policy in place and intended to be followed that sporting organizations should be allowed to carry out certain gambling operations on the understanding that the proceeds from gambling activities would accrue directly to the sporting organizations. It was not the policy to have the sporting organizations lease out their rights to *bona fide* gamblers in return for the payment of a fee with the lion share of the proceeds accruing not to the sporting organisation but to the *bona fide* gamblers. That was never the policy.

I just want to say, Sir, that the policy of this Government still is that sporting institutions in the country should be allowed to be able to fund their operations from the proceeds from gambling, that they themselves should be the persons collecting the proceeds rather than other persons collecting the lion's share of it and they *are* getting a small fee for the lease of their rights. The matter, Sir, has been referred to the Ministry of Finance and I will not on this occasion go beyond just stating what the policy has been.

I am glad the Member for St. John has come to the point of view I had last year that the leakage in the duty free sector is a major loophole and it should be plugged. I give the House the assurance that we will proceed now that we have the support on the Other Side to deal with this particular matter.

Sir, I am not going to give a long winding up speech. The House is anxious to go on to the Heads but it is

just that I took note of the fact that there was a lot of anxiety on the part of the person who spoke to deal with the economy, the reserves and unemployment.

In that respect, Sir, I beg to move that this Bill be now read a second time.

*The question that the Bill be read a second time was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.*

*On the motion of Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR, seconded by Hon. R. C. EASTMOND, Mr. SPEAKER left the Chair and the House went into Committee of Supply, Mr. W. C. C. CALLENDER in the Chair.*

#### COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY

Mr. CHAIRMAN: This House is in Committee of Supply.

#### HEAD 10 – GOVERNOR-GENERAL – \$708 744

Hon. G. W. PAYNE: Mr. Chairman, I beg to move that Head 10 stand part.

Hon. R. C. EASTMOND: I beg to second that.

*The question that Head 10 stand part was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.*

#### HEAD 11 – JUDICIARY – \$44-797

Hon. G. W. PAYNE: Mr. Chairman, I beg to move that Head 11 stand part.

Hon. R. C. EASTMOND: I beg to second that.

Hon. Sir HAROLD St. JOHN: Mr. Chairman if you talk to anyone in Barbados, they will tell you that we need to do something about our traditional method of delivering the judicial service in Barbados. Now, this is a problem that is not confined to Barbados. It is a problem that wherever you go in the Caribbean you will hear of this problem and if you are following events that take place in this area throughout the Commonwealth, there is a problem. I would like to say that daily this problem is becoming far more serious. I know the Government has taken steps to increase the manpower available to the judiciary in the form of additional judges. I also know that steps have been taken with great rapidity to improve the

physical infrastructures at the courts. Those are undeniable facts. Those activities will bring some relief to the situation but I am of the opinion, having studied this matter very carefully, that we need measures over and beyond the measures that have been taken. A whole new look must be taken at the structure of our Judiciary. The time has come when an increase in the work load of the Magistrates must take place and an increase in the number. The jurisdiction that a Magistrate now exercises, I believe in the last review many, many years ago the monetary amount could be increased greatly. The effects of that would be, to relieve High Court Judges in Barbados of the responsibility every Tuesday and every Thursday, or every Monday and every Thursday, of having to adjudicate upon matters with small sums involved of \$4,000 or \$5,000. If you knocked a motor car today and you touched the fender and the doors it cost more than that. That should not be the concern of a High Court Judge.

5.50 p.m.

We need to increase the jurisdiction of the Magistrate in civil cases. There is no question about that. The time has come when in addition to that Sir, it is very important that we recognise that one of the sources of personnel that one gets to become High Court Judges, is promotion for Magistrates. The greater the jurisdiction they exercise the better for them because they would be exposed to a greater variety of legal cases. We also have the problems that arise in respect of the commercial cases that you get. You get Sale of goods matters, Hire Purchase matters and you get a number of other areas. This again, in my opinion, illustrates the need to increase the monetary jurisdiction of the Magistrates. That is as far as the civil law is concerned, Sir.

Then we come now to the criminal law, it is in this area that we have an even more disturbing situation. It is a fact of life, whether we like it or not, that we are going to have continuous sittings of what we call in Barbados the Assizes. In other countries they call it the Crown Court and other things like that. If you look at the pattern that is developing, I believe that the January Assizes just finished last week or week before and we are ready to start in April again and that is with two Judges sitting. So something has to be done.

We have a two-tier system of Justice in Barbados. In other countries there is a three-tier system. There is an intermediate Court, a Crown Court dealing continuously and a County Court dealing continuously all day long, one dealing with criminal and one dealing with civil.

#### Asides.

Hon. Sir HAROLD St. JOHN: We need to have that. I feel we have to face this matter because Barbados

is now a jurisdiction in which we have very complicated matters which need a tremendous amount of judicial time being utilized in studying the matters. If we do not have the effective machinery in place, it is going to affect Barbados as a domicile for our international business. They claim that one of the great things about London as an international business centre is that it has a vast array of expertise that can adjudicate upon these matters. We ourselves, because we have some way of in the vicinity of 2 000 or 3 000 companies now, we have now reached the stage where we have disputes arising out of matters which come within this area. You cannot say that you have three and four years to say that you have a case to come off in that area. We are going to get what we have already received, and that is, many of the protractual documents and other documents putting in specific clauses that matters to be settled arising out of these documents under arbitration outside of Barbados, or in some areas, they have to be settled by the Ontario Court of Justice. I think everybody recognises that there is a need for an **indepth** review. I know that judging **from** the circulars that have been sent around by the Bar Association, I believe that this matter is engaging the attention of the Bar Association, the Judiciary and the Attorney General.

My basic point is, Sir, that we need to get on with the job, have this review as urgently as possible because I can say this, what is in existence today is not satisfactory. Now there are some who say that you should not raise these matters in the House of Assembly. Now I never subscribed to that. I have never subscribed to that because this is the body that all and sundry in Barbados have to submit to this scrutiny. I have always been of that opinion and I have raised it in that spirit.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: There is just one particular issue that I want to raise, Mr. Chairman, that is proving somewhat bothersome to me. I raised it in this House before. I cannot attract the attention of any practising lawyers or members of the Judiciary on this matter. I have had a few instances recently as representative that bothers me. It is this whole question of the attitude of the Judiciary in this country towards bail and towards the civil liberties of the people in this country and the way in which the Judiciary responds to fundamental entrenched rights of people to liberty under the Constitution of Barbados. It is a matter of **concern** to me that people are denied bail for **all** kinds of very trivial reasons among them being that the Police are not ready to bring a case, or something like that. Imagine the Police arresting somebody, bringing them before the Court in the specified time and then the only reason they can offer is they are not ready to proceed, and on that basis a man is denied bail.

My own feeling is, that the Constitution of Barbados should be so interpreted, that every man is entitled to his liberty unless there are good and sound reasons why such a person should not be denied his liberty, and that is if he

is found guilty of an offence in a Law Court where the prescribed penalty is a deprivation of liberty, or if pending such a definitive decision, there are reasons such as danger to himself or danger to the community. I am not even quite sure, or probably the seriousness of the complaint or whatever. But certainly the denial of bail seems to be largely routine matter in Barbados. I do not know why the lawyers do not make more fuss about this. It seems to be part of the tradition of Barbados, this denial of people's constitutional rights and I think it is so largely because it is the under-privileged in this country who are largely affected by that kind of approach to the liberties guaranteed the people of Barbados under the Constitution of this country.

I think that now we are approaching the 21st Century we cannot have **this** same attitude towards people's civil rights, people's **freedoms guaranteed** under the Constitution as probably existing in Barbados a hundred years ago. I think it is unfair, I think it is unreasonable what **goes** on in Barbados and I believe it is time that this matter should be addressed in a positive manner. Now I have heard in a *sotto voce* remark by the Attorney General that the matter is being addressed in a substantive bill, or something like that. I presume that he will respond to that. It is a matter that is of concern to me. It is one that constantly crops up.

I happen to represent a constituency which largely consists of people who are in the lower income groups, and very often the young people in my constituency are the victims of this kind of approach to the questions of matters relating to their constitutional rights. I believe that this House at some time has to take a **firm** decision as to how we regard the fundamental liberties as guaranteed by **the** Constitution. Too many people in this country are denied bail, appearing before a Magistrate, that there is no evidence that they are going to **run** anywhere. There is no evidence that they will not appear in Court. There is no evidence that they are likely to repeat the offence and be a nuisance to the rest of the community. And then for no reason at all they are denied bail largely at the whims and fancies of a judicial officer totally ignoring the fundamental tenets of the Constitution of Barbados and the whole question of the civil liberties of the people of Barbados. This is something that affects poor people and the children of poor people and it is something that we need to deal with in this House of Assembly. That is my contribution on this particular matter.

6.00 p.m.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: I want to ask a question of the Honourable Attorney General. You will recall that some time before the structural adjustment the then Attorney General had indicated that provision was being made for the development of the courts and I believe some

property at the corner of Country Road and White Park Road had been acquired. After that had occurred I believe the economic situation forced us to have to put that in abeyance but some preliminary work had been done. I wonder if the Attorney General would address the issue as to where we are in that **regard** because I think it is important in terms of forward planning.

I know that some accommodation has been made in the existing courts.

*Aside.*

Mr. B. M. TAITT: I do not know, because I do not frequent them, but I believe that that has relieved the problem somewhat but I think in terms of forward planning there is the need for us to have some general idea of what the thinking is in the new dispensation about the development of a proper set of courts for the administration of justice in the country. There are some people who have said, and many who may even still believe, that this would not be money well spent, that it is economically undesirable to invest money in the courts. I do not share that view. I believe that how people perceive the environment in which justice is dispensed is as important as almost everything else and in some instances more important than a number of issues in the community.

I believe also that love for justice and respect for the law is engendered when the instruments by which justice is dispensed can be perceived by those who have constant contact with them as being majestic, for want of a better word. So I would appreciate if the Attorney General could give us his thinking on what is happening and what is likely to happen.

Also while I am on my feet, and I declare a more than passing interest in this issue, the question of how long it will take for a person to become an attorney-at-law has been one of contention. My recollection is that the Attorney General of Barbados, during **our** time, was near the point of having a one-year relationship with the professional schools as opposed to the present two-year requirement. I am of the view that that is more than a passing concern because it has to do with the economics of the country. Requiring each of our lawyers to have 5 years academic activity which, by and large is paid for by the state as opposed to 4 years seems to me to be unnecessary after we have had the experiment which was tried at the inception of our taking over the teaching of law in the Caribbean.

It is not always remembered why the teaching of law was repatriated to the Caribbean, but one of the reasons

had to do with the attitude of the British to the necessity to get these people back to their respective territories as soon as possible. I will not try to spend any time on that but I am sure the Attorney General is familiar with it. I have got an indication that he would prefer to take that under a different head. In any case I have made the point. I do not believe that it is necessary. I really in all honesty do not believe this is necessary. I have examined it for some considerable time and I can see no redeeming value in having to spend two additional years in order to practise at the Bar.

Those persons who became attorneys-at-law by virtue of having been attached **as** articled clerks and who became solicitors have proven to be no less efficient as lawyers practising at the Bar than many who have had the full experience and indeed in many **instances** they have proved to be better.

*Aside.*

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Yes, but we are not talking about the length of time it has taken because in the dispensation one is discussing one is not saying that it should not take 5 years to become a lawyer. We are saying it ought not to be necessary to have two years in the law schools that one of those years could be spent and should be spent **articled** so that when people come to practise law they have had real experience in how the law is practiced.

The Attorney General will tell you I have been saying this for a fairly long **time** and when people are assuming that I am saying it because I have a vested interest, which I do, they still recognize the inherent value of the point. If you look at the cost to the country over time it is a high cost and there is no one I know who has been through the process who is willing to testify that it has made any particular difference whether they have spent two years or one year but I do not have to **belabor** the point. I would like to hear the Attorney General on it.

Mr. L. R. TULL: Mr. Chairman, I will make one or two very brief observations in relation to this Head. The problems relating to the courts are qualitative and quantitative. I agree with many of the points that have been made so far in relation to bail. This keeps coming up over and over again. There has been a draft Bail Bill which I understand has been with the Attorney General's. I know when I was Attorney General and that is more than a decade ago there was a draft Bill sitting around in the Attorney General's Chamber and perhaps it was not as pressing in the past as it is now.

We have almost an assembly line in the system of delivering the work in the Magistrates' Courts on

some days. I will tell you what I mean, Sir. It is not unusual to find 30 or 40 cases set down in the Magistrates' Courts for one day. Common sense suggests that if you have two or three contested matters in the Magistrates' Courts that would take up the whole day so it means that if there are 40 cases there must be 37 adjournments. The system is one where adjournments seem to be fuelled by the way the system is set up.

The question of bail is important, Sir, because if a man is charged with an offence and goes before the Court and he is denied bail, and this is really common these days, Sir, and he has to go through a series of adjournments over a long period of time, obviously his rights are affected. Now we have a situation where persons **are** charged in Barbados and I speak with great authority on these things, Sir, because I believe that I spend more time in the Law Courts than any other attorney-at-law practising in this island. There are persons who are charged for offences a year ago who have been denied bail and have not been able to get their cases heard, over a dozen adjournments over a period of a year, and in one case I think where it has been more than 30 adjournments over a period of a year. Every single occasion in which the person appears in Court, he wants his case started and the Crown says that they are not ready to start. Now that cannot be fair, Sir, and the magistrates are constrained by practice, tradition and in my view sometimes timidity to keep remanding people in custody without bail. Something is very, very wrong with that system. I would like the Attorney General to get the Bill circulated and let some of us who go through these things almost on a daily basis take a look and make some recommendations. In other words, we should not be presented with a Bill that is practically fait *accompli*. But for those who have had these experiences they should be made to make an input at a very early stage and the early stage is now.

6.10 p.m

We have a situation also where the delay in the hearing of cases is occasioned by the fact that the Courts are scattered across Barbados. It is over 25 years that there has been a body of opinion that says that the Magistrates' Court should be centralized in Bridgetown. Some people argue against it. I have never quite understood the reasons. The Supreme Courts are centralized in Bridgetown and everybody knows in Barbados if you have a matter in the Supreme Court you come to town for it. But scattered across Barbados are a number of small Magistrates' Courts and I will tell you exactly what happens. There are very few advocates in Barbados, probably about 300 lawyers, but only a small percentage of them are advocates who work in the Courts almost on a daily basis. It is not unusual, Sir, for an advocate to wake up one morning and look in his or her diary and see that he has a dozen cases in seven different Courts. Well, it is physically impossible

to do that. He cannot run from St. **Philip** to St. Joseph, Oistins or Speightstown and three High Court matters the same day. It is impossible to do it. So a lot of the delays in the system **are** also occasioned by the fact that the Courts are decentralized and I am saying that only a small percentage of practising attorneys-at-law in Barbados are advocates. They cannot be everywhere at the same time so a number of cases have to be adjourned because they cannot be in several places at the same time. So I am again making the case for centralization of the Courts.

I see that the Attorney General has been renovating a number of the country Courts. A lot of work I see is being done with the one in St. George and some is being done in St. **Philip** and perhaps it might be the wrong allocation of funds. Because so far from repairing those Courts perhaps the money should have been spent in building other Courts in the Bridgetown area. So that lawyers can go from court to court like they do in Bridgetown depending on what your circumstances are. If all your cases are in Bridgetown, you can move from one Court to the other as the case arises but you cannot do that across the country.

I also want to mention, Sir, another matter and this is the question of the lack of accommodation for persons who have to be witnesses at the Courts particularly at Bridgetown and it is not only their physical comfort that I am concerned about although that is important for people who stand for 3 and 4 hours in the sun and rain and so on who are waiting to give evidence. Their discomfort is a concern to me. But even more important than that is that it frustrates justice because a number of people who go through this experience 2 or 3 times and have adjournments and stand around the Courtyard in the elements for 3 hours just refuse to come back and this quite often involves complainants. There is no point a man breaking into my house and I make the report to the police and I am required to come to Court. I go to Court on 3 or 4 occasions and have to stand up in the sun and the rain and the case is not heard and I have to keep coming back. In many cases, persons in that situation will say that it is not worth it. Whatever they took out of the house, let them keep it because I am finished with that. Therefore, I am suggesting that some rudimentary accommodation be made for those who have to make appearances in the Law Court. Because, as I said, it not only affects the physical comfort of those who have to appear in the Courts but it frustrates justice.

I want to make one other point in relation to the criminal law aspect, Sir. We passed an Evidence Act in this House in the last session of Parliament and in my view the most important part of that Act has not been proclaimed. The Act has been proclaimed but the section dealing with the video taping of confessions has not been proclaimed.

Now I would like to suggest to the Attorney General that he deals with that with the utmost expedition. Those who practise know that the vast majority of cases where felonies and serious criminal offences are involved the accused person alleges that he was beaten by the police. I have known of a case recently, Sir, where a man was subsequently charged for murder but when he was in the police station he complained that the physical pressure put on him – I say physical pressures because it was not only **beating** but other physical pressure – was such that he was able to scale a 10-foot **catwire** enclosure and run **all** the way from Holders Hill Police Station in St. James to St. George. When he reached St. George, he got a telephone call and called his lawyer and asked his lawyer to meet him down in some bushes and take him back to the police station. He made the point that he was not running away from questioning or dealing with the police, but he was running away from the physical pressure that was being put on him at the police station. This has long been common place, **Sir**. The Evidence Act envisaged that confessions that are made without certain safeguards should not be admissible evidence in the court of law. As the law always says and the Constitution says, you are entitled to have your lawyer present. But it does not say that **the** police have to question you while your lawyer is present. So your lawyer can be present and spend an hour at the police station or he can spend a day at the police station, it makes absolutely no difference because the police is not going to question anybody until the lawyer leaves. So it is folly in a way to say that a man is entitled to have his lawyer present, but when the lawyer goes to the police station and can stay as long as he likes and the police is not going to deal with him until the lawyer leaves. I do not know whether the people in Barbados realize how much psychological pressure is brought to bear on a man in a police station. Even the toughest of the tough are made to bend after a period of time in a police station.

6.20 p.m.

It is important, therefore, and I urge on the **Attorney** General, to get the part of the Act dealing with the video taping of confessions proclaimed, because **all** of us are concerned about crime wherever it happens and however it happens, but that must be balanced by the concern also of the rights of citizens, because it is not everyone who goes into a police station that is guilty of an offence.

I want to raise one other point at this point of my contribution, Sir, and that relates to the question of the condition of the courts. It is easy to stay at a distance and believe that the conditions in the courts are passable. I am not talking about court itself, I have been in the Chambers of the Judges of the Court of Appeal and have seen the water dripping in. I have seen in the Chamber of the senior Court of Appeal Judge the desk and the books having to be pushed around because the water is pouring coming in. I

have heard a Court of Appeal Judge say that he is not going back in his Chamber until they satisfy him that a mouse that was running around in there has been removed. The condition is bad, Sir.

I know that a number of efforts have been made in recent times to upgrade the physical conditions of the courts, but I do contend that the physical conditions are not conducive to serious work by people who leave comfortable, well appointed, air conditioned law chambers, then to go into conditions that amount almost to slumming. You cannot produce your best in those circumstances and I would urge on the Government that within the limits of its resources to make some kind of assault on the physical conditions in which lawyers, magistrates, judges and the public of Barbados are required to function on a daily basis.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Mr. Chairman, Honourable Members have asked a lot of very important questions relating to the administration of justice in Barbados and I have a duty to respond as best I can. Let me start and work my way from the back bench right through.

The Honourable Member for St. George South enquired about the proclamation of that part of the Evidence Act relating to video taping of confessional statements. Perhaps I had better answer that by saying that I believe the Right Honourable Prime Minister was at pains to point out in his presentation today that these Estimates this year are constructed on the premise that the Government of Barbados in the last three or four years in its relations with the Inter-American Development Bank was tardy in drawing down loans that were made available. In fact, the tardiness had the effect of jeopardising Barbados' status with the Inter-American Development Bank, and Government has deliberately and consciously so constructed the Estimates this year as to ensure that those projects for which there is foreign funding will be dealt with in this year, so that we can start drawing down the \$93 million. We had U.S. \$100 million in loan funding that was available since about 1991, we only drew down \$6 million of that up to November last year when the IADB came here and we gave the assurance that we would start drawing down the \$93 million. Having regard to that, Government has, as Honourable Members on the other side know, to find counterpart funds to match that \$93 million that we will attempt to draw down. It therefore means that certain of our domestic programmes and policies have to be held while we give priority and precedence to those programmes which are foreign funded, and so the complete renovation and reorganisation of the courts that has been called for cannot take place, at least before September, but we will look at the mid term review, assess how

Government's capital projects are going, and if there is slack we may be able to move along some of these projects. That is why I said I have to set my replies in the context of the structure of the Estimates and the financing, because video taping of confessions requires an expenditure on the necessary equipment, the training of officers, the sensitisation of ...

*Aside.*

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: But even if you enter into a lease arrangement you still have to pay the rental. This is a matter we are going to be investigating this year to try and evaluate and assess the cost implications. It may have implications for staffing and it will have certain implications for equipment, but I give Honourable Members the assurance that we are not oblivious of this matter and as soon as we have completed our necessary study we will deal with it.

Decentralisation of the courts that is called for by the Honourable Member for St. George South bears on the question raised by the Honourable Member for St. Michael West in relation to the establishment of a judicial centre which will house the Supreme Court. I am pleased to be able to tell Honourable Members that I have revived the issue of new courts and recently had a presentation by Gillespie & Steel, Architects, and I have in the Conference Room of the Ministry a model for the new Supreme Court, assuming the same site at the corner of Country Road and Whitepark Road, but the cost of that project is now being re-evaluated. It was in the region of \$30 million when the Democratic Labour Party started to work on it, and we think that even though inflation was held in the interim to about 1%, there is still a cost factor that has to be assessed, and the architects are doing that for us.

We have revived it, because in discussions with the Inter-American Development Bank at the end of last year and earlier this year when the President came, I made a presentation to him on the concept of justice and development, and the Inter-American Development Bank, after 20 years, when the concept was first mooted in here by the Honourable Member for Christ Church West, to his credit, the Inter-American Development Bank is now making connection with the concept, to the extent that in October or November last year there was a conference in Uruguay to which the CARICOM Ambassador and Mr. Justice Husbands went in my place...

*Aside.*

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Mr. Nigel Barrow, the Ambassador to CARICOM, Special Envoy or whatever. I thought the Honourable Leader of the Opposition knew,

because he stopped at a very crucial point writing in his column every week about "Bye, bye, adios". But let us get serious, Sir. At the meeting in Uruguay it was the brief to the Barbados delegation that we had to get across to the meeting the need for modernisation of the court systems throughout the region. When President Iglesias came here earlier this year expressed his support for modernisation. In fact, he said that they were doing a project in Costa Rica and they wanted to do a project in the English speaking Caribbean. Now, we have therefore been of the view that the bank is now sensitised to spending money in the justice area.

6.30 p.m.

As a result of that, together with the bank and through the efforts of Mr. Skeete at the bank in Washington, we are trying to put together a regional meeting around June on the concepts of justice, development, civil society and so on. We are preparing a project because the President said he wanted a total project. He didn't expatiate, but we understood it included a project that will not only embrace the justice system but also the penal system. We are therefore this year, as soon as April, going to embark on the project documents because we have physical plans and we can say that this is what we need and try to short circuit some of the bureaucracy.

Assuming that we can get funding for a new judicial centre, at that point we would be in a position to consider centralisation because the present High Court will create enough space to carry out the jurisdiction presently being carried out by disparate courts all over the country. So I am not going to commit myself or the Government to centralisation until we see more clearly the prospects for the new judicial centre as a reality.

The Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central spoke about bail and so did the Honourable Member for St. George South. All 3 political parties were circulated last year with 3 bills. The new Magistrates' Court Bill, a Bail Bill and a Rehabilitation of Offenders Bill. The three we intend to bring more or less together.

*Aside.*

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: They were sent to all the political parties by the Law Reform Committee. The Democratic Labour Party received theirs. I will ensure tomorrow that all three are sent to you. In fact, the Magistrates' Court Bill is up for my consideration. I have not had time to go through it again. I read it in January and we received the comments of the Judicial Council and it went back to Parliamentary Council to redraft and do the amendments in the light of the submissions of the Judicial Council and very shortly that Bill will be considered and

it should be in the House later on. The Magistrates' Court Bill should be in the House in April and as soon as we get the Judicial Council's comments on the Bail Bill and Rehabilitation of Offenders, those two will come. We will take the opportunity there in the Magistrates' Court Bill to increase the jurisdiction of the Magistrates and that would take account of the point raised by the Honourable Member for Christ Church South.

Mr. Chairman, I have campaigned in here for a long time for the reduction of the period of time taken to study for the Council of Legal Education qualification in Trinidad and Tobago. Indeed, in 1986, there was a meeting of the Council of Legal Education in Antigua before the Government changed and the then Chief Justice went and I made the point then, on the direction of Cabinet, to the Council that we would not be prepared to support a 2-year programme beyond 1988 and that was assuming we had been returned to Parliament.

That was not written down in a file. It was during the meeting and the Honourable Maurice King, the former Attorney General, asked me about it. I assured him that it had been done and that was the position that he was prepared to take and I believed he took. The problem has been that they cannot agree. There is a committee set up by the Council, headed by Dr. Lloyd Bamett, and they have been studying it. An Interim Report was promised at the last Council meeting in St. Lucia on February 5 and it has not yet reached; but it is down in the Minutes of that meeting that a final decision must be taken by the time the Council meets here in September 12 for the 25th anniversary of the Council of Legal Education. By then we expect to have the Bamett Report.

I am not saying that a year is the mark, but I think probably between 15-18 months is long enough. I don't have the time now to discuss it except to say that it is a matter on which we on this side need no convincing and we will keep pushing for a reduction in the 2-year course for something more manageable in the interests of the students and the Government. Don't forget we fund all of the students at the Law School.

Mr. Chairman, Sir, the Honourable Member for Christ Church South called for an increase in the number of Magistrates and a new look at the judiciary for continuous assizes. He pointed out that the January Assizes just finished at the end of February and implicit in that is a concession that we are fast moving towards a system of continuous Assizes because when he used to practise a lot of criminal law and I used to practise a lot of criminal law, there were clear demarcations – January Assizes, April Assizes, July Assizes and October Assizes. Now the Assizes are running for 2 months and there is virtually only

1 month between the close of one assize and the start of another.

The lawyers in the DPP's Office are off in March but they have to start back again in April. So we are almost at the point of continuous Assizes. We will have continuous Assizes. It has been discussed. The substantive Chief Justice is in favour of the introduction of continuous Assizes but it means a few more judges and courts. 6.40 p.m.

We have taken all the space that we could last year. We did renovations to the Supreme Court. We built two new courts and the repairs and renovations at the Supreme Court cost \$237 143. I must declare an interest in relation to the Judiciary, a marital interest.

There have been two appointments to the High Court Bench at the end of last year. There is one court that is not staffed and the Honourable Prime Minister will have to make an appointment soon, hopefully, to take effect some time in the next month to two. Mr. Justice Smith is going home this year. There will have to be an appointment to the Court of Appeal.

*Aside.*

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: If the Honourable Member for St. Michael West looks in the Civil List he will see that there is only one person whose birthdate is not recorded. Within a year of assuming office the Government created two new courts. This must be evidence of the seriousness and commitment of the Government to improving the administration of justice and doing what is necessary to give some relief to the problem.

I think, Mr. Chairman, those are the points made by Honourable Members. Honourable Members have with them the Report of the Registrar for 1993. It is a very important document. I do not know how much people pay attention to it but it gives some historical data that is important for planning.

In the Magistrates' Courts of Barbados, for example – the 1993 – 1994 report is not ready yet – there were 15 200 cases. Of those, quite a substantial number were adjudicated. District "A" Criminal – 1 691, District "A" Criminal Court again – 1 482, Traffic – 3 007, Civil – 2 198, Oistins – 1 012, Boarded Hall – 904, District "C" – 838, District "E" – 758, Holetown – 1 293. It is all here. It shows the amount of work that was done in the court.

On the High Court side, the criminal side, the Registrar reported that of the 171 criminal cases

presented at High Court during 1993, 107 were adjudicated and 64 were traversed to the January Assize cases. That statistic alone suggested the need for additional courts and additional judges because 64 of those cases could not be dealt with by the courts because of time. I will give a little addition. The Court of Appeal in that year heard 155 cases, magisterial as well as High Court.

Mr. Chairman, the Government is well aware of the need to modernize the system. We have started last year doing exactly what the Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central wanted, a little project spread around. I will give them when I come to the other Heads 28 and 30 to show how the Government is doing. But this year the Government is going to be planning for the modernisation of the court system with a view to implementation of projects in the next three years. I have already told the Prime Minister and Minister of Finance that the time will come when this sector has to get substantial funds. The new penal system is going to call for substantial expenditure but we cannot escape it because a new penal system has to do with the development of human resources, the chance to give the youth of this country a better deal than they presently have. We have as a country to be prepared to make the expenditure and the courts the same thing so I give Honourable Members the assurance that I will give other information when we come to my substantive Heads, 28 and 30.

Mr. L. R. TULL: Just a few more questions.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: As far as the Chair is aware, the Honourable Attorney General ...

*Aside.*

Mr. CHAIRMAN: I thought you were winding up? I gave you half an hour.

*Aside.*

Mr. L. R. TULL: You do not wind up in Committee, Sir.

*Aside.*

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Okay.

Mr. L. R. TULL: Mr. Chairman, I just wanted to raise a few additional points and hope that the Attorney General will bend his mind to them for me. 6.45 p.m.

I am concerned, Sir, about the demeaning aspect of child support. Women go to the Magistrates' Courts up

and down the island and literally stand by like suppliant to get a few dollars paid into Court by delinquent men to keep their children going. I see it, Sir, I see it on a regular basis and I see these women going, sometimes they are shuttered aside, treated with less than dignity, as though they are going to beg, Sir. They are not mendicants. I believe, Sir, that we have reached a stage in our development where a more humane and sensitive approach can be adopted in assisting these unfortunate women who are doing nothing more than support for their children, to which they are entitled.

*Asides.*

Mr. L. R. TULL: I also want to raise the question, Sir, of this business of imprisonment for civil debt. We have a situation in Barbados, Sir, where the exigencies of life in Barbados make a number of people who have contracted debt unable, not unwilling, Sir, unable to meet the debts. You go into Bridgetown and you credit a mattress from one of the stores around town. Put it this way, Sir, a woman who has five little children and no man in the house, she goes to one of these places, with no down payment, and she trusts a mattress, Sir, I am not talking about a video or television or any luxury, a mattress. After a while she cannot continue to pay for the mattress but she is not working, the father of the children is not putting any money in and she has no source of income. If she had a fridge, Sir, or television or dining room set, or living room set the company can come and reprocess it and sell it for the money that is owing. You do not take back a mattress, Sir. Once you have used a mattress, if even once, you cannot get it back.

*Asides.*

Mr. L. R. TULL: The company goes to the Courts and gets judgement against that woman. If she cannot pay the normal payments, she cannot pay the judgement. So the next step, Sir, is to get an order of committal. So this same woman, whether she is living in Brighton, or Draxhall, or Byde Mill with her five children, one morning, finds that a marshal arrives, with a piece of paper in his hand, and grabs her and drags her off to Glendairy. No provision is made, Sir, for what happens to the five children. Nobody is concerned that when the Marshal is dragging her off that the little children are holding on to her dress and crying, and begging. He carries the woman off and dumps her in Glendairy for debt, Sir. This is not right, Sir...

*Asides.*

Mr. L. R. TULL: This is not right, Sir. I would not mention the part that Honourable Members mentioned, Sir, that quite often a Member of Parliament has to go and

put his hand in his pocket and go up in Glendairy, pay the money and get the woman out. That is a common thing, Sir.

*Aside.*

Mr. L. R. TULL: You put this woman in Court for debt. A lot of people in Barbados are being locked up for debts. People with impeccable character who through difficulties, economic difficulties, particularly the past few years have entered into genuine contracts, with the intention to pay, find themselves in positions where they cannot pay, men and women end up in Glendairy, cooling out. Something is wrong with that, Sir. I want the Attorney General to put this at the top of his priorities. It may not have been in the past, for one reason or the other.

*Asides.*

Mr. L. R. TULL: I am minding them, Sir, because the Members of the Opposition, and principally, the Honourable Member for St. John is ploughing contempt, and at the very valid point that I am making. He is showing, Sir, some kind of insensitivity of which I speak, Sir. He considers this to be a big joke.

*Asides.*

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: On a point of order, Sir. Mr. Chairman I have spoken in this debate and trying to find out what the Honourable Member was doing, other than warming his seat. The Attorney-General's office, when he was there, had an impeccable record himself until now, I discovered, that he left **all** of those things undone.

*Asides.*

Mr. L. R. TULL: When I was Attorney General, Mr. Chairman, Sir, this country was not thrown into the horrors of a structural adjustment programme, throwing large numbers of people out of work, which caused a lot of pain and suffering among masses of people in this country. It was therefore...

*Asides.*

Mr. L. R. TULL:... It was therefore not the priority in my time as it is today.

*Asides.*

Mr. L. R. TULL: Mr. Chairman, Sir, the Honourable Member for Christ Church South makes the important point that jurisdiction of Magistrates would probably have to be increased...

*Asides.*

Mr. L. R. TULL:...to take part of the burden off the High Court Judges, with the volume of work and so on, and the Attorney General agrees that, that will be a good move, and they would have to provide more Magistrates. I also, Sir, want to say a word about Magistrates. I would barely suggest that 90% of the people who go before the Law Courts, go before Magistrates, not before Judges. The Magistrates are the ones who deal on a daily basis with the whole of Barbadian humanity who goes before the Courts. I really think, Sir, that the Magistrates are badly under paid and I would suggest that to the Government, Sir, that they really do take a look at the pay of Magistrates for the voluminous amount of work they have to do and the important work in which they do. They are the ones who are sending people to prisons, they are the ones who are seeing **all** the ravages of the ills of society, the drugs, the broken homes. All the things that are going wrong they are seeing and dealing with on a daily basis. And I would like to suggest, Sir, that we really set about to do a regrading of pay for Magistrates. Of course, if there is a regrading of pay for Magistrates, it means that by reasoning there would have to be a regrading of pay for Judges. Judges in Barbados are notoriously paid, Sir, and we have to look at that.

*Asides.*

Mr. L. R. TULL: The Parliamentarians can break for themselves, Sir.

*Asides.*

Mr. L. R. TULL: I am making an appeal, Sir, we are dealing, Sir, with the quality of justice being delivered in the country and we cannot have it compromised in anyway. When you really look at the emoluments for Magistrates and Judges in this country it is scandalously low, Sir, and the Government has to take a decision, do not mind the criticism, although I believe that the people of Barbados will not criticise a regrading of Magistrates and Judges if they get to understand what they are being paid and the type of work they have to do, Sir.

I want to make one more final point, Sir, and that relates to the Law School, the point raised by the Honourable Member for St. Michael West. We brought a mentality in this part of the world that you have to do things the way the old colonial powers **did**. We have for a long time followed their University system and all kinds of systems without reference to our own indigenous conditions. This business of trading Law Schools for two years. Do you remember the two years when they set

up a big committee to walk around the region, spending a lot of money, to ask people whether they need the two years? They reduced it to eighteen months and so on.

There was a time, Sir, when a number of **Barristers-at-Law** used to train in England and used to qualify as Lawyers in eighteen months. Qualified as Lawyers in eighteen months and came back here and made important contributions to the system. The point, Mr. Chairman, Sir, is that most of the Lawyers that ...

*Asides.*

Mr. L. R. TULL:... We are **talking** about people like the Honourable, the former Prime Minister Barrow, Sir, who did not do a law degree, who did law in eighteen months ...

*Asides.*

Mr. L. R. TULL:... and were good lawyers, because, Mr. Chairman, Sir, you learn the law after you qualify. It is after you get into practice that you begin to learn what the law is all about, Sir. So it is a waste of money, Sir, for the Government of Barbados to continue to pay the economic cost for Barbadians to study in Law Schools for eighteen months and that kind of pay, Sir. It is a waste of money, Sir.

I believe that those Lawyers who practise in Bridgetown are, quite often, not given enough credit for the amount of training they give because most of these young Lawyers who come with the practice work with someone who is already in practice, like the Honourable Member for St. Philip South, who takes somebody under his wing and most of us would take somebody under their wing, and they **learn** the practice of Law from the Association and the working with practising Attorneys-at-Law. This is a luxury that we could have afforded when money was plentiful but money is not plentiful **anymore**, Sir. I am urging the Government to take a new look at our association with the Law School and see whether we cannot come up with a system that uses the experience of practising Attorneys to assist people who have gone through the rigorous of the Faculty Degree Course to come into practice, without having to spend this inordinately long period in Trinidad or Jamaica.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Mr. Chairman, Sir, since the Honourable Member raised the question, Sir, I wish to expand it. With the greatest respect for all who have studied it, it does not need **anymore** studying. Anyone who has done an LLB could not need more than one year in any law school anywhere and then they come back and get attached to a lawyer of a certain standard. The lawyer they are attached to must have been practising for longer than

"X" number of years and must be able to give a certificate that that person at the end of a year or as much time thereafter is fit to practice. End of story.  
7.00 p.m.

Let me tell you one of the reasons why it ...

*Aside.*

Mr. B. M. TAITT: You were not here when I raised the issue. I said I have a vested interest in it but it has nothing to do with me. The point is that if you look at the practice of law, if you look at the courses which are taught in the law schools, there are courses which are duplicated and there are people who will tell you that when they learn the course at Cave Hill, when they go to Trinidad what they learn has no relationship to what they learn at Cave Hill. I heard all the young lawyers say so. There are people who have a vested interest in maintaining the law school for two years.

There is also a myth that there are too many lawyers. The Honourable Member for St. Thomas has heard me say in here that there can never be too many lawyers except possibly in a Cabinet because lawyers **Q** not have to function in the law courts only. If you have lawyers in the public sector, those lawyers in the public sector would be able to **think** and assist public **administration** in a manner which does not now exist. If it was possible to have one or more lawyers in each Ministry it would save a lot of the confusion and **error** that is made almost daily through no fault of anybody in particular. All we need to do is to coordinate the thing properly and I think the Attorney General will find, on the record, that the former Attorney General indicated in Jamaica to his colleagues that that was the last time he was going to a meeting at which he was going to continue waiting for the report.

Maurice King reported to the Cabinet that he had told his colleagues that that was the last time. The Bahamas had their part of it. St. Kitts/Nevis decided they would have no part of it. Trinidad and Tobago, when it was convenient, if you will recall, changed their regulations to accommodate certain persons. The only safe and secure country that followed the rules and as a result is constantly behind the 8-ball is good old Barbados. It is about time that we tell Lloyd Barnett and company what the facts of life are and get on with it.

*On the motion of Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER, seconded by Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR, Mr. CHAIRMAN reported progress to His Honour the SPEAKER and asked for leave to sit again and Mr. SPEAKER resumed the Chair and reported accordingly.*

## SUSPENSION

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I beg to move that this House be suspended until 10.00 o'clock tomorrow morning.

Speaking on the suspension so to speak, it is proposed that during the course of this Estimates debate that we would start at 10.00 o'clock tomorrow morning, Wednesday morning and Friday morning. On Thursday we would start at 2.00 p.m. Lunch will be made available and we would start at 2.00 p.m. We would work therefore, as today, from 10.00 o'clock in the morning until 7.00 p.m. tomorrow Tuesday and Wednesday. On Thursday from 2.00 p.m. until 10.30 p.m. and then on Friday we would work again from 10.00 o'clock in the morning to 7.00 in the evening. It is anticipated that the guillotine would fall at 6.00 p.m. Lunch is expected to be sewed generally speaking between 12.30 and 1.30 on these days and we would take a 15 minute tea break at some point in the afternoon whenever debate allows. I would wish to remind all Members that the House is only suspended and not adjourned and that they really must be here for 10.00 o'clock in the morning. Thank you, Sir.

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

## RESUMPTION

Mr. SPEAKER: This sitting is resumed. When the Suspension was taken, the House was in Committee of Supply. To that it will now revert.

*Mr. SPEAKER left the Chair and Mr. CHAIRMAN resumed the Chair.*

## COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY (Resumed)

Mr. CHAIRMAN: This House reverts to Committee of Supply.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Sir, I beg to move that Head 11 in the sum of \$947 055 stand part.

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

*The question that Head 11 in the sum of \$947 055 stand part of the Bill was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.*

#### HEAD 25 – MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE & RURAL DEVELOPMENT \$42 678 449

Hon. R. C. EASTMOND: Mr. Chairman, in asking to move that Head 25, Ministry of Agriculture & Rural

Development stand part, I must say that on this occasion for the year 1996/97 the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development is seeking permission from this Committee for the grant of \$42 678 449 for allocation to the said Ministry. However, I want, with your permission, to make the following observation. For the year 1995/96 this Honourable House approved the sum of \$40 044 788 for the Ministry of Agriculture and in circumstances where that figure was approved for the financial year 1995/96, I believe the Parliament which approved it is entitled to find out precisely how such funding went. I am happy to report, Mr. Chairman, that the funds granted to my Ministry under various programmes and subprogrammes have yielded results which I take it that this Parliament should know because it was this Parliament that in the first place approved the funding.

I want to begin, Mr. Chairman, by indicating that in the last year the output of various commodities in agriculture did show significant improvements over the previous year and in that respect I would want to say that for the last year the output of yams increased by 119.1 per cent to reach 2 570.4 kilogrammes compared with 173.3 the previous year. In addition, Mr. Chairman, the output of sweet potatoes recorded a spectacular increase in the amount of 315 per cent.

In relation to onions, Mr. Chairman, even though the amount of hectares in the production of onions actually declined, output itself increased so we had a situation in relation to onions where the total acreage under onions actually decreased but nonetheless output increased by 71.1 percent.

In respect of vegetables we saw in 1995 string beans production increasing 297.2 per cent while the output of beet rose by 252.5 per cent the production of cabbage increased 254.6 per cent, carrot production 295.3 per cent and generally speaking the pattern of improvement in output continued. In relation to cucumbers we saw an increase of 288.9 per cent. Livestock also saw an increase, as did fishing.

Now, I deem it necessary, Mr. Chairman, to provide this information because if a Parliament through its Committee of Supply is minded to provide a particular allocation of funds, then that Parliament is entitled to know what became of the funds. There are instances where in moments of controversy Parliament has its own special committee, the Public Accounts Committee, to look at controversial issues but on this occasion I deem it my duty to inform Parliament up front that the monies that were voted did not go to nought and that, in fact, we did see agriculture, especially non-sugar agriculture, record significant increases.

Perhaps, Mr. Chairman, you would permit me at this point to also mention sugar agriculture. In 1995 largely

because of the drought in 1994, our total output of sugar was 38.4 thousand tonnes. This is for 1995. This year we anticipate that sugar would produce us about 60 000 to 61 000 tonnes. We expect the programme for the rehabilitation of the sugar industry should yield better results in the future despite particular constraints.

Mr. Chairman, I would therefore now want at this point, having provided the background, to go on to look at the allocation of \$42 678 449 and how we propose disposing of this amount of money if this committee is minded to approve the allocation.

Mr. Chairman, the position is that of the \$42 million plus which we are seeking to be allocated to the Ministry of Agriculture, we intend, subject to Parliament's approval, to apply \$26 269 471 for current expenditure and, as you well know, Mr. Chairman, this current expenditure is mainly taken up with administrative costs while we also are asking Parliament's approval for the grant of \$16 408 978 for capital expenditure.

Now, Sir, as part of my duty to be frank with this House, I would need to look at these figures more closely. As indicated earlier, we did get last year \$40 447 088 for the Ministry of Agriculture of which \$24 332 763 was applied for current expenses and \$15 712 025 for capital expenditure. We have a situation though where in 1996 we were to recover a revenue of \$1 455 520 but this year we expect an increase in revenue where our projections are that for the Ministry, revenue for the new year 1996/97 should come to \$3 931 110 so if we take into account our expected inflow of revenue and deduct it from the total of \$42 678 449 that we are asking really and truly we are asking for a net amount of \$158 071 more than we did last year. In other words, if we look at the global sum of \$42 678 449 and then take into account our expected inflow of revenue, in actual fact we are asking this committee to grant us no more than \$158 071 more than we had in the last financial year.

Mr. Chairman, with these monies we propose to implement and follow a number of programmes and, perhaps, at this stage you would wish me to highlight the major capital projects which the Ministry is expected to embark on for the financial year 1996/97. Of our capital projects we intend upgrading the facilities at Consett Bay and Skeete's Bay during the coming financial year to an amount of \$800 000. In addition, we expect to commence work on the proposed northern Fisheries Development Project for which we expect \$750 000 to be spent in the coming year.

We are also intent, Mr. Chairman, on providing funds for the Tent Bay landing site. We are embarking on a policy of continuing improvements to markets to which we are seeking in excess of \$5.1 million. Being aware of the special nature of the Scotland District, we are going to do

some capital works at the Scotland District which will cost us \$972 000. Apart from that, there will be some \$4 million allocated to the new Rural Development Commission.

These capital works, Mr. Chairman, require the necessary funding. We take it that all of these capital works are important as having a measure of potential for development for the particular areas to be affected by them. At the same time these capital projects will necessarily promote a measure of employment. As a consequence, therefore, Mr. Chairman, I am respectfully suggesting that these capital works are necessary for the good of Barbados. 10.10 a.m.

Mr. Chairman, we should also be seeking to continue to promote the fishing industry, among other things. But there are a couple matters relevant to the Estimates which I should very much highlight.

If Honourable Members would turn to page 61 of the Estimates, towards the bottom at sub-programme 250603, they will see that there is an actual reduction in the allocation to the sugar subsidy. In the financial year 1995/96, an allocation of \$4 million had been made. But this year the Government deems it necessary to apply \$2 million rather than \$4 million. And this requires an explanation, Mr. Chairman.

The reason for it, is that last year we had a situation where the sugar industry had been hard hit by drought, in particular. And last year the \$4 million that Parliament approved had been applied towards a programme of drought mitigation.

The farmers in the sugar sector had witnessed a scenario, where as a result of the drought of 1994 it had severely handicapped their efforts to optimise their production of sugar and in consequence, Government, under the Ministry of Agriculture, had provided \$4 million last year, primarily for drought relief and also as a programme for replanting for the independent plantations.

Now, in Barbados, since the restructuring of the sugar industry, we have two categories of plantations for the purposes of the restructuring exercise. One category is known as independent plantations. These are the plantations which still maintain their ownership and management structure, especially ownership structure because they had not yet reached a level of indebtedness as to require intervention by the Agricultural Credit Trust and the Barbados Agricultural Management Company.

These independent plantations, even though solvent, had still required a measure of support, from my Ministry, in the last year. But the reason for the reduction in the support this year, is not because of any abandonment of

these people, or not because of any desire to neglect them, but primarily because the circumstances that required a higher allocation of \$4 million last year, \$2 million more this year, do not now obtain, because the industry is very much back to recovery.

To make the point again, Mr. Chairman, what I am actually saying is this. In 1995/1996, the effects of the drought had been so severe as to warrant support to the industry in the amount of \$4 million but in that drought conditions no longer obtain, there is no need now for us to have to provide money by way of drought relief.

Whilst we were providing funds for drought relief last year, we also thought it prudent to provide a measure of funding for replanting. And by and large, by the time preparations were being made for the sugar crop for this year, the sugar industry had been very much back to recovery, to such a point, while last year the industry had seen a total output of sugar of no more than 38 000 tonnes, this year's projections were between 60 000 and 63 000 tonnes, which means that in the interim between the last financial year and this year, sugar output would have increased by 25 000 tonnes.

We are hopeful that the pattern of recovery in sugar, Mr. Chairman, will continue, notwithstanding the fact that there are threats by way of cane fires. The Government, as you know, has taken proper action at the urging of the Attorney General's Ministry to do something about this nuisance of cane fires.

I just thought it fit and proper, Mr. Chairman, to explain the reason for the decrease in support given by my Ministry to sugar. Notwithstanding that though, Mr. Chairman, this \$2 million would not represent all that this Government is doing for sugar.

As you well know there exists an entity called the Barbados Agricultural Management Company for which the Right Honourable Prime Minister and Minister of Finance has responsibility. And in his programme, as Minister of Finance with the BAMC coming under his portfolio, he too is providing a measure of support and subsidy for the sugar industry. This being by way of support to BAMC controlled plantations, which are now called non-independent plantations. These are the ones so heavily hit by debt that they owed out millions upon millions of dollars in debt. They represent a significant segment within the sugar industry, in that they represent 40% of all plantations.

Because of the need to restructure an entity called the Agricultural Credit Trust was created, with its functioning arm, a management arm being the Barbados Agricultural Management Company, and it is this entity, to which I am referring, in relation to assistance which the

Prime Minister's Ministry, the Ministry of Finance, as the Ministry responsible for it, would be providing in addition, Mr. Chairman, to the \$2 million to which I adverted earlier.

So I just thought it fit and prudent, Mr. Chairman, to inform this Honourable Committee of that particular matter.

In addition, Mr. Chairman, a close and careful perusal of these Estimates will show that in relation to the Water Programme, currently administered by the Ministry of Agriculture, that there is a diminution in the allocation to this particular programme and this requires an explanation as well, Mr. Chairman.

This Government is of the view that in relation to the management of water resources that with the existence of the Water Authority, that the Water Authority should properly be given full and total responsibility for administering and managing water resources in Barbados.

We have an anomaly, Mr. Chairman, where under the old Three Houses Act passed somewhere in the 1700s, there is clear reference to an entity, which we interpret these days to mean the Chief Technical Officer, as the person responsible for seeing that that Act was followed. So that Act contemplated a situation where the current person responsible under that Act, for water management, in relation to the Three Houses Spring is the Chief Technical Officer. Nonetheless, because of a number of problems over time, farmers in the Three Houses catchment area have been repeatedly turned to the Ministry of Agriculture in times of crisis. And sometimes to stimulate farmers' interest in continuing production and to reduce their frustrations, the Ministry of Agriculture actually got involved in making sure that the farmers in the Three Houses catchment area got water.

Nonetheless, in that this Government's policy is that the Three Houses Spring should fall properly under the Water Authority, and I believe that the Chief Technical Officer has a relationship with the Water Authority, we are now taking funds away from water resource management out of the Ministry of Agriculture and properly allocating them under the Water Authority for the management of the Three Houses Spring. Of course, this Government is also considering reforming the legislation affecting Three Houses, in such a way as to modernise it and at the same time taking into account the fact that we will be putting the Three Houses Spring and the resources, therein, under the Barbados Water Authority.

So when Honourable Members see that the Head, Management of Water Resources, has seen a decrease, I want to explain that it is not so much a question of about having turned our backs on that but a question of a change in policy where the Water Authority will be

administering the Three Houses Spring in the future. And Government is determined to make sure that the amount of wastage and problems associated with Three Houses are removed.

Apart from that, Mr. Chairman, I did hear the Honourable Member for St. John, who is not now in his seat, indicate yesterday that he was disturbed or, uttered words to the effect, that he was disturbed that he saw a mere \$4 million allocated for the Rural Development Commission.

It is this Government's policy, at the start of a financial year to allocate a given sum of money and then by way of a mid-year review come back to see whether it is necessary to increase that or to decrease it, or whatever.

Yesterday the Honourable Member for St. John was lamenting the fact that, \$4 million would not have been good enough for the parish of St. John alone. What we are saying here is that, we are asking that this \$4 million be given by way of transfer to the Rural Development Commission.

10.20 a.m.

I rather suspect that the Rural Development Commission is going to be so stretched as it delivers services to rural Barbados that a case may very well be made out at mid-year review for a review of the allocation and this is my response to the Honourable Member for St. John.

Perhaps, Mr. Chairman, while I am at it I can report to this Parliament what projects are being undertaken in rural development to date and the programme is going to continue down the road. We have allocated to the Benn Hill Re-development project a sum of \$698 000. This also, Mr. Chairman, requires explanation. The Benn Hill Project is going to be executed and developed through the National Housing Corporation but the funding provided out of the rural development vote and we have so far transferred \$698 000 to Benn Hill and we are looking to see that project come up to as much as \$1.1 million and the funding will continue.

We have also started work at Forty Acres, St. Thomas. Forty Acres represents an interesting community. It is east of the Shop Hill area, a typically rural district or north of the former Glendale Children's Home. For many years it was what the French would call un *village perdu*, a lost village. When the Honourable Member for St. Thomas became MP for the area he became aware of the fact that Forty Acres had been under developed, had virtually no facilities and at his own cost actually pulled his pocket and installed water for them.

We do not think that it is the role of an MP to have to pull his pocket to develop a community. We thought that

community development and the enrichment and enhancement of facilities for communities should be funded by the State and so we have started to fund a programme for Forty Acres by which its entire life would be enhanced and which we expect to be completed in the coming financial year.

So far in rural development we have committed funds to repair of bridges in St. James, including one at 4th Avenue, Rock Dundo, one at Zion Hill Tenantry Road, one at Westmoreland, one at Upper Taylor Gap, Risk Road, but you will recall, Mr. Chairman, that for the last financial year we had a situation where \$3 million had been allocated to rural development but we had a situation where it was not allocated to the Commission which was not yet in existence. It was allocated to the Rural Development Unit within the Ministry of Agriculture. Because of our position in breaking down funding for Government Departments under the Head some of the \$3 million dollars had been allocated under Heads like Operating Expenses, Plant, Equipment and Furniture and could not be applied for Structures. The advent of the Rural Development Commission would see a block type vote obtain where the Commission would be given, by way of transfer, a block vote and the programme that Honourable Members in this House would be seeking for their constituents would be very well addressed.

I did hear *sotto voce* the Honourable Member for St. Michael West make certain remarks, but the Honourable Member for St. Michael West must know that St. Michael West is no part of rural Barbados and he will therefore have to make his concerns felt...

Mr. B. M. TAITT: On a point of order, Sir, in keeping with my thesis that all of Barbados is one, Sir, I cannot accept that I know any such thing. I believe that I have said in this Committee before, Sir, that there is no divide between the poverty stricken people in the City of Bridgetown and the people next door in St. Michael South and St. Michael East, they all have one thing in common, poverty. We were told there would be an urban development commission to accommodate the issues so I wait.

Hon. R. C. EASTMOND: On the occasion, Sir, when the Rural Development Commission Act was being debated here the Honourable Member did in fact indicate then that he saw all Barbados as one, but we did not agree with him. I rather marvel at the humble way in which he just put in his point of order because he came in as a man making plaintive plea for help and in no way manifested arrogance or any sort of aggressive request. He just stood up as if to say "do not forget me". I take that to heart. I note that, Sir.

Mr. Chairman, apart from the projects already described we have so far ordered 1 500 street lights to illuminate the dark country side districts of Barbados.

I must explain to this Honourable House that I am a little bit perturbed that in a country where people boast about how efficient and fast the private sector is, that the private sector entity responsible for installing these lights has been as tardy as can be. They explain that they only have two teams to work the entire island, that they do have to do a lot of preliminary **surveying** work and things like that. There is no Government Department, Mr. Chairman, that installs street lights. There is just one entity in Barbados in the private sector that is responsible for the actual installation by request and they have been extremely slow after we applied for these 1 500 street lights to be installed at various points in Barbados. So if the Honourable Member for St. Lucy is impatient, his impatience should be squarely directed at the private sector entities that the approach has already been made to, that has not properly responded to his several requests.

Mr. Chairman, while on the question of rural development I want to say that the Ministry of Public Works had started a number of roads at various points in Barbados under the Venezuelan **Project** and the funding ran out. For example, some roads were started at Upper Highland, Content and Shop Hill in St. Thomas. Some roads were supposed to be done in **Monroe** Village and other parts of Barbados, the funding ran out and through the Rural Development Programme we have decided to finish as many of these roads as we could out of our funds just to make sure that the roads are finished.

Mr. Chairman, before I conclude, Honourable Members will see, when they look at the Estimates, that there is a very tiny allocation to the BADMC. I must indicate to this Honourable House, Mr. Chairman, that there used to exist in this country an entity called the Agricultural Development Corporation and another one called the Barbados Marketing Corporation. During the dying days of the last administration and most probably at the urging of the International Monetary Fund, a decision was taken, to merge the Barbados Marketing Corporation which was a marketing and commercial entity with a developmental entity called the Agricultural Development Corporation and out of that emerged the unfortunate acronym BADMC. At the point, Mr. Chairman, when the merger of the BADC and the BMC occurred and when legislation was brought to this Honourable House, it was clearly stated, Mr. Chairman, that the merger should bring about a situation where the new BADMC should be entirely self-financing. Honourable Members who were Members of this Honourable House at the time of that debate will recall that as a matter of policy this Honourable House learned from the last administration that the BADMC should be entirely self financing. The objective was to make it prudent in the management of its finances, the objective was to make it efficient in its operations, the objective was to make it cease to be a burden and a clog on Government finances.

The time has come, Mr. Chairman, where the situation where this BADMC owes out \$13 million. Not a debt incurred this year or last year, but a debt developing even before 1994, but in a situation where this BADMC has not been practising any kind of financial or commercial prudence, the time has come when we have carefully reviewed its operation.  
10.30 a.m.

I must say, Mr. Chairman, that its future will soon be put in the hands of the Cabinet of Barbados for restructuring. No longer can we go on subsidizing an entity that is entirely inefficient. No longer can we subsidize an entity with no real serious direction. No longer can we support an entity whose objectives are muddled up and confused. No longer, Mr. Chairman, can we support an entity that is a strain and **brings** about a drain on the public purse. I must say, Mr. Chairman, that there was a day in the former administration where for more than 3 years, despite having 7 so-called accountants in the Accounting Department, they did not produce an Annual Financial Report. There was a day too, Mr. Chairman, where when you asked for any kind of Financial Statement, it took a long time to deliver despite having 7 so-called accountants in the Accounting Department. There was a day when the entity seemed to feel that it was not accountable either to this Parliament or to anyone. I am saying, Mr. Chairman, in clear and unambiguous terms that we have reviewed this operation. We feel that for the future it should have more of a developmental role to play than a commercial role. I am therefore saying, Mr. Chairman, that it is destined for restructuring. It will be restructured, Mr. Chairman. It will not be permitted to continue its programme of wastefulness and shoddy practices. It will be **redir-cted** in such a way as to eliminate the various controversies that have attended it since its inception. I am saying so in a situation, Mr. Chairman, where as I already indicated when this entity first was created consequent of the merger of the ADC and the BMC, it was supposed to be fully self-financing. We are aware of that and we shall not be permitting it to continue on its wayward course.

Mr. Chairman, as I conclude, I just want to remind those Honourable Members who are not aware that I started by giving an account of how the funds provided for the year 1995-96 had been applied and what success has attended the application of those funds. Mr. Chairman, as I move that Head 25 stand part, I shall now sit and if Honourable Members have any particular questions or concerns, they are free to do so and I shall be able to come back sometime later and reply as I can. Thank you very much.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Mr. Chairman, after one has sat and listened to the Honourable Member for St. James North, one can only come to the conclusion that the BAMC is the best company in Barbados and one can

only understand why the honourable gentleman up there is receiving the salary that he has been given. But, Mr. Chairman, I would also like to say that the money that the Ministry of Agriculture is getting through its Revenue Department can go to rural development. They are two Ministries in the same and I cannot accept that the independent farmers of Barbados will be getting \$2 million more whereas the Rural Development Commission will be getting an increase technically from \$3 million to \$4 million. How can you as the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development feel happy to give the farmers of this country \$2 million more and give the whole rural constituencies \$1 million more? I am going to tell you why. If they are supposed to be getting \$2 million more because of drought and then you continue to show that the drought has passed, I would like to know why you are giving those farmers \$2 million more? I cannot understand.

*Aside.*

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: I will name the roads that should have been built. You do not worry. I will get around to that, Mr. Chairman. We have a situation also that we are having a Northern Fisheries Development and it is strange. I do not mind whether it is in St. James North or in St. Peter, but my problem is that nearly one year ago an area in Barbados called **Weston** was described as flood prone. Now, Sir, we have a situation where we are going to get the Northern Fisheries Development in that particular area. That area was not good enough for people to live but it is now good for the Government of Barbados to construct a building.

*Aside.*

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Mr. Chairman, I have been accused of lying. So I am prepared to give way to the Honourable Minister and to let the Honourable Minister explain to this Parliament where the Northern Fisheries Development will be located.

Hon. R. C. EASTMOND: Mr. Chairman, if the Honourable Member will give way.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: I will.

Hon. R. C. EASTMOND: Mr. Chairman, I did in fact refer during my opening remarks to a Northern Fisheries Development Project and the Honourable Member is questioning whether this is the same or proposed **Weston** facility. The proposed Northern Fisheries Development Project which is attracting \$750 000 mainly by the way of feasibility is contemplated to be done somewhere between the Gibbs area and down to Half Moon Fort. We are doing a feasibility study to determine the best site. Now you will notice that \$750 000 is allocated by way of preparatory work and feasibility. The **Weston** facility which is indeed

a 1994 Manifesto promise of the Barbados Labour Party and which promise was made before the battle of 3rd August, 1994 is a timely facility not attracting anything in the range of \$750 000 and, in fact, will be erected at a lower cost sometime soon when the existing houses including the squatters on that side **are** removed entirely. In other words, it is north of the fire station which I believe the Honourable Member for St. Michael South knows the best having **run** through that area as a boy before any of us in here was able to run through it. The area north of the **Weston** Fire Station has 3 or 4 houses, 2 of which are derelict. Those houses will be removed and then a modest facility will be installed to make sure that fishers in that **area** have better facilities. It is no great grandiose project and I am sure that it is **no** threat to the environment nor will it cause hardship in an area that was hard hit by a flood recently. Thank you very much, Mr. **Chairman**.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Mr. Chairman, I am extremely grateful for the explanation but I will still stand on my point. I cannot see how you can declare an **area** a disaster area and then set about to use Government funds and then you **can** use the excuse of a manifesto. You see we have a problem in this country and I keep saying it. There are people in this country who believe that a manifesto is a social contract and, whenever you get a manifesto being a social contract, you get wastage of the taxpayers money. That is exactly what is happening in this Parliament because they feel just because they put something in a manifesto that situations cannot change and they are bound by that and cannot put it in a better location. So now you see why, Sir, that there **are** some people who believe that when things change one should be prepared to change. I have no problem in saying this. I do not believe that a manifesto is a social contract and I will not depart from that, and I will tell you why. When you plan things and anybody who is involved in business will tell you, you cannot make a plan and not change it **because** situations change. You are telling me that after the flooding and **Weston** has been declared a disaster you are going to come in here and tell me that you had it in your manifesto and you are prepared to keep it in your manifesto because it is a social contract. Well, let me tell you something. The taxpayers out there will not look at it as a social contract. They will look at it as wasting taxpayers money.  
10.40 a.m.

Mr. Speaker, I want to go on to cane **fires**. We **on** this side do not just believe in glossing over issues, we believe in solving the issues of the day. We have a problem in this country with cane **fires** and that is why we cannot allow people to accuse people, we must look for solutions. My belief is that we have a problem with the capacity of factories to grind canes at the rate that will give a fair return to cane cutters and allow the plantation managers to get their holidays in time. I will develop it. You cannot ask a cane cutter to go into the sugar industry to work,

he has cut a load of canes then to hear that the factory cannot take the canes and he has to go home the next day. We have one problem, the factory is creating the problem for the worker. The cane cutters and the people who are familiar with the cane cutters know that once you have burnt canes the factories are prepared to take them, not that they deliberately set about to light the canes, but it so happens that when you have burnt canes they get to the factory quicker than when you have green canes, and at the end of the week the pay packets of the reapers are much larger than if they reap green canes. I would never accuse a cane cutter of burning a cane in Barbados; not me.

We have a system where the people who should set certain policies are not setting them. My suggestion is that whenever you have a cane fire, if it is on the BAMC land, that the management of the BAMC should call in all the workers and ask them to cut those fields and three things will result:

- (1) the canes would be reaped quicker;
- (2) the juice quality would not deteriorate; and
- (3) the incentives for people to burn canes would not be there.

The same thing would apply to the independent growers even though it would be more difficult to manage, and that is why I strongly believe that the Barbados Agricultural Management Company should be in total control of the agricultural industry in this country, because there are many gains to be got from a policy like that. You cannot ask the independent growers to come together. That is why when I saw \$2 million, after we were getting so many complaints about cane fires, in this Parliament, I thought the Minister of Agriculture would have said today that this \$2 million would be going to the independent growers, but there is a policy in place to tell the independent growers that if they expect to get this money, whenever a plantation has a cane fire they are supposed to help. Those farmers who do not help the other plantation would not be entitled to any of this grant. It is my belief that if you had a policy like that we would not only be getting 61 000 tonnes of sugar, but there is enough evidence that we would be getting more than 61 000 tonnes of sugar, because you would not have to grind stale canes. In one day a field of canes, no matter how big that field is, could be delivered to the factory and every time a load of cane is delivered it could go straight on to the mill belt.

Mr. Chairman, sometimes it is not what you give, but how you give it. It is clear to me that the \$2 million given by this Government to the independent growers will be a waste of time. Not only will it be a waste of time, but it will not stop. If you had given them a one off, they would have no reason to come back next year, but I am going to tell you that next year they are going to find a reason to

come back and ask for support. You have not learnt from the 1982 situation. It is regrettable that the Honourable Member for St. Joseph is not in his seat, because I know I would have received some support from him. I am sure I will receive some support from the Honourable Member for Christ Church South on this, because he knows well, even though he might not want to support me by getting up and saying so, but he would tell me so in the comdors of this Parliament.

Mr. Chairman, the Honourable Member for St. James North has laid a very, very good foundation for an agro-processing plant in this country and I must congratulate him for that, because it has been about a year and a half I have been calling for this plant and I did not receive any support, but today the Honourable Member for St. James North has finally agreed with me that there is a need for an agro-processing plant. I will tell you why I am saying this, Mr. Chairman. Yams, 119.1% increase, potatoes 315% increase, onions 71.1%, vegetables 297.2% increase, cucumbers 288.9% increase, beets 252.5%, cabbage 254.6% and carrots 295.3%. Getting this type of increase after the BAMC has been formed – it is true we were criticised for forming the BAMC, but now we can see the success of the Barbados Agricultural Management Company, but we do not have any problems with that. The problem is that if we had an agro-processing plant you would not see cabbage at 254.6, you would be seeing 1 254.6, because there would be an incentive for farmers to produce more. Because we do not have an agro-processing plant, we have farmers who ploughed back carrots this year in their fields, and it hurts. How can we have a situation where farmers are prepared to plough back carrots when there are people on the streets begging for something to eat? Sometimes we do not have a social conscience and we must do something. I am sure that if that plantation had belonged to the BAMC those vegetables, instead of being ploughed back into the fields, would have found themselves in one of the day nurseries allowing the Government to help subsidise the cost of those day nurseries.

You would also have heard the Honourable Minister of Agriculture speaking about the bad MC. It is true we have been hearing about this bad MC now for 18 months and we were promised for 18 months that something would have been done about that bad MC, but nothing has been done about that bad MC.

#### *Aside.*

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Are you saying years? You are making it worse now. From day one you should have known what you had to do.  
10.50 a.m.

Mr. Chairman, what would even make it worse is that I told them when they were discussing the BADMC

that there are certain aspects of the BADMC that should have been transferred to the BAMC. Can you tell me why the ginnery is still at the BADMC? Can you tell me why the BADMC is still controlling sugar lands? When you have just invested millions of dollars in the BAMC and there is evidence that the BAMC is doing the job they have asked it to do.

I am saying that you cannot continue saying that the BADMC is not doing the right thing when you know that you have another entity to which you can transfer some of the roles played by the BADMC. I honestly believe, Sir, that if you are going to transfer the sugar lands, if you are going to transfer the ginnery, then you should also transfer the right to import onions, the right to import chicken wings and the right to import sugar to the BAMC. I will tell you why.

When you have an entity like the BAMC in total control of those entities, then you have a company that can dictate the policy for you and it will relieve the Ministry of Agriculture of having to figure out what other people are doing, because they will have a company that they can easily get the information from and they do not have to worry whether somebody is hiding information from them or not.

You see, Mr. Chairman, we have a situation where there are people in this country who are saying that diversification is wrong. I disagree with that. Diversification is the thing that is going to make the agricultural industry in this country profitable.

I will have to come back.

Hon. Sir HAROLD St. JOHN: Mr. Chairman, I always welcome the opportunity to say a few words on this matter. I would like, first of all, to raise with the Honourable Minister a number of fundamental matters in relation to agriculture in Barbados. I am one of those who are of the view that the Democratic Labour Party did not pay sufficient attention to the potential damage that could be done to agriculture in Barbados when it agreed at the level of the Caribbean Economic Community to a common policy which was propounded by the multilateral institutions that in the Caribbean it would be possible for the Caribbean countries to introduce trade liberalisation within a rapid period of time.

I opposed that at the time and I will continue to urge the Government of Barbados to raise this matter at the earliest opportunity when the review of the operations of the single market is taking place. I am fortified in this view by further information, which is now public knowledge, and that is that the developed countries in the world who heavily subsidise agriculture, all of them, have themselves adopted an attitude that they will make maximum use of

the rules under the WTO and former GATT regimes to phase in over a much longer period the trade liberalisation measures.

I am further fortified in the view by the recent experience of the Canadian Government in dealing with particular products, notwithstanding the fact that they are members of the WTO, notwithstanding the fact that they are members of the North American Free Trade Agreement. In respect to specific products, they have changed their licensing regime to tariffs but have set the tariff rate as high as over 250%, and despite all of the complaints of the United States Government, despite all the complaints of the Mexican Government, the position as I have been reliably informed is that the legal regime contemplated that you can convert your licensing regime into tariffs but that over a period of 15 years you have to reduce it to a reasonable amount.

If it is necessary for a Government like Canada to do that for its farmers, how is it possible that the Governments of the Caribbean could have accepted the directives of the international institutions and moved straight into a trade liberalisation regime with very few elements of protection other than the ones you have for public health and standards and things like that. This must be reviewed.

Another point we have to deal with in this area is that we in Barbados have to let other Governments in the Caribbean understand very clearly that we are not under any circumstances going to allow the Rules of Origin to be used as a vehicle for semi processing taking place in CARICOM countries of subsidised raw material from abroad. Milk is a classic example of that. We are on good ground when we take every step that is possible to ensure that the free trade regime within the Caribbean is not exploited by some of the manufacturers in other parts of the Caribbean.

I don't care what they do in Jamaica in this respect. Jamaica, as I have always said, and those countries which have decided to accept the dictates of the multilateral institutions and introduced devaluation have a built-in tariff by virtue of the fact that they have devaluation. A US dollar at the customs barrier and a Jamaican dollar at 40 cents, if you apply 20% to \$40 it is very different from if you apply 20% to \$2. So they can try and get around it in that direction. But as far as the Barbados Government is concerned, it is on good ground when it says we are very strong adherents of the concept of free trade and to the concept of trade liberalisation, but the rules always presuppose that the Governments would not subsidise their domestic productions and neither the United States, the European Economic Community or any of the big developed countries have adhered to the rule that you must reduce your subsidy.

11.00 a.m.

Even for the reduction of your subsidies you have a phase-in period. A great disservice was done by the Governments of the Caribbean Economic Community when they agreed to the rapid introduction of trade liberalisation in this area. It is the duty and responsibility of this Government now to let that be known to their colleagues in CARICOM. We are on good ground.

In Jamaica recently because of the damage that was done to their indigenous cattle industry both milk and beef arising out of this, steps have recently been taken to reverse that policy. It is not only Jamaica that has to do it. We have to do it. We have to put it back on the table. Jamaica is out of the IMF now. They can talk freely. Barbados can talk freely. Trinidad and Tobago can talk freely. We must have another look at this and I call on the Government to have another look at this.

#### *Aside.*

Hon. Sir HAROLD St. JOHN: Yes, Jamaica is out of the IMF. Since the last programme they were finished with that. I think recently the Prime Minister of Jamaica said that he was very glad to announce that they did not want anymore money from them. They have the debt relief now so that is all right so they can go ahead. They can start fresh.

Now, Sir, I regard this as a very important area and there are a select group of products. It is significant that the select group of products that we are talking about as likely to be affected are the very same products that the Canadian Government has had to take the special measures to ensure that their farmers were not subject to unreasonable competition having regard to the subsidies that the free trade partners have given to their producers. What we should do is to try and get some technical assistance from Canada to see how we can introduce - I am not saying 200 per cent, because in any man's land 200 per cent and over sounds high - but the point is that we can have a reasonable balance between that figure and the figure we have now where I believe CARICOM has agreed that the maximum protection for agriculture is 40 per cent. This is a matter that needs study. This needs a lot of study.

One of our problems is that being small countries we do not have that technical expertise instantly available to us as to the international trading conditions and these multilateral agreements. But there is some expertise in the Caribbean. A tremendous amount of work has been done in this area by the Institute of International Relations in Trinidad and Tobago, part of the University of the West Indies.

I was privileged to listen to a programme on the radio, part of a CANA programme I believe it was, and this point was made some time ago. I have an interest in this area and continue to follow the international

developments in this area. Many countries have now decided that they are going to take advantage of the regime which permits them to phase out over 15 years. I believe only Australasia and a few countries like New Zealand and Australia who have natural conditions are able to boast that they do not have a regime of subsidisation to their farmers so as to be in conflict. But that is a deliberate decision they have taken and their economies, no doubt, can stand it. That is one area. That is an important point of policy.

The second point, Sir, that I wish to deal with, and I really want to deal with some of the things that were said by my friend for St. Lucy. The BADMC is an amalgam of the ADC and BMC. The BMC was started in the 1960s. From its inception there have been problems with management at the BMC, no question about that. From the inception there have been problems with the fact that they have been asked to do a job which sometimes it is impossible, however well they are managed, for them to perform satisfactorily.

Everybody knows that where you have processing which is not controlled by the growers that there is an inherent conflict between the processors and their need and desire to make a reasonable rate of return because the raw material producers want the highest price and the processors want the lowest price. The only successful systems I know of that reconcile this inherent conflict are those in which you have the growers in control of the processing or where you have a Government as a deliberate policy subsidizing the processing industry by virtue of paying a flow price for the raw material. We have never been able to do that. We have tried it with pigs and we have tried it with other things.

To some extent we have to develop, after our experience of all of these years, now our own pattern and our own norm. There is a feeling now in Barbados that the private sector, through the producers' associations that we have, can become the processors. I want to caution the Government that unless the processors establish discipline over their own members in relation to this area sooner or later you are going to have what exists. You are going to have a lot of breakaway organizations and the lobbies are going to try and put pressure on the Government for subsidies.

It is a difficult problem. If you say you are going to put this area into the hands of the BAMC that does not solve the problem because the BAMC already is in receipt of Government subsidies. It is in receipt of Government subsidies in order to get the sugar production up and if they have to do the vegetables and all the processing, they are going to have to be in receipt of more Government subsidies.

Sir, in the last Government regime they tried at Fairy Valley to have a processing agency. What happened to it?

In a short period of time it **lost** so much money that it had to be closed down. That is a fact.

*Aside.*

Hon. Sir HAROLD St. JOHN: My friend says it is the private sector that did that. In this area there has been a great change over the last 30 years in the sense that today you have a number of specialist exporters who are interested in the export of vegetables and root crops. You also have the producers' organisation, the BAS, which has built up some expertise in primary processing and in the export area. But I want to caution you too. I am aware of the fact that both the Government and the private sector have had great difficulties in collecting money from produce which they have exported. That is the market condition.

Whether you export to Canada, England, wherever you export to you have importers who do not pay. If you read the history of the efforts of the Caribbean in this area - in my own constituency the headquarters of the Caribbean Agricultural Marketing Company, I knew all the players in that game. They had **a project** funded, I believe, by the European Economic Community, to encourage a Caribbean wide agricultural marketing company concentrating on exports. Their record shows they had problems **too**. This is a very difficult **area** in which a few players may be able to survive but in the absence of export credit insurance, <sup>2</sup> the absence of excellent intelligence in a **market to which** you are sending the vegetables, you are likely to run into a lot of problems with uncollectables.  
11.10 a.m.

The first excuse they give is they may have left your **country** in the best of conditions but for some reason or the other when they arrived there the grade was low and it did not match the specifications. So therefore instead of paying you the agreed price they will pay you a lesser price. All these things go on. It is not an easy thing.

The best help that the Government can do in this area is to encourage the development of the linkages between the producers and the export marketing, with the few specialists, who will deal with it. It is time for the BMC to get out of that. They have lots of years of experience and they have not **gotten** better they have **gotten** worse.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member, you have two minutes to wind up your presentation.

Hon. Sir HAROLD St. JOHN: Yes, Sir, I am going to, Sir.

On the other hand there is still a role for a Government entity in this area because there are certification procedures that need to be done. My own

experience in international trade, in this area, is that foreign countries prefer to have a Government agency responsible for certification, rather than the private sector certifying itself.

So I will come back on this matter, Sir.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Mr. Chairman, I share some of the views expressed by the Honourable Member, who just sat down, with regards to the need for Barbados to be vigilant...

*Asides.*

Mr. B. M. TAITT: If the Minister of Agriculture would listen, ...for Barbados to be vigilant in this whole question of trade in primary products, especially. But I want to ask the Minister a few questions, which I think are important.

The first one: I noticed at page 50 of the Estimates, you are making provision for purchase of land at Skeetes Bay, for the execution of works at **Consett** Bay and Skeetes Bay, and the new abattoir facilities. I wonder if the Minister can give us some idea of what progress has been made in these long-standing projects, and more particularly, the whole question of the abattoir. I **am** satisfied that, until we get the question of the abattoir settled once and for all, we are always going to have a problem with the export of our meat products, for example.

In the context of liberalisation of trade, it is still unacceptable that we are unable to sell some of our pork products, our fresh pork, our chicken, in the Trinidad market, for example, because of their insistence on what they call the FDA standards, and our inability to reach their standards because of the state of the abattoir which we use for processing our **fresh** meat.

I believe the Minister should bring us up to date on where we are on the abattoir. Is it still going to be built on the original site? Has reconciliation with the private sector been **confirmed** or is there still, the inherent, difficulty where the private sector was of one **kind** of view and the public officers who were to advise the Government were of a different point of view? Would the size be the same?

You were speaking of the new abattoir facility, so I would like some clarification on that. I think that would help us to understand and take positions in keeping with the theme struck by the Shadow Minister for Agriculture of the need to do something with surplus product in Barbados. However it is dealt with, the development of a good industry in agriculture is going to be dependant, as he quite correctly said, on what happens with the excess product.

I also wish the Minister to relate to the two priority agricultural enterprises which will be **served** at page 53, Cotton Research and Development Project and the Flower Crops Research and Development Programme.

Now, I am an unabashed believer in when people have been repentant, that you can forgive them. And if the Barbados Labour Party has discovered that cotton is a product worthy of development, I believe that once they have confessed their sins they can be forgiven to the extent that it is necessary. But I would like the Minister to give us his present thinking on the development of the cotton industry because for a substantial period of time, over the last few years, it was left in the minds of Barbadians that the development of cotton was, somehow, dangerous, wicked, spiteful, among other things, to say nothing of corrupt.

But I am glad that as time has gone on, the attitude – and here I do not seek to condemn the Minister, I think he understands that – has changed. The realisation that Barbados has to have another foreign exchange earning product that comes out of the soil of Barbados is a reality. It is a reality that is now apparently accepted without further contention.

And if that is the case, the whole issue relating to the patent,...

*Asides.*

Mr. B. M. TAITT: ...My colleague and I have some very...

*Asides.*

Mr. B. M. TAITT:... but both trained.

Mr. Chairman, I would like to get some idea of where we are in relation to this court case that has been outstanding for some considerable time and which stands in the way of our development, to some extent. This Committee should get some information.

I think that if the Minister has read all of the documentation relating to the issue, he would be in a position to enlighten some of his colleagues, who had taken a rather **ostrich-like** attitude to the concept of the development of cotton by the knee-jerk reaction to the use of the word **CARSICOT**.

Even today, if one listens to the call-in programmes or reads the verbiage written in the Barbados Labour Party's columns, one can still see constant reference to CARSICOT with some **distain** when, in fact, CARSICOT was the attempt of a former Minister of Agriculture to put cotton on the front burner and to bring the country to a level of integrated production of Sea Island Cotton that

would have given Barbados the **same** stake in its industrial development that some of the countries in the Pacific and in the Far East now enjoy. I believe the Minister should bring us up to date on what progress has been made in regard to that particular issue.

I also **think** the Minister should tell us what is happening in the Flower Crops Research and Development Programmes, another innovation in which the Government, that I had the honour to be part of, moved towards the 21st Century.

There is no question that flowers present an opportunity for Barbadians in agricultural development. And to the extent that it is necessary to put more resources into this development, it is desirable that the Government should acquaint its **citizenry** with its plans and programmes.

Mr. Chairman, there is also another matter on which I would like the Minister to give us his considered thinking and that of the Government.

11.20 a.m.

It has been popularly put into the market-place, no pun intended, that we are going to have our own brown sugar shortly and everybody is looking forward to Barbadian sugar in their teacups once again. That is a **marvelous** image and wonderful but in the context of the economic development of this country I wonder if the Minister **does** not agree that it is infinitely better for the country generally to earn the foreign exchange from any sugar which we produce while continuing to sweeten our coffee with less costly sugar.

My understanding of this situation is that when we are producing only 60 000 or 65 000 tonnes, if we sell all of that on the hard currency markets that we would get all of the foreign exchange from the sale of that sugar. Now the difference between foreign exchange that is earned from sugar and foreign exchange earned, say, through tourism is that the amount of investment of the local part of the total investment to acquire the foreign exchange is so relatively small as to make it worth our while to seek to earn our foreign exchange through crops and other indigenous products where our input has been at the highest level.

I am not criticising the Government. If the Government makes that priority that is the Government's watch and the Government will call that tune but I do not think we should not let our citizens know that there is a small price to pay for having our own home-grown sugar as opposed to having sugar from somewhere else.

The need to indulge in massive sugar eating ought to be a matter dealt with by the Minister of Health at

a different level because I am sure that as my good friend the Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central will confirm that the less sugar we eat in Barbados the better off we will be but this is not the time. Quite seriously, apart from the need for us to eat less sugar in Barbados, the economics of our eating our brown sugar when our production is at the levels that it is still at, as opposed to the levels we are striving for, we should pay some attention to that. I saw the most curious argument which is alleged to have come from the Government but I immediately said that no one in the Government would make that argument. They suggested that the growers would be getting the same price for the local sugar as they would get for the EEC sugar and therefore there is no difficulty in selling the sugar on the local market but of course the Minister and I would know that that is a false argument, certainly it was fraudulent in relation to the foreign exchange **earning** capacity of sugar and that is why sugar has remained, even in the days when sugar was being produced at a cost higher, much higher, than we were getting on the world market. Even in those days we persisted in trying to produce as much sugar as possible because of its capacity to **earn** foreign exchange.

On any occasion when Barbados ceases to **earn** a substantial proportion of its foreign exchange from products produced from scratch in Barbados, our economy will really be in trouble. So I would like the Minister to let us have his Government's thoughts on this business of 16 000 tonnes that are used in the local market and the 16 000 tonnes if sold on the international market would provide more benefit to Barbados than if the 16 000 tonnes are sold in the shops in Barbados. It does not matter but I hope no one will accuse me of not being nice to Barbadians by not wanting them to have their own home-grown sugar because those who must eat sugar in large quantities are **free** to eat it from anywhere as far as I am concerned, but my argument is an economic argument which we used also when we produced our own oil here.

If you will remember when we started mining our own oil in Barbados I remember in those days, in the 1970s, we had to make the decision whether we would export our **crude** and continue the programme which we had and for some time we did that until Mobil was in a position to properly process our crude because we continued to make foreign exchange from selling our oil produced in Barbados.

These are not arguments that are so subtle that they are beyond the understanding of ordinary persons and I believe the Government **has** a responsibility to put these arguments into the marketplace so that the people can understand the choices they are making and the choices they have to make.

Mr. Chairman, the Ministry of Agriculture was not debated last year and so we are not in a position to know

what is the status of the extension programmes but I recall that just prior to our leaving the Government that the Chief Agricultural Officer had indicated a reorganisation of the whole approach to extension services and I believe that that is a programme which must have led to the increased production which the Minister outlined in the opening statement. I wonder if he could again give us some indication of the extent and level of these extension services and if they are working differently, if they are working better. Based on the estimates it is very difficult the way they are organised these days to tell how much money is being spent on what.

While I am on my feet, let me say that I hope that the Budget Department, the Chief Budget Officer and the Ministry of Finance will get together and finally let us have Estimates prepared in a manner that is more commensurate with understanding for people who have to deal with it. These figures as they are laid out here, even for us who have been around for a long time, require some very dexterous capacity in order to understand even remotely what some of it means. There is a lot of verbiage in this which does not help. I am not saying this is the Government's fault because this is the system which has been evolving but I hope it will not be long before we have a set of Estimates that are set out. They could get the model from the U.N. There is a system of setting out the Estimates and the cycles and you can read them and understand them and do comparative analyses between what happened last time and what is happening now. As it stands now the most of the time we are flying by the seat of our pants remembering stuff from the previous year but you cannot really read these Estimates and come to any significant conclusion. Sometimes you have to accept the word of the Minister. On this occasion it is a Minister whose word you can accept. On the other occasions there are Ministers whose word you cannot accept. Mr. Chairman that is grist for a different mill. I hope the Minister will be able to give us some responses when he gets up next time.  
**11.30 a.m.**

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: Mr. Chairman, I spent a considerable amount of time last night looking through these Estimates in the area of agriculture and comparing them with previous Estimates, not specifically from the point of view of looking at the amount of money being spent this year as compared with previous years but looking to see whether there were any new initiatives that would characterize and define a new Government and a Ministry under the direction of a new Minister. Regrettably, I was unable to identify anything in the Estimates to suggest to me that there is going to be any significant change in the status of agriculture in Barbados. The single major departure has been the inclusion of Sub-programme 02 under Programme 9 under the Head - Rural Development Commission which can probably better

be defined as a political slush fund rather than any serious developmental activity. Because, unless we wish to titillate and fool around with the emotions of people living in rural areas, we seriously have to ask ourselves the following: What does a Rural Development Commission do in the context of a Ministry of Agriculture and why this sum of money is under the Ministry of Agriculture?

I reflected, Sir, and I thought that I would cast my mind and see what are the ingredients necessary for rural development in Barbados. I believe that housing is an important one. We have a Ministry responsible for Housing and an allocation in these Estimates for Housing. I thought that Transport was a very important factor in the development of rural areas. I believe that we have a Minister responsible for Transport and there are allocations in these Estimates dealing with MTW. I thought that Community Development would be an important aspect of rural development and Education of the people in a rural **area** at all levels. I believe that we have a Minister of Education and I believe that we have allocations in this Ministry for Cultural and Community Development under other heads. I believe that Roads and Road Development are an important aspect of rural development. I believe that we have a Minister responsible for roads in Barbados and there are allocations in these Estimates for that purpose. I believe that there are other areas of development for which the public must take some responsibility across the board whether it be in health or education and there are appropriate allocations already in these Estimates. I believe that jobs for the people in the rural areas are an important developmental aspect that should apply to rural people and I believe that job creation as it affects public policy would be articulated under the heading of Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs by and large.

Therefore, pray tell me, Mr. Chairman, what is this \$4 million all about on top of \$3 million last year and to be sure as we get nearer and nearer to elections that \$4 million will become \$6 million or \$10 million? What is it all about? As I said, it is not about Housing. Housing is already taken care of. It is not about Transport. It is not about roads. It is not about community development. It is not about education. It is not about health. What is it about? I know exactly what it is about. I am not stupid. I have been around here long enough.

*Aside.*

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: That is right. You have the answer. You cannot confuse me or come and put all kinds of things in all kinds of fancy language and expect me to swallow that foolishness. This is an attempt, as the Honourable Member for Christ Church South has indicated quite frankly, for political consolidation of the rural vote in Barbados.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member has to note that the Chair does not take any observation of *sotto voce* comments and therefore that should not be any part of the record. The remarks by the Honourable Member for Christ Church South shall therefore be **struck** and expunged from the record.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: How can you strike South Central from the record? You cannot strike me from the record. You did not hear. Anyhow, I do not want to get involved in that too much but the general thrust of your ruling is quite correct.

So that I believe that it is very important that the people of Barbados understand that a substantial proportion of their money in the amount of \$4 million is primarily for party political purposes in the rural areas of this country and has absolutely very little to do with the development of Barbados. During the few minutes that I heard the Minister speak, he was pointing out that there is nothing he can do to accelerate the provision of public utilities in the **rural** areas because it is not under his control.

*Aside.*

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: You said that people have a false impression or words to that effect of the efficiency of the private sector of Barbados and that it is **difficult** because of considerable delays in getting utilities placed in certain rural areas of Barbados. You said that. So I see this as a facilitating agency for political **expediency** and I think that amount has no place in these Estimates under that head. From the very beginning, I was suspecting that this was the **purpose**, objective and intent of the **establishment** of the Rural Commission in Barbados...

*Aside.*

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: I will deal with the issue of Local Government in a different context altogether. I just want to deal with what **should** not be **inside** here starting off with under the **Ministry** of Agriculture. **As** far as I can see, the Minister of Agriculture also has **sufficient** allocations under the other **subheads** under the Ministry of Agriculture to carry out all of the things that are **required** in the rural areas as well. Provision is made for **Extension** Services. Provision is made for all the traditional help that should be available to small farmers. Provision is made, as he said, for the enhancement of agricultural activity on the plantations which would benefit those people living in **rural areas** that relate job-wise to the plantations. So all those agricultural components of rural development are already provided for within the Estimates.

Sir, we have provisions for Housing, Transport, Roads, Education, Human Resource Development and

all other aspects of the development of the people of Barbados already funded in the Estimates including Agriculture and we have this separate Head **sticking** out in the Estimates like a sore thumb that will catch attention. All this business about accelerating the progress, that was the argument which was put in this House at the time and I had no doubt what it was all about.

11.40 a.m.

I have no doubt whatsoever that it is about accelerating the progress for the Barbados Labour Party, not accelerating the progress for the people of Barbados. All that is required is a proper and effective co-ordination of the services provided by the various executing Ministries, free from any political input, apart from what is decided here in the Parliament of this country, and to get the politicians out of the day-to-day allocation and the day-to-day spending of public funds when you appoint whom you feel like on commissions and this kind of thing. That is exactly what is going to happen to the money. Those of us who have been around long enough know exactly how this **kind** of thing operates, and all the **kind** of high powered verbiage with which this **kind** of exercise may be endowed cannot persuade me other than the fact that what I am seeing here is quite inappropriate.

There is no question that there is a need for accelerated rural development in Barbados. We are not saying there is not the need there. I am saying that this is not the mechanism. The only people who are going to benefit from this would be the politicians, as far as I can see, because in any event the money is already provided under the other Ministries.

There are one or two other things I will be **talking** about later on. I was particularly pleased to hear the Honourable Member for Christ Church South address this question of the impact of trade liberalisation, not only on the agricultural sector, but on other sectors of Barbados. It is something you have to watch, as well as the question of the impact of **free** trade on agriculture and on **agro**-industrial development in Barbados.

The other point I want to raise is this. I should like the Minister to give us some idea of his long term view of the development of the Scotland District and its integration into the economy of Barbados. For many years we have gone through the routines of voting under various Heads for various activities in the Scotland District area. I believe that by the appropriate development of that area it can make a significant contribution to the development of Barbados and for job generation in Barbados; that whole area, starting from Pico Teneriffe going right across to Sam Lords Castle. I think there is tremendous potential there. I would like to hear some kind of a vision by the Minister of Agriculture as to how he thinks his portfolio can fit into

a major and appropriate environmentally friendly and environmentally protective development for that **area**, linking it of course to various aspects of tourism, fisheries and this kind of thing right through that particular **area**.

This is the kind of thing that if we spent \$4 million on an appropriate study, an appropriate action for development over a period of 10 to 15 years for that particular area of Barbados, which I think holds out tremendous potential for development, especially when we look at the environmental problems being caused on the west coast and the south coast, partially as a **result** of over development, that kind of exercise, that kind of expenditure, where you can see global benefit to the entire community would be very worthwhile indeed.

I have no doubt, whatsoever, that based on our experiences with the south coast and the west coast and our experiences in investment patterns in these areas and the return for Barbadians, new opportunities can be created for development in that area. I really wanted to see some new initiative coming out of the Ministry of Agriculture rather than the same stale allocations year after year, the same stale issues, especially now you have a new Ministry in a new Government to find a new thrust for development.

Mr. Chairman, this is my initial contribution. I will be returning on this matter of agriculture later, because I believe it is pretty pivotal to the safe and sustainable development of Barbados.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Chairman, I want to join the debate to deal with a few issues that have been raised by the Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central and the Honourable Member for St. Michael West.

I want to say, first of all, that the Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central's antagonism to the expenditure of funds on agricultural development in general, and rural development in particular, runs deep. You **will** recall, Sir, that in 1986 the then Minister of Finance brought into this House a package of tax measures, the purpose and the effect of which were to substantially reduce the burden of taxes on people in the upper echelon. My colleague, the Honourable Member for St. Thomas, asked a Parliamentary Question on October 21, 1986 requesting the Minister of Finance to state what cuts in expenditures had to be occasioned in order to accommodate his **tax** give-aways. The answer was provided on July 21, 1987 to the effect that the then Minister of Finance had to make \$38 million in cuts in expenditure to accommodate his tax give-aways. The heaviest burden fell on the agricultural sector where \$9.4 million in cuts were effected, and within the Ministry of Agriculture \$300 000 in expenditure was cut from the then Rural Development Programme. This Member has had a long-standing grievance against any Government of this country spending any money on rural development and he has a record

in Barbados of cutting taxes on the rich so as to be able to deprive **farmers** under a rural development programme from funds. He cut **\$9.4** million in agriculture, on the Government Analytical Lab, **\$467 000** from the Crop Research and Extension, he cut Agricultural Diversification by **\$198.7** thousand, he cut Irrigation, he cut the allocation to Vegetable Production, he cut Livestock Development by **\$1.1** million, he cut Dairy Development by **\$370 000**, he cut the Veterinary Research and Development by **\$742 000**, he cut the Agricultural Development Corporation by **\$800 000**, Markets by **\$12 000**, Scotland District Development, for which he has just requested a vision from my Minister, he cut that by **\$563 356** in order to accommodate his **tax** give-aways, and he is now calling on the Minister of Agriculture to express in this House a vision for the Scotland District Development when he cut, in the one year that he was Minister of Finance, the vote for the Scotland District by **\$563 356**.

**11.50 a.m.**

Rural development, Sir, he cut by **\$300 000** and now cannot understand why the problems of rural poverty have so accumulated that we have to revisit the question of rural development. We speak in terms of trying to stimulate food production in order to reduce the import bill. There was a national fruit orchard project in this country and he cut that by **\$223 000** as well. He even cut the entire vote of the Speightstown Fishing Harbour which was a grant provided by the EDC.

Sir, I want the House to **understand** that the full burden, the largest proportion of expenditure that was incurred in this country by any sector to accommodate the **tax** giveaways by the Leader of the NDP, was the agricultural sector which carried **\$9.4** million of **\$38** million of cuts that were incurred, and within agriculture the Scotland District programme is there for the record and the rural development programme also suffered substantial cuts.

Mr. Chairman, I cannot finish there. I must refer the Democratic Labour Party to its manifesto of **1986** on price supports. I am reading from page 5 of a document that is a document of the House.

"Price support **and/or** subsidy to the sugar industry will be continued, in the interest of job preservation ... and in the context of our agricultural revitalisation and diversification policies."

Mr. Chairman, Sir, the Member for St. Michael South would have heard me make this point again that it was left to him in **1988** to bring to this House a price support system for agriculture after the member for St. Michael South Central had come to this House and talked in terms

of giving the sugar industry all that they wanted. But he, when he was Minister of Finance, although he had committed the Democratic Labour Party to a manifesto position to continue the price supports, **1986** came and went and there was no price support; **1987**, no price support and it was left to the member for St. Michael South to bring a price support. The result was a rapid downhill fall in the level of sugar production in this country from **111 000** tonnes in **1986** to **83 000** tonnes in **1987** to **80 000** in **1988** to **66 000** tonnes in **1989**.

Nobody in this House should listen to the member for St. Michael South Central because he had a record that cannot be defended and he if he wants to hear from our Minister the vision now for the Scotland District Development, has a responsibility to tell the House what great injury was done to the Scotland District from his decision to withhold **\$563 000** in funds in **1986** from that part of Barbados upon which funds now have to be spent. I am saying, Sir, that he is a man that must be speaking with forked tongues to be now saying that we should be increasing expenditure on the Scotland District when funds were voted in **1986** which he cut by more than half a million dollars. That is the level of debate that we have come sadly to expect from the member for St. Michael South Central because he does not believe that the records will ever come back to haunt him. But the records, Sir, are there. He had the opportunity to maintain the expenditure of the Scotland District and I want to say, Sir, that in this year's estimates I have required that expenditure be increased for the Scotland District because the failure of this country to consistently spend funds on the Scotland District has led to a situation where expenditures of a previous time period, particularly the **1960s**, on irrigation facilities has been wasted because there has not been sufficient maintenance. The Scotland District has therefore become an area under stress and we have in this year's estimates increased the allocation.

The Member for St. Michael West raised a legitimate issue that I think the House can sensibly join in, the question as to whether Barbados should export the surplus over the European quota to build up a reserve as distinct from selling it to the local market. Sir, we have had the benefit of advice on this matter and the Government's position is that we will build up the reserve in phases rather than all at once so that for example in this year there is the possibility if the fires allow for us to have a surplus over the European quota of between **6** to **8 000** tonnes depending upon the outcome of the crop, that we could decide to carry forward all on the understanding that what we would be doing is building up a reserve in the European Union unit against the eventuality that we would have a drought sometime in the future and that reserve would allow us to be able to maintain our quota without a drought threatening Barbados' standing in the European market.

Sir, we have decided, insofar as they are asking Parliament simultaneously to vote funds to increase the amount of planting that farmers do, to bring up the production and on the basis of probabilities that we would carry forward not 6 000 or 8 000 tonnes to build up a reserve but at a rate of 2 000 tonnes a **year** with the understanding that we will continue to build up a reserve.

The House has to be told, Mr. Chairman, that the best market for Barbados sugar, revenue wise, is the Barbados market. The sugar industry realises \$1600 a tonne when it sells sugar in Barbados, while it realises only \$1400 a tonne at the best from selling it on the European market so that it suits the purposes of the Barbados sugar industry, if it is going to come back to a situation of viability, to try to maximise its sales on the local market to the extent that is consistent with meeting our external premium market requirements and building a reserve for abroad.

Our policy this year therefore is that we will carry forward 2 000 tonnes and build a reserve in Europe and sell the surplus of domestic production on the local market. But, Mr. Chairman, Sir, I need to bring to the House's attention a particular problem, an issue that has arisen out of the policy that has been pursued not just to import sugar but to allow the Barbados Agricultural Development Corporation to realise the profits from the sale of sugar locally.

In 1985-86, Mr. Chairman, when we last had price supports the domestic price of sugar in Barbados was raised on the understanding that the difference between the new price for sugar locally and the old price would have gone to a sinking fund to redeem the bonds. I negotiated the 1985 sugar bonds and it was raised again in 1985 that the price differential would be put into a sinking fund to redeem the price support bonds when they fell due.

From 1989, the Barbados Agricultural Development Corporation had been allowed to import sugar and to sell the sugar and to use the proceeds from the sale of sugar to run its operations. We now have a state corporation which depends on the importation of sugar for its survival. The result is that the funds have not been going to the sinking fund to redeem the price support bonds when they fall due. They are going to fall due now without there being a sinking fund in place and that is a financial issue that we are grappling with in the Ministry of Finance.

I want to say, Mr. Chairman, we are committed to bring back sugar production in this country to a stage where Barbados should be able to satisfy its domestic requirements for sugar from local production. This is not just a chauvinistic national position we have adopted but the reality is that the viability of all of the sugar industry depends upon our sugar industry being able to sell its sugar to its best market, which is the Barbados market.

While I understand the point being **made** by the Member for St. Michael West that there might be a net foreign exchange benefit ensuing from selling our sugar elsewhere and importing world market sugar, the fact is that you have to balance that net foreign exchange consideration with the question of the overall revolution in the industry and the impact on the viability. This House has been committed and we are committed to a range of supports for the sugar industry and we have an obligation as a result to make sure that the industry financially is as viable as possible. We have provided funds to assist the industry with planting to carry production from 65 000 to 75 000 tonnes and there is a subsidy in this year's Estimates for that purpose.

We are servicing the debt of the **BAMC** and, as I said, it will now fall to the Ministry of Finance to find a way of dealing with the price support bonds when they fall due in the absence of a sinking fund for the purpose.  
12.00 noon.

The industry therefore has to be put in a position where it will maximize its revenue from whatever source that is going to be garnered. I want to impress on the House, Sir, that the sale of sugar locally is one of the means by which the sugar industry should maximize its revenues.

I also want to say, Sir, that I have started to **speak** in terms of the need to look back at the structure of the Barbados Agricultural Development and Marketing Corporation and that is dictated by the background I have just given the House that we now have an enterprise in Barbados which realizes \$15 million and more a year in revenue from the sale of imported sugar. It has developed an organizational system designed to deal with imported sugar. Once we are no longer committed to importing sugar, and given the quality of the sugar to be imported, all Barbadians want us to stop importing sugar, and the institution that has developed a structure to import sugar will have to change.

There is an additional point, Sir. Barbados is **the** only country in the Caribbean that continues to have to use import licences on soft **drinks** as a way of protecting the soft drink producers from competition from **other** Caribbean soft **drink producers**. **One of the reasons** why that is the case is that our soft **drink** producers **are** uncompetitive **vis-a-vis** other regional producers because whereas, regional producers **are** allowed to buy their refined sugar at international prices by importing it themselves, our soft **drink** producers have to buy refined sugar by importing it through the BADMC who imposes their margins on the imported sugar. Then they **turn** it from point to point and you have additional costs ensuing to our local producers in the food and beverage industries,

but particularly the soft drinks industry, precisely arising out of the nature of the arrangement for the importation of refined sugar.

We have **struggled** in CARICOM, Sir, against the rules. We have used imported licences to stop other people being able to outsell the soft drink industry in Barbados. A day will be coming, Sir, when we have to rationalise it. Barbados cannot be responsible for the single market in CARICOM and be the odd man out where trade with soft drinks is concerned. Barbados does not produce the refined sugar necessary for the soft drinks industry.

Mr. **CHAIRMAN**: The Honourable Member has one more minute.

Rt. Hon. O. S. **ARTHUR**: And it will continue to be import. but we will have to allow the soft drinks industry to be able to import sugar at world market prices if it is to be competitive and if we are therefore going to move to the stage of being able to compete in CARICOM.

I also want to join those in this House who have spoken very constructively about the dangers of unbridled liberalisation in agriculture. I just want to give the House the assurance that I have established a private public sector commission to **analyze** the implications of any removal of licences by Barbados particularly on agricultural goods because we still have to maintain licences on agricultural goods from CARICOM and devise safeguard mechanisms within the context of the CARICOM Treaty to make sure that our agricultural producers are not disadvantaged by our giving vent to any free trade policy in the region. The new Article 29A of the CARICOM Treaty allows a Government to take defensive positions in order to support its agricultural production from undue competition from regional producers and we will invoke those as the circumstances require.

It is also the case, Mr. Chairman, that Barbados has faced unfair trade practices in trading in agricultural commodities **more so** than in any other commodities within CARICOM. There are some CARICOM countries that, in relation to their own commodities, apply CARICOM standards for meats but then expect the rest of CARICOM to follow **U.S.** Food and Drug and Administration standards. There is a lot of confusion in relation to the Rules of Origin and the domestic content on a large number of food products, sausages and other things and Barbados **has** carefully documented every instance of unfair trading practices in agricultural commodities within the region. I want to give the assurance that we will be invoking every safeguard mechanism allowed within the CARICOM Treaty including the use of standards and other such mechanisms to make sure that our agricultural sector and our food processing centres do not suffer by reason of our giving vent to our commitment to support free trade in the region.

I will necessarily have to come back in this debate, Mr. Chairman, but I really do feel that on things like support for agriculture, rural development and the Scotland District this House can fully disregard the pomposetting from the Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central because history will never absolve him from the massive cuts he put on rural development.

Dr. R. C. **HAYNES**: Mr. Chairman, the Honourable Member for St. Peter who is an economist, is someone whose opinions on economic matters I from time to time respect. He has just sought in this Honourable House to put forward the preposterous argument that because there were reductions in expenditure across the board, including agriculture and everything else in Barbados as part of a fiscal policy which saw the economy on a balanced basis, including agriculture by some 5 per cent in 1986, and I think 2.8 per cent in 1987 in real output, the only two years for a long period that there was significant expansion, although I think the Honourable Member for Christ Church South can take some credit for 1986 as well, to be reasonably fair. Now, how does a man who is an economist come in a House of Assembly and say that because there was a \$550 000 reduction in the vote for the Scotland District 10 years ago that that was responsible for the **destruction** of the Scotland District? Such idiocy, Mr. Chairman, is something that should not be inflicted on this Honourable House.

Mr. **CHAIRMAN**: Please withdraw the word "idiocy."

Dr. R. C. **HAYNES**: Such bogus argumentation is not something that should be inflicted on this Honourable House because he is an economist. If I had heard such argument from other Members skilled in other areas then it is something that you could tolerate but to hear it coming from someone who is an economist that says that a reduction in a vote in the Scotland District 10 years ago was responsible for the destruction of the Scotland District! Mr. Chairman, have you ever heard of such stupidity in all your life?

Now, the second point I want to make is this. The Honourable Member said that I was responsible as Minister of Finance for a reduction in sugar output in 1986.

*Aside.*

Dr. R. C. **HAYNES**: In 1986 and 1987. Those were your words.  
12.10 p.m.

Rt. Hon. O. S. **ARTHUR**: On a point of order, Mr. Chairman. I said the Member's refusal to grant a price support as promised, caused the sugar production, Sir, in the years after 1986 to decline. Those are my words.

And I used the fact, Sir, and I want to compliment, the Member for St. Michael South, for having brought a price support in 1988, to give support for the 1986 crop.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: Mr. Chairman, I sat down here, I allowed the member to make all his distortions. I just ignored him. I checked my facts and I am dealing with them now. If you are uncomfortable, it is too bad.

The fact is that in 1986 I was the Minister of Finance in the DLP Government, after the end of the sugar crop. And the second problem is, that only a clown, outside of this House, could accuse anyone, during the Government in 1987, for a reduction in the sugar crop in 1987 when the canes had already been granted for the acres, whatever acres there were, were already committed and 1986, in fact, showed a decline on 1985 as a result of reduction in planting of the acreage.

What stupidity, Mr. Chairman! But you see, Mr. Chairman, I have watched the Honourable Member use this kind of argumentation, with great passion, to embarrass other Members of the Opposition, who might not be as familiar with these details as I am. But he is not going to get away with it.

And would you believe it, Mr. Chairman, that both in 1986 and 1987 there was a significant expansion of almost every aspect of agriculture in Barbados.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: On a point of order, Mr. Chairman. As usual, Sir, The Honourable Member will seek to mislead the House, Sir, unless you walk with the facts, Sir.

I am citing the Annual Statistical Digest, Sir, of the Central Bank of Barbados for 1994. It shows, Sir, that sugar produced in 1985 was 100,000 tonnes. Sugar for 1986 was 111,000 tonnes. But he has just told the House, Sir, that there was a declining level of sugar production for 1985 and 1986. And he talked about people being stupid, Sir, but the records, Sir, are here.

He did not inherit any declining pattern of sugar production, Sir. The sugar production was going up and the refusal of the new DLP administration, Sir, to announce a price support for sugar before 1988 caused people to stop planting, in the interval, between 1986 and 1987, and caused sugar production, Sir, to decline. The records, Sir, are here.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: Would you believe, Mr. Chairman, you are hearing from a man who was adviser to the Barbados Labour Party in 1981 when sugar production, speaking from memory, fell from something like 130,000 tonnes to 81,000 tonnes or somewhere, the lowest in the history of Barbados, up to then? And he was an adviser to

the Government? And in one year plummeted from the highest, for many years, to ...

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: On a point of order, Sir. I happened to be in Jamaica working, as an employee of the Government of Jamaica, when the sugar production for 1981, Sir, was conceived and being undertaken. I came back to Barbados in the midst of the sugar crop of 1981, so good Lord, you could not hold me responsible for the sugar crop for 1981? I was not even here.

#### Asides.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: Mr. Chairman, the Honourable Member was in Jamaica boasting, to his friends, that he was advising the Government. That is well known. That is well known to one and all. It's known all over the place. As a matter of fact, the first time I heard of the Honourable Member, somebody from Jamaica asked if I knew of this gentleman who was advising the Barbados Government all the time, Sir.

But the point that I am making, he has no right to be taking any moral high ground on the issue of the sugar production in Barbados, and to link a price support as a vital component to the expansion of sugar after five or six years of price support which had failed miserably then, is a bit of joke.

Now, Sir, you know, the magic of this whole thing was that to be able to cut expenditure a little, insist on efficiency and get the high levels of productivity in the various....

#### Aside.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: When you look at the 1986/87 pattern in relation to agriculture, we saw cotton on the improve. We saw a whole range of non-sugar agriculture expanding.

I don't need to go through all the details here, because there is no question about it, that 1986 and 1987 were very good years for non-sugar agriculture, both in terms of local production and in terms of exports in Barbados.

But the myth that you are cultivating, and the myth that you have cultivated, and the myth that will be your destruction, and the myth that you continue to propagate in Barbados, that unless you spend huge sums of money, no matter how you spend the money, no matter how you waste the money, that that is evidence of good management. And that is the core of the argument.

The reality is, if you look at agricultural output in Barbados in 1986 and 1987, and when you compare it

to what was going on over the previous years, non-sugar agriculture, then you **see** the kind of improvements that **took** place in that period of time.

So what is the issue? Is the issue production? Is the issue jobs? Is the issue performance? Or is the issue spending more and more public money? And he is an economist, not me. I know that he could only come in here. He could not go into any other economic forum with that kind of bogus argumentation **talking** about you reduce the money by 1% or 2% or whatever. And because you have reduced the money, despite the fact,...

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: On a point of order, Sir. I would just like to bring to the House's attention, Sir, that the provision for the Scotland District in 1986/87 was \$2.7 million. So when a Minister of Finance cuts a provision of \$2.7 million by \$563 000, it is not just a 1% cut you are **talking** about, Sir. It was a savage, savage, savage cut in the allocation for the Scotland District, Sir. And I am suggesting, to the House, that if you were to cut any department that is in such a sensitive area, as the Scotland District, by as much as 20% of its vote in a year, that the **damage**, Sir, is going to be enduring, and that is the charge that we are levelling against the Member for St. Michael South Central, Sir.

I am also saying that while he is now accusing me of wanting to increase expenditure, he is also now saying that we should be finding more money now to spend on the same Scotland District. But he had his chance, Sir, and he cut a vote of \$2.7 million by \$563 000. It is not a 1% cut, Mr. Chairman, and that is why it is so serious, and that is why it sticks in my memory.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: Mr. Chairman, it is a sad, a very sad thing to see an Honourable Member unable to remain in his seat...

*Asides.*

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: ...He spoke, he distorted, as much as he liked. I am trying...

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member is asked to withdraw the word "distort."

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: ...Well, he gave as much misinformation as he could and... He put...

*Asides.*

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: ... he put whatever interpretation he wished to place on the matters before him.

All I am saying is this. That where you have a situation, where all aspects of agriculture expanded in those two years, it ill befits him to get in this House and try to

criticise me on those particular matters. I have gone through the Economic Reports, here, there are both here and there is no question that agriculture had a hard time in the middle 1980s, a very difficult time in Barbados and it started to climb out during that particular period.

I would say this, Sir, I also remember the particular circumstances surrounding that adjustment in 1986/87. One of the reasons was that a lot of information was brought through the Ministry of Agriculture on the problems of wastage on the programmes that were taking place at the particular time, and the Ministry, itself, wanted an opportunity to re-evaluate the efficacy of the particular programmes in the Scotland District, and even the persons. That is a fact.

12.20 p.m.

I will make a telephone call very shortly because I remember well who was in charge of the Scotland District and I remember what were the issues raised at the Planning and Priorities Committee in relation to the programmes then in place in the Scotland District. There was a considerable amount of argument and decisive arguments put forward that there needed to be a change in thrust, a change in emphasis on the way in which the whole question of conservation was taking place in the Scotland District at the time. I will make sure that I call the person who was in charge of that project during the interval here. When I get back to the House I will have all the details. I am quite sure that that came out of the particular discussions we had at the time.

Now, Mr. Chairman, I do not want to deprive the Honourable Member for St. Michael South of his time. I just wanted to make a very simple point that it was fundamentally an unacceptable argument that is unworthy of the Honourable Member for St. Peter. The problem with the Honourable Member for St. Peter he talks at one moment as an economist and the other moment as a politician. I understand when he is talking as a politician but the tragedy is that a lot of his Members on that side do not recognise when he makes that transition and this is a clear instance of someone abandoning his training, abandoning basic common sense and coming in here making this kind of silly argumentation to this Honourable House today that because there were cuts in a particular area that that destroyed agriculture when all the evidence he has is that agriculture performed extremely well in those years.

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

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: Mr. Chairman, that is the limit of my intervention.

*On the motion of Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER, seconded by the Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS, Mr. CHAIRMAN reported progress to His Honour the SPEAKER and begged for leave to sit again and Mr. SPEAKER resumed the Chair and reported accordingly.*

#### SUSPENSION

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that this sitting be suspended until **1.30** in the afternoon.

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

*The question was put and resolved in the affirmative and Mr. SPEAKER suspended the sitting accordingly.*

#### RESUMPTION

Mr. SPEAKER: This sitting is resumed. When the suspension was taken the House was in Committee of Supply, to that it should revert.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: This Honourable Chamber now reverts to Committee of Supply. The Honourable Member for St. George North.

Hon. G. A. CLARKE: Mr. Chairman, I would like to first of all compliment the Minister of Agriculture for setting the stage in agriculture by which this country can take off. I believe that agriculture has provided tremendous opportunities for the people of Barbados, not only in terms of jobs but also in terms of food production and providing stability to the economy of this country.

I would like also to say that agriculture is the base on which most Third World countries have formed their economies and Barbados is not an exception. Therefore to strengthen a country's agricultural base is really moving in the right direction and therefore, Mr. Chairman, the provision in this year's Estimates shows that the Government intends to spend more than **\$42.6** million in agriculture which is indeed a large sum, moving up from last year which I believe was **\$40** million.

Of this sum, Mr. Chairman, **\$26.2** million will be spent on recurrent expenditure while **\$16.4** million will be spent on capital expenditure, making a total of **\$42.6** million. I believe that to the observer that sum, once it is well spent, will **provide** some form of growth within the agricultural division and I want to speak on a number of small points that the Minister of Agriculture spoke about today.

First of all support for the development and improvement of the sugar industry in Barbados. It is a fact that the sugar industry in Barbados declined to a modest total of about **38 000** tonnes last year and is expected to

increase to about **63 000** to **65 000** tonnes this year. That is indeed good news. To the people of Barbados it is a significant increase this year and if we **are** serious about sugar production we have to put support behind the sugar producers and the sugar growers in this country. Sugar has been the **life-blood** of our great grandparents. This country has boasted of a lot of its development out of sugar. I believe, Sir, great developments like the Deep Water Harbour and the Queen Elizabeth Hospital and so on came out of revenues **from** sugar and therefore any support for the sugar industry is vital.

**1.40 pm**

It is a fact also that the decline of the sugar industry always come about when the small farmers are **at** a disadvantage. When you support small **farmers**, the sugar industry will increase and by putting support behind sugar and encouraging small farmers to get into sugar production will do well for this country. Therefore, to the extent that this Government decided that Bulkeley factory was to remain open, that indeed is a boost for the Minister and the Government. If the Bulkeley factory was closed, one would see the decline within the sugar industry especially in the St. George Valley. The St. George Valley is still considered to be the largest single area of sugar production in this country. If you go to the St. George Valley, you will **see** for 2 or 3 miles sugar cane cultivation. The last Government had the intention and planned to shut down Bulkeley factory and it was the Minister of Finance and I am sure the Member for St. George South who pleaded for the continuity of the Bulkeley factory not only as a transshipment port but as a factory which produces sugar. So we are happy about that.

I also want to say, Mr. Chairman, that small farmers within my constituency and within the rural area **formerly** depended to a large extent on sugar. Now I understand that a number of acres have been coming back into production. But I am not sure if the Ministry of Agriculture would have any statistics to show how many small farmers were brought back into sugar production over the last year or so. From my observation, I still **see** a number of small farmers who are not in the sugar production. In fact, we still have a lot of idle land in certain areas in my constituency which I believe could be under sugar production. If you travel for example from Combermere School to Waterford, you still **see** a lot of land laying idle which **can** be put back into sugar production.

But I want to find out if it is Government's desire in putting idle land into production. I also want to ask the Minister how many Extension Officers are **now** available within the Ministry of Agriculture to advise small farmers on what types of crops to grow. Now there was a time when Extension Officers would travel early in the morning to help advise small farmers as to what crops to grow and advise them on what kind of fertilizer to use

and what time to plant crops. I am not sure this is the case **today**. For example, at Groves Agricultural Station in St. George where about 20 years ago Extension Officers came to the various areas within my constituency, in St. Joseph and also in St. George South early in the morning to advise small farmers. So that if you have this type of activity the Central Department of the Ministry of Agriculture would know how many farmers are growing vegetables, fruits and canes and what advice can be given. You will also know how many farmers **are** in livestock production. They will be able to detect diseases on an early basis. I am calling on the Minister to use his office to bring back these Extension Officers into the system which will help the small farmers. Because agriculture provides that source of employment which is important and I do not believe that the Minister of Finance is able to say with any degree of accuracy how much real finance come out of Agricultural activity. There are a number of people who grow their vegetables and who sell them and they do not pay taxes. They sell their fruits and eggs and this is important for agriculture. We cannot boast of an industrial state. We are involved to some extent in tourism and that is our main source of revenue. But I still believe that we must maintain the agricultural sector and must do whatever we can to retain it and to promote the growth of crops.

I understand that there has been an increase in the output of yams and potatoes for last year. I understand also that even in this year's crop season there **are** many people who right now rely on yams and potatoes but who cannot get them now. I would like to see also an even further increase in the yam and potato output.

I believe, Sir, that the Ministry of Agriculture must help small farmers cultivate their land. There was a system in place some years ago where small farmers were able to get their land cultivated at a nominal price. I hope to see this facility again and I would like to see it even extended further as we go on into the next century.

Sir, I **also** want to **speak** to the Rural Development Division within the Ministry of Agriculture. The Member for St. Michael South Central was questioning the importance of the Rural Development Division within that Ministry. I would just want to say, Mr. Chairman, that rural people **are** people too. Rural people have voted in the last election for change. They voted in your constituency, Mr. Chairman, for better roads and better **side-walks**. People in the rural are. voted for bus-stop facilities, better street lights and housing and recreational facilities. They voted for agricultural support and cultivation. Therefore, I believe that the Rural Development Commission can play a vital role in helping to provide these things for the rural people. The **rural** people pay taxes too. They have to travel to work and when you go to some parts of my constituency like **Applewaites** Village and Golden Ridge, you still see a lot of mud tracks which reminds one of the days of slavery.

You still see, **Mr.** Chairman, a number of under-developed economic activities which need to be put into the streamline of modern economic activity in this country. People still have to travel with 2 and 3 pairs of shoes either going to church or to work. These are the facts of life which need to be addressed.

Therefore, now that the Honourable Prime Minister has put money into the Estimates for this division of rural development, I think it is indeed a good sign that we want to address the imbalance which has taken place over the years.

1.50 p.m.

The Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central spoke about the relevance of this Department. Only this morning I took note in his constituency that a number of small activities are taking place through the drainage unit. I will speak on urban development under the next Head, but we want activities in the rural areas and if it is properly planned all rural constituencies – be it St. Philip, St. John, St. Lucy – should get their fair share of development. It has nothing to do with the person belonging to this side or to that side. The Ministry of Rural Development, if it is properly planned, should give constituencies within rural areas a piece of the cake, as we say, but development should take place.

Mr. Chairman, there has been a lot of talk about the taking up of agricultural land for housing. There are a number of persons who are involved in agriculture, and a number of organisations, who feel that there should not be any activity other than agricultural activity taking place within the rural areas, but I believe that through the Rural Commission we can have activities such as housing and recreation for persons who are in areas far out into the canefield belt and so on. I also believe that the Rural Commission can identify areas where we can establish better communities, better recreational facilities which would **indeed** help to promote the type of activity which would help not only the rural communities but also Barbados as a whole, and it will have a great impact on our tourism, because there is a link between agriculture and tourism. If we have proper development within rural Barbados, it will definitely impact on **eco-tourism**, which would help the country to a large extent.

Therefore, Mr. Chairman, I see the Rural Commission as playing a vital role within today's economy and, as I said before, if it is properly implemented it will help also the urban areas.

Thank you.

Hon. R. C. EASTMOND: Mr. Chairman, I am not winding up, I am about to respond to a number of questions that were asked.

The Honourable Member for St. **George** North raised a question about the involvement of small farmers in sugar and I can tell him that at June 1995 we had projected that some 20 000 acres would be worked by small farmers for sugar agriculture and indications are, at January 1996, that some 26 000 acres are actually being worked by small farmers. I do not have any figures in relation to the total amount of small farmers actually involved in sugar agriculture, but the information I have here is that they are working some 26 000 acres at the moment.

Hon. Sir **HAROLD St. JOHN**: Was sugar production from 26 000 acres? I think you should check that again.

Hon. R. C. **EASTMOND**: I am sorry, Sir, 26 000 tonnes, not acres.

Mr. Chairman, the Honourable Member for St. Michael West asked a number of pertinent questions. He queried the state of the extension services and I will answer him frankly and honestly. At the moment the BADMC is responsible for organising tractor services, especially for small farmers. At the same time, under the former Integrated Rural Development Programme they offer irrigation facilities and advice in relation to that. As it is, the extension services are really spread out, because within the Ministry itself there is a section called Services, manned by four or five people who literally visit farms and advise. Then there is the Information Section, which would have put together a lot of the evidence and results from that research, and that also plays an advisory role. Under the Plant Pathology Section, where farmers complain of diseases affecting their crops, Mr. Phillips and others from that Section will then go and render help. There is an Entomology Section which also provides services. The services themselves have not collapsed, it could very well be that there is a cry for the services to be co-ordinated in such a way as to be more visible and to be seen to be performing a more direct role.

The Honourable Member for St. Michael West also queried the position in relation to cotton. There is a court case which, unfortunately, has been adjourned and adjourned and now set for next month. We have taken the best advice we could get on this matter and it seems, based on the advice we have got, that we have an excellent chance of getting what we want.

The background to this is that many years ago when cotton was produced, it was decided that because of the special nature of Barbadian cotton it should be marketed by way of trade mark or patent and we settled for trade mark. Initially, an institution called WISICO had the rights to the trade mark. In recent times somehow the trade mark situation became very complicated and when CARSICOT was involved in the marketing of cotton it seems as though the trade mark slipped into the hands of CARSICOT and

one of the objectives behind the court case next month, if it is heard promptly, is the determination of where the trade mark should go. If the trade mark goes back to WISICO, and we are hopeful that will happen, then it will mean that with the issue relating to the trade mark settled we could get embarked on a proper policy for the future of our cotton.

At the moment we are hamstrung somewhat in deciding a final policy precisely because of the uncertainty of the court case. However, we have been receiving a number of approaches from interested investors who are indicating that should the whole matter of the trade mark be resolved to our satisfaction, they are prepared to work with the Government of Barbados in relation to a policy on cotton that would see Barbados go beyond being a mere primary producer. Historically, and up to recently, Barbados would have been a producer of cotton at primary stage. We are hopeful that, with all the difficulties in the way resolved, we might be able to get involved not just at the level of growing the raw cotton, but at the secondary stage where things like processing could actually be started, but this is of course all subject to the outcome of the court case scheduled for April.

Mr. Chairman, in agriculture it is not wise to put all your eggs in one basket, even though there will always be a lobby that will argue that whatever seems in the short term to bring the highest gain should be encouraged to the maximum and you should take maximum advantage of it. As a cautionary step for the protection of agriculture in Barbados, and to promote greater diversification, we are going to go with cotton. There is no question about it. So long as we can get our integrated policy on cotton together following the court case of next month, I will say that there is a future for cotton. We have the misfortune of being minor economic players playing in a game with a major economic power, Japan. I am satisfied that the Japanese have not always operated at arm's length with us, there are occasions when they literally pull the cotton over your eyes and we have to be careful with them, but based on the interest that other investors are showing, I will say that there is a future for cotton.

2.00 p.m.

The Honourable Member for St. Michael West also raised the question of **Consett Bay/Skeetes Bay**. We have come to a stage where we have done work on the final cost and design estimates and having already acquired the land at **Consett Bay** and **Skeetes Bay** for this project, we are now positioning ourselves to get hold of the foreign funding that is going to be invested in this project at **Consett Bay** and at **Skeetes Bay** so that what provision the Government of Barbados is going to provide by way of funds for **Consett Bay** and for **Skeetes Bay** will be by way of counterpart funding. For the most part, this project will be funded from money out of Europe.

Mr. Chairman, the Honourable Member for St. Michael West also asked about the matter of the flowers. We are satisfied that in a situation where several countries abroad are showing a keen interest in our exotic flowers the programmes we started in the Ministry are **working** well both to sensitise the farming community to the benefits that floriculture can bring and at the same time the type of technical support the Ministry provides to these farmers is putting farmers in a position where floriculture will be taking off and will be doing extremely well in the future.

As you well know, the Ministry has a tissue culture laboratory which is a young laboratory but which will be providing the type of plant material which would go towards assisting farmers in getting their floriculture going. At the same time, I would want to say that a lot of charitable organisations in Barbados and a lot of small people would do well to be advised that there is a future in floriculture once you can get past the initial capital investment of \$20 000 and \$25 000 for a flower farm of reasonable size, thereafter it is plain sailing and the industry stands positioned to be able to attract some foreign exchange earnings for Barbados.

Apart from that, the Honourable Member for St. Michael West raised a question about the abattoir. I understand that the whole notion of a new abattoir for Barbados has preceded my time by 14 or 15 years. The latest is that the private sector has commissioned a study and this study has indicated how they plan to approach the project. Initially, a site has been located close to the area below Vacluse above Central cricket ground. The private sector themselves indicated that as far as they were concerned that site was unsuitable for them and they manifested an interest in a site at Dunscombe, St. Thomas further north.

Their study is now being carefully looked at by the Ministry. The Ministry's primary concern is that they will take into account the capital cost of this venture if run by the private sector and look at the reality of the types of charges they will be **asking** small producers of livestock to pay, the reality is that we are going to have, even though we have not made the decision yet, to consider the whole question of whether the charges farmers will be asked to bear will be reasonable in the circumstances, whether the farmers will be able to afford them and what would Government's role be. So much so, that at the same time that this private sector abattoir is being looked at the Ministry itself is looking at what government's role ought to be in relation to such an institution but we should expect a decision on this in the foreseeable future. I don't see it dragging for another 2 years. Something certainly has to be decided.

The fact of the situation is that the current abattoir which is being used is very much inefficient, is very much

not operating at the type of capacity that Barbados wants, but at the same time we both have to **look** at whether it would be wise and whether it would be good financial and economic sense for Government to invest directly in an abattoir and what the social and financial consequences this would have for all the stakeholders as opposed to an abattoir private sector driven.

We are into an era where I believe governments all over the world are looking to see if they can encourage the private sector activity as far as possible and this would no doubt be a sensible thing in cases where the private sector proves clearly that it can do it and do it well. We still have as a Ministry to take into account the concerns of small farmers. Livestock production in Barbados is very much a small farmers' activity for the most part. We cannot have a situation where we go and permit an institution to come into existence that eventually works prejudicially against the interests of small farmers. So whatever decision is to be made is going to have to highlight the plight of small farmers.

These, Mr. Chairman, are my responses to questions well thought out. They tell me that it is not normal to compliment a member who opposes you in the House but the questions are well thought out and well conceived, asked in good faith by an Honourable Member who has used the full benefit of his political experience to raise matters of national concern and I hope that I have satisfied him with my responses.

With those remarks, therefore, I would indicate that at this moment there are other things I have to say which I will say later.

Mr. D. CARTER: Mr. Chairman, I would like to congratulate the Minister of Agriculture on his speech this morning. I would have to do that because I thought his speech was such that I am really surprised that Honourable Members on the other side criticised it. I am happy to see agriculture has once more reached that pinnacle where it was in the 80s and I believe the genesis of this great movement started when the Minister of Finance made money available last year to prop up agriculture. Today we are a much happier people in relation to agriculture.

Mr. Chairman, I know that quite recently in the Ministry we have got a new area in rural development and I was surprised that 2 senior members on the other side criticised that rural development plan that we are now putting in place, to the point that one member referred to it as a slush fund. Quite recently, on reading the papers, I realised that Members on the other side made statements to the effect that the Members of Parliament in Christ Church were not doing anything for their constituencies.  
2.10 p.m.

I can see the beginning of great things with such a fund to really not only help people in Christ Church but to help all the people in the rural districts.

Obviously last year \$3 million was made available for this fund and because of certain technical difficulties it never got off the ground. I am quite sure now with \$4 million being made available I believe the people, certainly of my constituency, Christ Church East Central, Christ Church East and, as I said, the wider part of Barbados, would start to see the benefits of such improvement.

I was sitting here earlier on and the Member for St. George South used a **term** when he said that we are going to redress the imbalances. I am referring to the rural area. For too long in this country we have tended to forget the people in the rural areas. Quite recently I applauded the Government and the Minister of Finance, and certainly the member for St. George South, for fighting hard to make sure the factory at Buckeley was kept working because the southern side of St. George is also my constituency and there are a lot of people in the Edey Village area, St. David's and Cox Road areas and it is important we keep people working in this country.

You will remember, Sir, during our campaign we said Job No. 1 was jobs and we still maintain that. I was happy quite recently looking at the figures to see that unemployment came down significantly. I am quite sure that with the sort of work the Government is doing and certainly the Minister of Finance we will continue to make sure that unemployment comes down quickly.

Now, obviously from the attitude of the last Government it would appear that agriculture meant nothing to them and although the Prime Minister stopped short at 60 000 and the figure dropped from 110 000 tonnes to 38 000 tonnes, my basic commonsense suggests that if the production goes back up the foreign exchange would increase and jobs will increase. Quite recently the Prime Minister alluded to the fact that in the next year or so things would improve to probably 3 - 4 per cent and if that should take place as he predicted, the small figure of \$4 million for this rural development plan should increase significantly. I am quite sure then the Members on the other side would be able to have things done in their constituencies as also we in our constituencies would get things done.

Mr. Chairman, the Minister of Agriculture in his plan not only did he say that sugar is going to increase significantly but he made the point about things like onions. He also said that the possibility is there for vegetables, cotton, cut flowers and things like that. What amazed me really is that the Honourable Member for St. Michael West looked at the figure 60 000 as neither here

nor there. It does not mean much to the economy of this country. What amazed me really was, how **could** he be beating his chest two years ago when sugar dropped to such a low figure and now if it rises by nearly 20 000 tonnes how could he say it would not be either here nor there.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Mr. Chairman, if the Honourable Member will give way. I hurt so much if the Honourable Member would misunderstand me but I feel I must elucidate. I was not discussing the 60 000 tonnes in terms of it not being a significant increase from our lowest level. I was discussing it in terms of its relationship to the EEC requirement. The point I was making was about selling the sugar in the Barbados market so if he misunderstood me to be pooh-poohing our increase to 60 000 tonnes, it was not my intention at all.

Mr. D. CARTER: Mr. Chairman, seeing that the Honourable Member has good use of the English Language, I would forgive him but I believe sometimes when he speaks he should speak in such a way that all Barbadians could understand.

Although I gave praise to the Minister, I believe we should also think about the technical people in the industry who obviously work very hard alongside a Minister to help this industry improve significantly. Mr. Chairman, we in the Christ Church area have to pay attention, and great attention to this \$4 million. I know it is just a small sum of money which was put forward but I believe that as a Member of this Parliament I can now at least go to my people and **confirm** that there should be a start in the area of Christ Church pretty soon.

I would like to say that when a memo was put out by the Minister of Agriculture some months ago, the new Christ Church **MPs** immediately responded and we were able to go to his office and he informed us that the mere fact we were so keen and came to him so soon that when he starts the scheme he would start **from** Christ Church and work northward. I want the people of Christ Church to know that things have started to happen and will happen soon. It is important because, as you all know, the campaign for the other side started by saying that for 19% we were not doing anything for Christ Church and it is important.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Mr. Chairman, I do not want to **interrupt** the Honourable Member but **he** is misleading the House. I know Your Honour would prefer to hear him but the Minister who is not now in his seat outlined the projects that formed part of the \$4 million and the first one he mentioned was something like the Benn Hill Project. The next one he mentioned was Forty Acres in St. **Thomas**. He then discussed about nine bridges in St. **James**. Sir, I know I have said they are all one but how the Honourable Member can stretch from **Benn** Hill and Forty Acres in

St. James North and say that the Minister is starting with Christ Church is confusing the House, Sir.

Hon. R. C. EASTMOND: On a point of elucidation. I understand the Honourable Member for Christ Church East Central to be saying that some time in the future certain works will be carried out in Christ Church. What the Honourable Member for St. Michael West seems to be saying is that the Honourable Member for Christ Church East Central is incorrect because what was heard was **referring** to elsewhere. Actually what I was saying this morning was that work had started certain places which the Honourable Member for St. Michael West just described, **Benn Hill**, **St. James** and such like but I think the Honourable Member for Christ Church East Central is saying something else where he is saying that out of the coming budgets things will happen in Christ Church. The Honourable Member for St. Michael West is so interested in these things it is so unfortunate that in my perception he is simply not a part of rural Barbados.

Mr. D. CARTER: Thank you, Mr. Minister. There is a little ambiguity there so he has rectified things there for US.

As I said, Sir, I know that the other side is actually making sport at the \$4 million but I believe we were given a job over a five year period so if the Minister of Finance starts this year with \$4 million the possibility is there that down the road it will reach \$8 million, maybe \$10 million, even \$12 million.

*Aside.*

Mr. D. CARTER: Well, I do not know about an election year. We are here working. We will operate in that vein hopefully and I am certain that you, Mr. Chairman, and other Christ Church **MPs** and the rural **MPs** in general would be looking forward to, if you want to call it a hand-out, because, basically, this never came about with the other **side**. This is a new concept.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Mr. Chairman, on a point of order. The Honourable Member is **misleading** the **House**. I was in here this morning when the Rt. Hon. Prime Minister pointed out that the Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central cut the Rural Development vote.  
2.20 p.m.

*Asides.*

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: He pointed that when the Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central was the Minister of Finance, he made some dramatic cuts to Scotland District. I heard him say that.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: Mr. Chairman, on a point of order, Sir. Earlier this morning I was wrongly castigated by the **Prime** Minister of this country for saying that that vote would be incrementally increased in the pre-election period.

We have just had a confirmation, by a Member of that side, that it would go from \$4 million to **\$8** million to **\$12** million in a pre-election year. You see now who has been telling the truth? Quite clearly, Mr. Chairman, I have been telling the truth all along. And out of the mouth of babes the truth can come from time to time.

*Asides.*

Mr. D. CARTER: I am glad to also see that the Minister of Agriculture, under Capital Works, is trying to upgrade places like **Consett Bay** and **Skeetes Bay**, and areas in the North Eastern area of Barbados.

Mr. Chairman, I feel comfortable that I, as a Member of this Barbados Labour Party and a Member of this present Government, could face my electors and the electors of Barbados, knowing quite well that this Government is doing all the things it said it would have done:

*Asides.*

Mr. D. CARTER: I **am** part of this. And I **am** happy, certainly, for the people of Christ Church East Central, to know, that in the very near future, the small things would be done in their area and, hopefully, when the Prime Minister carries out his work we will get greater things done in their area.

Thank you.

Hon. Sir HAROLD St. JOHN: I just want to continue, Sir, I am very happy with the response to the matters I raised, Sir. There are a couple more matters I raised, Sir, that I will like to raise in this debate, Sir.

My firm belief is, Sir, that a great part of the increase in root crop production and other vegetables in Barbados has taken place against a background of the tremendous research that has been done over the years, and also as a result of the utilisation of irrigation testings in Barbados.

It has been drawn to my attention, Sir, that a problem has now arisen. In view of the fact that important decisions have to be made on a rational use of our water resources, I feel that some of our time, today, would best be devoted to ensuring that in the allocation of our water resources, attention is paid to the needs of the farming community for adequate supplies of water, to ensure a continuation of the upward trend in the production

of vegetables. Most of this water that I am **talking** about is water that is produced by farmers out of their own farm, with their own machinery and things of that kind, Sir.

Now I am very proud of the Rural Integrated Development Scheme at Gibbons in Christ Church. You only have to go to Gibbons, Sir, and it was not only Gibbons. There were other areas in Barbados, there were areas in St. Thomas and there were in Neils, there were areas in St. Philip, Sturges, Heddings and, I am hoping, very soon, to see an extension of that, on the East Coast area of Bath.

At one stage there was a very interesting development of melon growing, in that area. Of course over the last nine years that was neglected. It is a fact. There was water that used to come out of the ground, by Bath, for years. And as a result of a special scheme that was introduced, while we had some Israeli technical assistance and otherwise, there was a project, which was designed, to ensure that water would be trapped.

The Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central is very familiar with that Bath area. It is an area of special regard for him. It was part of a scheme that the Honourable Member once concocted, with his friends, to develop the whole area.

So, Sir, I will like the Honourable Minister to ensure that there will be a continuance of the policy of encouraging, within the constraint of our water resources, the utilisation of the water for the growing of vegetables.

The second area that I would like to raise, Sir, is the question of the Rural Development Scheme. I am told that my constituency comes within that area. That is a fact. I am certain, Sir, that yours come within it, and I know that I am speaking for you, Sir, when I say, that I am looking forward to the final implementation of a policy, that the Barbados Labour Party started years ago, of leasing some of Government lands to farmers who wish to farm on their own account.

All societies now have recognised, that perhaps it is better to allow farmers to contribute their labour and their expertise to farming land that is leased from the Crown, rather than the Crown indulging in the activity of trying to farm.

Sir, I know the area of Christ Church East has a large number of farmers, in the Fairy Valley area, and the Lowland area, who are looking forward to the Government devising a land scheme whereby they can take advantage of the large amounts of unused land around the Airport.

Everywhere you go in the world, and you go into an airport you will see that they had to acquire land in excess of the needs of the particular airport but all around it there

are either allotments, as there are called in England, or in other countries of the world there are small farming activities.

In Holland, I believe, around the Airport there, **all** of the land that is not taken up by the **tarmac**, is actually leased to farmers and they grow grass on it, and they make an important contribution to the livestock industry there.

*Asides.*

Hon. Sir HAROLD St. JOHN: Alright, Sir, I am not saying...

*Asides.*

Hon. Sir HAROLD St. JOHN:...Some people have done that. Maybe in Barbados we are not allowed to do it. But outside of the parameter of the **Airport**, outside of the parameter of the Grantley **Adams** Airport, there is land available for farming. It is no use the Government farming it, because the Government will farm it, pay the cost for farming it but will not reap it. That is a fact.

Hon. Sir HAROLD St. JOHN: The crop will not be reaped by the Government but they will pay the cost.

What I am saying, Sir, is that there is a golden opportunity as part of the Rural Development Scheme. The Government has a golden opportunity. It was started before under our time. We have plenty of precedents, within the Caribbean, for the type of leasehold arrangement.

There has been a land settlement scheme in St. Lucia, recently. There is certainly one in Belize that I know of. There is also one in St. Vincent, where **all** of the Orange Hill Estate was acquired by the Government. As a result of an active policy decision, special leasehold instruments are in existence with provisions to ensure that if the people don't farm it properly, they can take it back and give it to somebody else.

We have a large number of people in Barbados who would like to farm and cannot get access to land. One of the lessons we should have learnt from the Spring Hall Land Leasing Scheme is that it is necessary to still have a monitoring mechanism to ensure that the land is being used for the purpose for which it was leased. That is correct.  
2.30 p.m.

The fact that Spring Hall would not be regarded as being 100% successful should not deter us from continuing to try. I have always had my views about Spring Hall and I am a firm believer that with more encouragement some of that land has to be put into sugar cane to keep it perpetually clean.

I want to say that **as** part of the rural development programme I know that this Government will continue the policy of ensuring that some of its land is **channelled** in the direction of **people** who wish to farm on their own account, not as employees of anybody, but **as** self-employed people. I know that is one of the programmes of the rural development authority and I look forward... I have already volunteered all the help I can give to that authority in the form of researching the types of leases that **are** available around any that we have access to. I have already started some of that work and have done discussions with people. So that is a programme that has to go on. That is a very praise-worthy programme.

Now, the development of the markets. Now there can be no doubt about it at all that the Labour Party's record on the question of markets is one that we **are** not going to hide anywhere. That is one that we can keep trumpeting abroad because it is one that is worthy of that activity.

Listen, had it not been for the intervention of that 9 year period in which the Honourable Members on the other side were in control, Cheapside would have been finished. Cheapside would have been totally and absolutely finished. We left here with a plan for a \$6 million programme for the development of Cheapside into a proper modern facility. In 9 years absolutely nothing has happened with it except recently when, just before the last election, they started back and they put all of the people on the outside saying that they are working on the inside. The position is that I am very glad to see that there are funds here now appropriated to ensure that that project is completed.

#### *Aside.*

Hon. Sir HAROLD St. JOHN: I **am** not saying it is your fault or anybody's. I **am** saying that 9 years ago we left it there with the plan to carry it out and we are back here now and the good Lord knows why we are back because the good Lord knows that Cheapside should be properly finished.

Next thing is this. Of course I must talk about Oistins because I wish to **see**...

#### *Asides.*

Hon. Sir HAROLD St. JOHN: Sir, these is a document called the Oistins Central Area Design Report. In 1980, Sir, a whole town centre plan was commissioned by Mr. Gill. We started it and I **am** very glad to see, Sir, and I wish to thank the Honourable Minister of Agriculture for the small contribution that they have made towards the implementation of Oistins Development Plan.

Now there are other things. The **area** must be paved. There must be ice available to the boats there and also the demand for space to vend there is so great now that the

second phase of that plan around "Endors Villa" has to be implemented so that the people will be moved from selling their bread. They cannot sell on the seaside because the people up there have made it clear that selling on the seaside is only for fish vendors in all forms. So we have to get that going.

I am sorry the Honourable Member for St. John is not here. If he were here I would be able tell him how we are empowering the people. Tell him that if you go around Oistins at night on Friday, Saturday and Sunday and you look you will see who is being empowered.

#### *Aside.*

Hon. Sir HAROLD St. JOHN: I do not mind, Sir, if somebody from outside comes up there. I **am** sure there will be somebody up there, whether it is man or woman that will ensure that some of the money is left in Oistins.

Now, Sir, the question of fisheries is very important and we must deal with it. We are still not able to have a rational development of the fishing resources in the Caribbean. This is a question that has bedevilled a lot of countries in the Caribbean. People think that it is only a **Barbados/Trinidad** issue. It is far from that because little do people know that this problem has now become a major problem in that boats from Trinidad have recently been arrested in OECS territories and dealt with under the Fisheries law there. We have a problem now in Barbados where it has been reported to us that it is a fact that both French fishermen and fishermen from the OECS are, it is believed, pulling up long lines that are now being used by the Barbadian fishermen. It is said there are some boats with 30 miles of line and after they have put it out that other boats are coming in at the end and pulling up the lines. This is a matter that if you get into fishing talk, if you go around any of the bays they are telling you that. We are reaching the point now where the techniques that we are using on the South, West and North-west of Barbados are such that if you fish near centre line serious problems arise. There is no problem to the East and North-East because the nearest land you have is Africa and things of that type. But it is time that we try to have a regime among the CARICOM countries and among the contiguous French **territories** similar to the regimes that you have in the European Economic Community and other countries. Fish have no respect for national boundaries in this area.

2.40 p.m

I have discussed this matter many times with the Honourable Member. The Honourable Minister has been good enough to appoint me to a committee dealing with this matter. But I just want the Honourable Minister to give us an update on where we are because I know that we

have done our priority brief and we are waiting to have meetings on this. Of course, this is a matter that you cannot deal with by yourself but it is now becoming a problem which is not a bilateral matter, but it is really a problem among all of the countries. I can mention that it is a known fact that it is a problem between Venezuela and Dominica and in those areas. So that this is a problem that has to be solved as a result of vigorous efforts on the part of all Governments in these areas where we are so close together. I look forward of course to the northern areas having their fisheries terminal too. I know the tremendous difference it makes to the quality of the fishing and to the pride that those involved in fishing and in vending have when they have facilities where they can sell their fish fresh, iced or fried. I think that it has a tremendous impact on them. There are people who have gone to secondary schools who before would despise earning their living by participating in the fishing industry. There are young people who are going to all kinds of secondary schools and they are telling you that it is their ambition to own a boat that can fish between Barbados and Guyana or to fish in long lines. One of those boats cost in the vicinity of \$300 000. So you are talking about a substantial investment. Now that brings me to the last point that I want to make.

Now there has been a lot of talk about the Barbados Development Bank and banking institutions. There is a need for capital both loan and equity to fund these new developments. Not so long ago the Chief Fisheries Officer I believe recently made a comment on this. It is a fact. As a result of the removal of the duties, a new engine has reduced greatly in price. My own view is that it is better to have finance in some of these areas as equity capital or a soft loan.

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

Hon. Sir HAROLD St. JOHN: Yes, Sir. I am going to wind up, Sir. Representations have been made to the Barbados National Bank and to other institutions. I would like to see, Sir, immediate steps being taken to ensure these flow of funds will continue. The finance companies in Barbados have decided that it is profitable for some of this investment to be made via them. It is only a question now of giving help in producing the feasibility study so that they can make a decision on it. But an effort is being made to plug that gap that would exist.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member for Christ Church West.

Mr. H. deB. FORDE: Mr. Chairman, I really would like to intervene in this debate in order principally to congratulate the Government on the restoration of confidence which has manifested itself in Barbados even in the agricultural sector. Last night I was aboard the Lily *Martine* which is a small yacht bringing people from

England, the Cambridge Alumni, part of the tourist promotion and what came across clearly and I really want to begin my speech at this point was that visitors to the island who had been here 3 or 4 years ago were saying that there was a self-confidence now which they find among the ordinary Barbadian. They are satisfied that there is a changed atmosphere and that changed atmosphere has manifested itself very clearly in the confidence which flows through in the speeches of the Honourable Members on this side particularly on the major sectors of the economy and here even in the field of agriculture.

I am very pleased to see that the Minister has explained to the House today the increase that has taken place in sugar, cotton production, root crops, non-root crops and vegetables. This is a sign, Sir, showing that I believe that the agricultural community both at the level of the small farmer and the big farms realize that the Government is serious about this sector of our economy.

Now I want to talk a bit about cotton because I believe that diversification has been accepted by the major political parties as a way in which we should go. There are only certain things that we have done well through the years. We did well in tobacco when this country was first settled. We did well in cotton when this country was first settled and, in fact, we have done well in cotton up to some years ago as well. We have done well in sugar and we have had our high and low points in that field. I believe, however, that cotton is a very serious crop as part of our diversification and our rotation system are concerned. It is not the sort of crop which we can plant interminably for 4 years or so because of the factors occurring having regard of the nature of our soils. I have spoken in this House previously when the Democratic Labour Party made a total mess of the cotton industry and we have to face this fact. When we had the CARSICOT scandal which in my view set back ideas that theoretically were good ideas but implementation turned out to be very sadly lacking.

Now I know, Sir, that there is renewed confidence in this industry and I know it because on the floor of the House let me say that I have sent to the Government major investors from overseas from reputable law and investing firms who are interested in investing once again in agriculture in Barbados and in particular some of them are interested in the cotton industry. They are interesting in doing this not only at the level of producing cotton but at the level of moving on to the secondary and the tertiary stages of production so that Barbados will benefit right through from cotton production.

Sir, the Minister has stated that there is I think in 1994-95 some 483 100 kilograms of sea island cotton, an increase of about 200 per cent was produced. Likewise, we had an increase in lint during that period of time. I am aware of the fact that the Government has in store almost

150 000 pounds of cotton for sale and that is exclusive of the cotton crop which is under the Court's supervision, so I cannot talk about that, arising out of the CARSICOT problem. Sir, I am advised and I have to be advised here that if something is not done soon about that bit of cotton that after a while it loses its commercial and spinning value. Therefore, I must say to the Government that whatever happens we have to **try** and get the case completed concerning the cotton of several years ago. But it is last year's crop and this year's crop that we must also sell as soon as possible. I say this to the Government, Sir. We just cannot look at the Japanese. The Japanese did not buy all the crop last year and I can say it – the Minister and other Members cannot say it – but I have consistently in my career said about Japan that there is a certain selfishness in their economic trading relations that one has to regret.

2.50 p.m.

They will move in and they will put in a fishing facility for you if you are going to support them on the Whale Commission. They will move in and do something in Jamaica with the fleet or with a fishing area if you are going to support them. They will come to Barbados in a limited way and buy some cotton, tie up the whole of the trademark, don't reveal that the result is that they are taking genuine sea island cotton and blending it and destroying the validity and the value and the worth of the certification mark that the YSICA countries have. The YSICA countries are Barbados, St. Kitts and Nevis, Antigua, Montserrat, St. Vincent and the Grenadines and I understand that recently Jamaica has been making application to come into the framework.

I ask that the Minister analyse quite carefully Jamaica's application. These days are days no longer of the spies who are **looking** for nuclear secrets. They are **looking** for industrial secrets; and the point is that we must be very careful when we are dealing. It is not the Jamaica Government. It is the unscrupulous investors of which the Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central knows so well. You have to be very careful.

They will come in and they will ask to buy a few of the cotton seeds to start a cotton industry and they may not be the people. They may only be the front men for those persons who are behind. I am warning the Government about this. There must be very careful analyses and YSICA countries have a valuable trademark that unfortunately out of the CARSICOT debacle part of that trademark is now up before our courts, the certification mark, as to whether it belongs to CARSICOT or whether it still remains in YSICA. I cannot go into it because it is *sub judice*.

I tell the Minister this. Whatever the outcome of the position, we must put CARSICOT as rapidly as possible into liquidation.

I want to be on the positive side too, Sir. The Governments that I have just **named** have a duty if cotton is to be restored as a main contributor of foreign exchange in particular and a very stable product for us as part of our diversification, the Governments that I have just named have a duty to put some money together and defend that certification mark. The mark is registered in the United Kingdom. It can only be properly protected if we go after the abusers whether they be in Japan, in Italy or even in Britain itself and the United States who keep passing off as the genuine sea island cotton, West Indian sea island cotton, cotton that is not genuine West Indian sea island cotton.

Today it is difficult whether you are in London or in Rome or in New York to buy a genuine sea island cotton shirt or garment and they can once again be restored in a niche market for Barbados. I know because I have had access to studies done by people who are interested in this field and I can let the Honourable Member see these studies if he wants to, Sir.

As well, Sir, I would like to see the Government set up a team as part of the project team and take it seriously between the Ministry of Agriculture, the Ministry of Trade and Industry and International Trade and the Ministry of Economic Affairs who will monitor what will happen with this part of our intellectual property.

Sir, within **NAFTA**, within the World Trade Organisation, the United States continues to preach trade liberalisation but it holds on firmly to the stout defence of its trademarks and its merchandise marks and its copyrights. We have a duty in this field that we are pre-eminent and have been for years to hold on to this very vital commercial right and to defend it. We must bring it in the Estimates. You can find the money if you haven't got it in Agriculture. There are other votes that can be used for this purpose for professional services, but I would ask that a certain urgency be given to it and I am begging the Minister to give the urgency to it and let his technocrats take the lead and don't believe that it is something that can be negotiated as gradually as possible in this respect.

The Ministry has had the benefit of some of the best legal advice from one of the leading trademark lawyers in the United Kingdom of a firm that has been advising successive Governments of Barbados for many years. I believe that they should bring together those legal advisors with our own legal advisors and with our own experts on cotton growing and the diseases which face cotton. I believe they should bring together the economic people and the genuine investors and **try** to get the project moving as fast as possible.

Sir, it is a subject that I have spoken of in here during the unfortunate CARSICOT years with a certain amount of sadness. There is no other country in the world

that produces cotton with its staple that we do here in the Caribbean, not even Egypt or the Sudan, and they probably come nearest to us – the length of the fibre. I know that there is a lot of experimentation going on in this field as well by other countries; I believe that there is a certain friendliness being shown by the United States Department of Agriculture to help us control some of the pests that affect the cotton industry and go from cotton to affect other industries.

We should join with them to put our technical research there. I believe we have within our Ministry a Dr. Wilson who is very knowledgeable in this field as well. So we have some of the local expertise there and on the CARICOM basis I would like to see a lot more emphasis being placed on getting our colleagues in the eastern Caribbean to be interested as well. To the extent that I have been participating in the OECS Barbados Joint Commission I will use every opportunity to draw to their attention the importance of this subject for us. But some urgent decisions will have to be made.

Now, Sir, I want to move on to a subject that obviously has engaged us Members in this House for some time...

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member has one more minute.

Mr. H. deB. FORDE: ... and that is the Rural Development Commission. Let me say about this, Sir. I have no difficulty with the Government increasing the vote under this Head as money becomes available. I am not bothered about the allegation that the Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central is going to make that the Barbados Labour Party is going to increase the vote as it gets near to the election because nobody is going to believe him on that.

The position is that if you go back in the Barbados Labour Party's manifesto for several years when we were in Opposition, we were fighting for the integrated rural development project because we said that you could not have two Barbadoses and if you look at our 1991 manifesto rural modernisation and our 1994 manifesto you will see it is basic to our philosophy. We have done some of it in St. Philip. We have done some of it in Christ Church. We have done some of it in St. Thomas and in St. George and we intend to continue to do it because there must never be two different Barbadoses in this country. We cannot have a position like in Society. We are represented by the Democratic Labour Party for over 27 years and a Prime Minister, and today you cannot have a proper road in Society after having the Rt. Honourable Errol Barrow as its Prime Minister and representative for many years. That is Society, St. John. That is what I am talking about. We must never let those people feel that the only benefit they

have had is the benefit of the Barbados Labour Party ensuring that they can get their land at 10 cents a square foot and they are going on now and changing into wall and we cannot get the roads into being. That is what we are talking about. They must feel equal citizens of this country and that is what we are fighting for.

I want to make one last statement, Sir. I am aware that the Government of Barbados has been negotiating and has negotiated with a friendly country in order to make this a major project and the \$4 million is only the beginning of things to come.  
3.00 p.m.

I have no doubt that the people in St. Lucy, St. Peter, St. John, St. George, St. Thomas and Christ Church will see the benefit of this part of our policy.

I want to remind Honourable Members while speaking on agriculture that my constituency, Christ Church West, produces an agricultural product, fish.

#### *Aside.*

Mr. H. deB. FORDE: The Honourable Member does not even know lamb. We have lamb. If he comes up into Clapham he will find that we have large flocks of black belly sheep which produce some of the best quality lamb for consumption in our hotels and among our people. I want the Honourable Member to know that.

Mr. Chairman, I have great pleasure in supporting the Minister on his speeches in this part of this vote.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Mr. Chairman, I must congratulate the Honourable Member for Christ Church West for finally accepting that the policies of the Democratic Labour Party on diversification were good policies. Also, I must congratulate him for finally admitting that the project done by the Democratic Labour Party on cotton was a good project. While he was speaking, I was saying to myself that the speech he was making today should have been made nine years ago and we would have been a lot further in the development of cotton.

Mr. H. deB. FORDE: Mr. Chairman, on a point of order. The Honourable Member did not have the privilege of being in the House nine years ago when the Minister of Agriculture was here when I told him that conceptually he was on to a good point but he could not implement what he was talking about otherwise he would have heard about the scandal of CARSICOT. Why did he not compliment me on bringing it to the fore at that time?

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Mr. Speaker, I must again compliment the member because when he said, "and

he warned the Minister," he has to be careful of the people he is prepared to allow to invest in the cotton industry. He was saying exactly what I said nine years ago because we must understand, and I know this would not be the first time you would be hearing this statement, Sir, that cotton to Barbados is like oil to the Arabs. That is why we have a war on that section of the world today because people know that the Arabs had something that was important. That is why people were prepared to sabotage our cotton industry because they were aware of the fact that once our cotton industry got off the ground that we would have been receiving large sums in foreign exchange. It was petty jealousy, not only in the Caribbean, and by some farmers in Barbados, but by some people in North America and also in Japan.

*Aside.*

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: I cannot accuse them after hearing the statement of the Honourable Member for Christ Church West today.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Oh, he is a convert? I have no problem with that. I am saying, Mr. Chairman, that I agree with the Honourable Member for Christ Church West. There is a lot of foreign exchange to be gained from the cotton industry and that is why I feel the Barbados Labour Party should apologise to the Democratic Labour Party over the things they have said about the cotton industry.

Mr. Chairman, 18 months ago in this House they were giving the impression that nobody wanted the Sea Island cotton, how we had a lot of cotton and we could not sell it to anybody. I said in this assembly that that was not true that we were dealing with the wrong people. Today we are hearing the Honourable Member for Christ Church West admitting that there are many investors who would like to get a piece of the cake.

Mr. Chairman, we must understand that Barbados is a small country and because Barbados is a small country when we forge forward there are people who are prepared to sabotage our efforts because there are countries outside the Caribbean who feel that we should have devalued and they tried to make sure we devalued our currency and it has not happened.

I warn you, Mr. Minister, that when the cotton project comes off the ground, as we have seen it nine years ago, you will get our support. Not only will you get our support but we will warn you that you have to watch the people who you are prepared to invest with. I am not prepared to warn you about the Americans yet but I believe at this point in time if they are trying to help you stamp out the cotton diseases, we can accept their help but we must have our local experts alongside them because there are not many large countries that like to see small countries

progressing. They feel that they must always be depending on handouts so I leave that one with you.

Now, I want to turn to another matter. Today in this assembly, Mr. Chairman, the Honourable Prime Minister said that the reason why they will be shifting, and I want the Minister of Agriculture to hear this, their sugar policy from importing sugar for the local market and exporting our local sugar overseas is because when we sell our local sugar on the local market that the BAMC and the other farmers will get more money. That statement is correct, but that statement can only be correct if he follows the policy I gave him in the House this morning. That policy is that I suggested that the BAMC should control the importation of sugar in this country and they should take that right away from the BADMC. The impression given in here today is that you cannot take away that right from the BADMC until you close it down. That is not true.

I will tell you why you should take it away now. If the BAMC is allowed to import sugar in this country they will pay \$600 a tonne to get the sugar in Barbados but they will sell that sugar for \$1 600. You understand what I am saying to you, Sir? On each tonne of sugar they will make \$1 000 and the local market consumes between 14 000 to 15 000 tonnes of sugar and I have the support right there in the Honourable Member for St. James North. He has this information too. It tells me that the BAMC stands to gain between \$14 million to \$15 million in the importation of sugar whereas if they use the local sugar on the local market all they stand to gain in \$2.8 million extra.

I am saying, Sir, if we go to the policy where you allow BAMC to import sugar for the local consumption, they will gain \$14 million to \$15 million whereas if we use our local sugar we will only get an additional \$2.8 million. Mr. Chairman, what they are actually saying to us is that we would stop importing sugar and we would have to come to the taxpayers for \$12.2 million or \$11.2 million next year and I say that is foolishness. I am saying that we should continue importing sugar and the savings, if they figure that \$11.2 million or \$12.2 million is too much, they could take \$6 million at the BAMC seeing that their sugar vehicles are helping to destroy the roads in rural Barbados, including St. Lucy, and transfer \$6 million that they will be making from the importation of sugar and help repair some of the bad roads in St. Lucy.

*Aside.*

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Yes, St. Lucy. After you pass Judge Gap there is a place called St. Lucy because I am getting the impression that Barbados ends at Judge Gap and I am not happy about that, Mr. Chairman.

*Aside.*

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Judge Gap is where Six Men's ends and you go to Half Moon Fort or Colleton.

Mr. Chairman, we have a situation where Government is prepared to adopt a policy that is going to cost the country between \$11.2 million and \$12.2 million. I am saying to the advisors to the Prime Minister that the advice they are giving him is wrong advice and they should go back and tell him that it is better to transfer the right to import sugar to the BAMC and allow them to continue exporting the sugar and he would get an additional \$11.2 million than he would have budgeted previously.

Mr. Chairman, we also have another problem. I keep speaking about the Agro Processing Plant. Because we do not have an Agro Processing Plant or a good marketing agency in Barbados, we have small farmers who should be in their fields producing and, instead of being in their fields producing, they have to produce and then go and market their produce. I am saying, Sir, that is wrong.

A good example is when you go to the Spring Hall Land Lease Project. The farmers have to take their produce out and market them themselves and I am saying that is wrong. Those people should be in the fields producing. It is not good for the country. We must be efficient and we must set up an agency where those farmers would be allowed to produce and leave the marketing and processing, et cetera, to another sector. People have said to me that we had an agro-processing plant already. I thought it was clear that whenever I speak in this assembly about an agro-processing plant I do not ever refer to the one at Fairy Valley. I always speak about an agroprocessing plant under the management of the Barbados Agricultural Management Company. The reason why I have always spoken about it in that way is because I understand that when you have one at Fairy Valley, and you have one at the BAMC somewhere, or at some other location, you are talking about a company that has one common cause or should have had one common cause.

3.10 p.m.

At Fairy Valley you had a war. Do not let us fool ourselves. You had a war of interest. But at the BAMC there will be no war of interest. It will be a war to uplift the development of the poor, small farmers in Barbados.

So do not come and tell me that they had an agro-processing plant already. Because that plant, and if you look at the records you will see that the interest was not to serve the same people that I am speaking of, or the same country that I am speaking of. But that plant was set up to serve self-interest people, not that the intentions of the Minister was for that to happen.

As you were aware, the private sector had everything in it. They controlled everything. But this is a plant that I

am saying, that you should use the same way that you used BAMC, and the Honourable Minister will tell you, that when he wants figures now he has no problems with figures. They are accurate.

*Asides.*

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: You don't worry.

*Aside.*

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: At the BAMC you have no problem of anybody shifting costs. In other words...

*Asides.*

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Do not interrupt me, man.

At the BAMC you do not have a situation where someone can grow a crop and inflate the cost of the services elsewhere.

And I want you to listen to this. In agriculture before, there was a possibility, where people could inflate costs. In other words the sugar industry could have been carrying their bag of losses where other sectors could have been making money.

And as you know, Mr. Chairman, there is a relationship between agriculture and tourism. And I have seen a shift now, from agriculture to tourism by the same players. So I am asking the Minister of Agriculture to speak to the Minister of Tourism, to watch the same players who are now shifting from agriculture to tourism because the framework is there for the same thing that happened in agriculture to happen in tourism again.

But, Mr. Chairman ...

*Asides.*

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: No I am not going to explain that now, I will wait until we deal with tourism and then I will explain that, just as I will deal with the beaches.

*Asides.*

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Do not worry that I will get to that another time.

Mr. Chairman, there was an argument in here this morning. The argument was, that when the Democratic Labour Party took over in 1986 that sugar production was 111,000 tonnes of sugar. That is correct. And that by 1987 it fell to 83,000 tonnes and the Democratic Labour Party got blamed for the drop in production.

But you know it is amazing, that the Barbados Labour Party took over in 1994 and sugar production was 53,000 tonnes, and a year after it fell to 38,000 tonnes, but we are not blaming them. But do you understand that they want to blame us for the 1986/87 decline in sugar? The same time factor, the same decline but everything must be thrown on the backs of the Democratic Labour Party.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member has one more minute.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Yes, Sir. I have a lot to say so I will have to come back. Mr. Chairman, I am not happy with what is happening in Rural Development for the simple reason that I have supported the development in St. Peter and I cannot understand how people can look at what happened on the West Coast and realise that when the hotels were built on the West Coast, that places like Sandy Lane, now Westmoreland, areas around the West Coast were developed. And now you are having development in St. Peter, people cannot understand that there should be a trickling effect and it would flow over to St. Lucy.

But it seems to me, and I will repeat this again, and I want the Right Honourable Prime Minister to understand this, that Judge Gap, and he must tell his Ministers, I am not saying that he is doing it, but he must tell his Ministers that Judge Gap is only part of Barbados and that beyond Judge Gap there is some place called St. Lucy, the constituency which I represent and which I have an interest to protect.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Mr. Chairman, earlier I made an intervention and subsequently, the Minister of Finance, the Honourable Prime Minister, came in and addressed the intervention I made. In the course of his response to that he made a series of statements which, quite frankly, I found frustrating.

I found them frustrating, not because I did not understand the words he used, but because I know that his quality of understanding of economic argument is at the level where he ought not to have misunderstood what I said. It put me in a quandary because I did not wish to believe that the Prime Minister would engage in sophistry.

But there I was, Mr. Chairman, confused that the Prime Minister, who is at the level of intellectual understanding in Economics, that he could not possibly have missed that very primary argument, which I put forward, very slowly and in ordinary language. My language is not so flowery that the Prime Minister could not understand it. And then he came and spoke, and I was confused.

He suggested, and this is the gravamen of his presentation in response to what I said, that Barbados is the

best market for sugar that we have. That is what he said. The Barbados market is the best market for sugar.

Now, Mr. Chairman, if that is true, then all of the efforts which we have made over the last few years to get foreign exchange from the sale of Barbados sugar, have been wrong headed. If the Barbados market is what the Prime Minister said it is, then there is no reason why the people of Barbados should have been deprived of Barbadian sugar.

As a matter of fact, even supplying the amount that we are committed to the European Union was unnecessary in the face of this clear benefit that would accrue if we could sell the sugar in Barbados.

During the same speech, this same identical Prime Minister, the Right Honourable Member for St. Peter, in response to the Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central, perhaps believing that we who sit in this House only listen to ourselves and that we would not be listening to what he was saying, went on to make the point that he and his Government would have to give serious consideration to the soft drink producers that they would have to consider giving them the concession of allowing them to import sugar at world market prices.  
3.20 p.m.

Now, Sir, that is what the Prime Minister said and he is of sound mind so that is what he meant. Mr. Chairman, how can the Prime Minister, in the same debate in the same speech expect Honourable Members to accept such rubbish? Mr. Chairman, if he is saying that the world market price for sugar is such that we would have to give concessions to the sweet drink producers, he is conceding that such price that exists in the local market for sugar in Barbados is an artificial price and the Prime Minister knows that. I know that he knows it. I am glad that he is here so he can hear what I am saying because I hate to speak behind his back. The Prime Minister may not be in the same frame of mind he was in earlier, lunch having intervened, so I am going to ignore anything I hear him say. It does not matter. The Honourable Prime Minister knows that the price of sugar in Barbados is an artificial price, that it is subsidized. He knows that from time immemorial we have had an artificial price in this country for sugar. I was amazed when he said it. I really was.

#### *Aside.*

Mr. B. M. TAITT: That you said this is the best market that we have. I was making the point about foreign exchange earnings and I know that under different circumstances the Prime Minister would have taken me out to sea. He would have taken me out and paddled me, or attempt to paddle me, if I had made, or anybody over here had made that argument. We were discussing foreign exchange earnings and I made the point, Mr. Chairman,

but what the Prime Minister did, Sir, he made a paradigm shift in the premise in the space of the same speech, that he had one premise when he was addressing the issue of my intervention and a second and different premise when he was making a different and secondary point to the Honourable Member. But what the Prime Minister has to do is to take the full responsibility for deciding that he is going to sell Barbados sugar on the Barbados market and give the people of Barbados the psychic reward as well as the taste bud satisfaction of having brown Barbados sugar. If that is what he is doing I have no quarrel with that because that is what the Government is entitled to do but he must not shroud the argument, among those of us who understand, by suggesting that he was going to be .... You see, Sir, he took part of it. He was very, very clever. He took part of my argument because he understood that I understood what he was saying and he said they have made a decision to put 2 000 tonnes to the accumulation of our reserve in relation to the EU in case we run into difficulty so we do not have a problem of losing our preferential market.

I understand that but my argument and my point was, and I know the Prime Minister understands it, that we earn foreign exchange from the sale of our sugar on the hard currency market – let me put it that way – and that when we sell sugar in our own soft currency market that we make no gain except in arithmetic terms and that those arithmetic terms are related to prices which are artificially high. If the Prime Minister wants to give a real benefit for selling the sugar in Barbados he must now reduce the price of sugar in Barbados so that the consumer can get real benefit from getting brown Barbados sugar, because the brown Barbados sugar should be at a price that is lower than the price we pay for sugar which we import from Costa Rica or Guyana or anywhere else.

As a matter of fact the Prime Minister went on to discuss that when we import the sugar from these places we satisfy another benefit. He went on to discuss that. My time does not permit me to analyse his argument but he knows what he said and therefore all the Prime Minister has to do is agree that he is going to give the people of Barbados the full benefit of selling them their own sugar and then we would not have a problem, no subsidy, liberalisation of trade. Open the market and let price fetch what it can, *vis-a-vis* sugar imported from elsewhere. No artificial barriers to the people from Costa Rica, people from Guyana, Cuba, anywhere. Sugar versus Sugar. Barbados sugar versus the rest and then we will see real benefit to the consumer and let, Sir, the Manager of the Barbados Agricultural Marketing Corporation and all of those people worry about what they can get for their sugar. I do not understand how the Prime Minister expects to float that past me like if he goes into a flipper. He expects to wring up the arm and bowl a flipper and I am going to let it pass. I do not quarrel with him, Sir, I think in debate all things are reasonable.

Well, if the Honourable Member understands my speech in the same way that he expected me to understand the Prime Minister's speech then that would be valid. I just want the Prime Minister to know that my study of economics is not manifested by the utterances which I make in economic discussion because, as I have said in the past, discussion of economic issues in this country have tended to reverberate around economics 101 and I have not got any time for that.

I wanted to ask the Minister, since I am on my feet, whether, and I take it now that the Estimates for capital are all intertwined so we do not have to worry about which is capital and which is ...

#### *Aside.*

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Well 624 for example.. Page 54, Explanatory Notes – 610 provides for feed for animals. 624 provides for a 4WD jeep and 625 provides for electric kettles. When I was last in the Government the Ministry of Finance would never have allowed a jeep to fall into that category but I am just checking. I have no quarrel with the jeep. If a jeep is needed, a jeep is needed and I welcome the idea.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Chairman, 624 is indicated as purchase of vehicles. Unless the Member is going to say that a jeep is not a vehicle he is totally out of order to suggest that it should not be shown at 624, Sir. If you look at these notes, Purchase of Vehicles 624 – a jeep – so you can reasonably, I think, regard a jeep as a vehicle and purchase it under Item 624.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Sir, it is a 4 Wheel vehicle and it comes in many faces, sometimes the back to the front and that is why I am not going to be moved by the Prime Minister's questioning if I do not understand provisions for jeep. I am just merely asking, personally, if it now forms part of Current. That is really what I am asking.  
3.30 p.m.

So I was asking the Minister if Capital and Current are intertwined on this same thing. I do not have a problem. I just wanted to know but I want to raise a question with the Minister in that regard. On that same page, Sub-programme Statement is that the Sub-programme includes general livestock extension and management of two research and extension stations viz: Greenland and the Central Livestock Station. I wanted to ask the Minister if he is familiar with the study done under a different head and a different purpose about the landfill in Greenland, if the study done by the Canadian consultants did in fact make a specific statement that the establishment of the landfill in Greenland was not compatible with the decision that was made to establish the Livestock Station in Greenland.

*Aside.*

Mr. B. M. TAITT: I do not understand why the Prime Minister said that there is no such study. The **Stanley** Study on Greenland makes specific reference to the Livestock Station and states categorically that it is not compatible. I **am** not making a judgment call. I am asking the Minister if he is aware of it because he has made provision as if things **are** going to be continuing as usual. The Government has made provision for \$7 million for the landfill. I presume that the **landfill** is going to be at Greenland. I was asking the Minister of Agriculture if he is aware that a study made in relation to another aspect of Government policy had indicated that this ought not to continue if you **are** putting the **landfill** there. That is all I **am** asking. I make no judgment on whether it is valid or invalid. But the Prime Minister should be touchy when I interfere with anything he says. You **see**, Sir, I have been in this House long enough to remember everything the Prime Minister has said. I do not recall it instantly but from time to time I jog my memory. When we are **talking** about agriculture, the Prime Minister will be a little touchy that we do not remember everything that he has said in this House. I recall, for example, his view on cotton. His view has been recorded, Sir, in **Hansard** at page 512 on cotton. If I may quote, Sir, page 512...

*Aside.*

Mr. B. M. TAITT: It does not matter what year. It could not be this year. I said it is 512, Sir. It is the session before this one.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: What **date** and what year?

Mr. B. M. TAITT: I do not have to quote that, Sir. I quote the page. What is this now? Here is the Prime Minister speaking:

"Mr. Speaker, the Government would also want us to believe that Barbados' export problems can be solved by spending \$2 million on tourism promotion and \$1 million on cotton. I am satisfied that the Government has to come back to the House because obviously the Government could not have an export development strategy if it believes that you could solve a problem of the magnitude of our export problems by spending only \$3 million."

I skip a little bit and now I go down to the point that I really want to make and I quote:

"I refuse to agree and I am sure that you also will refuse to agree that the Government can by spending \$3 million to solve a \$250 million problem where exports are concerned..."

Then he goes on to say, Sir:

"But I want to suggest to the Government that, rather than looking to cotton and wasting more money on cotton, one of the simplest ways by which the Government of Barbados can boost Barbados' export quickly is by bringing about the fusion between the tourism sector and the offshore service sector."

He was saying then, Sir, "wasting more money on cotton". I **am** glad when I hear the Honourable Member for Christ Church West and the Minister and by extension that the Prime Minister has now come home to believe that spending money on cotton is not wasting money.

*Aside.*

Mr. B. M. TAITT: He said that spending money on cotton was foolishness. We have it in our files here. As a matter of fact, Sir, we have it as "**Arthur** - on wasting money on cotton, Budget 1991". That is what we have in the file because we know that it was the Prime Minister's view that cotton was a waste of time. I do not want to spend a lot of time on that. I want to continue.

I want to ask the Minister on this ground if he can give us something about the livestock extension. The Minister has to account for agriculture. Do not let the Prime Minister confuse you. Let him speak next, but I want to hear him when he finishes. But I wish the Minister of Agriculture to tell us or give us some idea of the Livestock Extension and Management Programme and the two Research and Extension Stations at Greenland and the Central Livestock Station because as I understand it you were going to be **moving** all of the stuff from the urban areas and moving it to the rural areas so we can have the Agricultural Station in the rural areas. When the Minister gets up, I would like him to spend a little more time on the provision of sub-surface draining. That is on page 55 - the protection and strengthening of water courses, the construction of irrigation development and refurbishment of building. Because I wish to find out if the Minister recognizes that drainage in Barbados requires the movement and the activity not only in the rural areas but in the alluvial plain that makes up the constituencies of St. Michael West, St. Michael South, and St. Michael South Central. That is one large alluvial plain. For those who came in recently, that is the settlement area that comes from an old river which had meandered down to the point just before it flows into the sea. The alluvial plain that makes up St. Michael West and North West is divided by a canal and there are a lot of wells in **Goodland** that have not been cleaned for a very long time. In fact, let me go a little further up in St. Michael West Central.

*Aside.*

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Head 25, page 55. I take strong objection to anybody suggesting that I have gone off. If

the Prime Minister is off for whatever reason, that is his problem. Page 55, the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, Item **623** includes provision for surface drainage, the protection and strengthening of water courses, the irrigation of building, *et cetera*. I am making the point, Sir, that if you go up to the source of a river or water and you do not clean the wells down at the bottom where the source empties into the alluvial plain – I am speaking not only for myself but I am speaking for the Honourable Member for West Central, the Honourable Member for St. Michael South, the Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central – the flooding is bound to occur. The Minister understands that. I will not bother the Prime Minister on this. He is not the Minister of Agriculture. I am suggesting that when you are looking at rural...

Mr. CHAIRMAN: For my purposes, I thought you were going on to deal with drainage which falls **under** the Ministry of Public Works. I thought you were dealing with that aspect of it.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: First of all, Sir, when we are in Committee of Supply – well, I am not going to question it, Sir. What I am trying to suggest to the Minister is that while he is responsible for agriculture, the Minister of Finance and Minister of Agriculture said that drainage forms a substantive part of their development programme. I am saying to the Minister of Agriculture because this is the Head and there is no guarantee that I will get a chance to say it any other time. But the canal that comes down from St. Michael West Central and passes through St. Michael West and St. Michael North West is going to be a continual danger because it backs up just like the canal in **Weston** backed up if you do not clean the wells in **Goodland** and **Fairfield**. Because these are rural areas and although they are within one mile of Bridgetown, the people in those areas function like people who live in rural areas because they have been neglected until recently. I am saying to the Minister of Agriculture that you cannot deal with your wells in the rural area unless you pay attention to where your wells having been cleaned drain out. I am grateful to Your Honour.

3.40 p.m.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: Mr. Chairman, in a short period of time this House will be graced with the presentation of the annual Economic Report and I sincerely hope that based on what the Minister said today and what is included in the Estimates that we shall see such matters as non-sugar agriculture growing by **9.1** per cent or agricultural output reaching its highest level or the contribution of food crops to nominal GDP increasing significantly or the agricultural sector peaking with the employment of **10.2** thousand people or output of green vegetables and root crops increasing appreciably by **48** per cent or thereabouts or the production of such traditional root crops as sweet potatoes, yams, cassavas growing significantly or that the output of onions reaching extraordinarily high levels and the output

of cotton increasing dramatically and the range of **non-sugar** agricultural exports widening to some **26** commodities and livestock and dairy products sub-sector improving considerably.

I sincerely hope that we will find those comments in the **1996** Economic Report, because they are to be found in the **1987** Economic Report, when we were told this morning by the Prime Minister of this country that there was chaos in agriculture. I would like to make this available to the Honourable Member so that he can read the **1987** Report.

I am really speaking for the benefit of the Honourable Members on that side who might be confused by their leadership and allow their loyalty to be misplaced rather than use their common sense.

#### *Aside.*

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: The second point I want to make, Sir, is the question of livestock development. Again and again we hear that livestock development is largely a small farming activity. That is true predominantly. However, over the years very little in this country has been done to help the small man who is interested in livestock development so that a lot of small farmers who are involved in livestock farming often find themselves farming their animals on other people's lands and this is especially prominent in the Scotland District area and in related areas.

The second problem we have is that there is an almost total absence of financing for such small farmers so that they cannot expand their activity. The reason is very simply. If the Honourable Member for Christ Church West who is not in his place now went to a bank tomorrow to borrow money to raise 2 or 3 calves he would have no problem because he owns property in a rural area and he has another income. The guy who has been raising calves for donkey years and whose asset is really his skill in raising animals has no property, no other source of income. There is no bank in Barbados that is going to lend him money although he has the critical asset, a good long record of raising animals successfully and yet there is no financial institution in this country that is going to entertain him unless he can find somebody of substantial means to back a note for him at the bank.

Unless we are going to deal with that kind of problem, the area of financing, the area of making lands available where appropriate to such persons then we will never reach our full potential in the area of livestock development.

In the area of the cotton industry, there can be no question that a properly managed cotton industry has the potential of making a considerable contribution to Barbados. We must always remember the serious

problems of soil erosion. We must remember the problems relating to pests and parasites as they affect the cotton industry. We must remember the experiences we have had with soil erosion which forced this country to go out of tobacco and forced this country to go out of extensive cotton in the early 1930s when, as you may recall, several plantations went into chancery during that period. There was a dramatic decline in sugar production and the farmers went over into cotton production and two things happened: within a matter of 3 years, the whole entomological impact and the environmental impact of that step were not properly understood and in a matter of 2 or 3 years there were serious environmental, entomological and other problems.

However, I believe the experts in agriculture would admit today that with careful rotation through crops that the impact of erosion and also the impact of insect control could be minimised. On the other hand, you keep hearing these stories of all these people who wanted to invest in the processing of cotton in Barbados. Let me tell you something. First of all, it is an extremely capital-intensive investment and I would say that there are at least 40 groups which I have seen over the years coming into Barbados talking about they are going to bring in 30 to 100 million dollars to invest in processing cotton and nothing ever materialises because of the very heavy investment it requires in the milling and the processing.

*Aside.*

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: The economics are such that a lot of these guys that come promising these things, when it gets down to the bottom line of the numbers, you do not see them again. They say goodbye to you.

*Aside.*

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: I stand by what I said and I want to be very clear about that.

The third point I want to raise is the question of how do you help small farmers either to own land, lease land and work that land productively. Now leasing land is one thing. I have leased land to several people in the past. I have underwritten the cost of cleaning the land to lease it. That is reasonable. I have leased it to several people but I never got any money in. I never collected any money and on top of that you have this problem that after you lease land to somebody who is not making any money and he has some crops in the **ground** you cannot even get back your land then. It takes years to get back your land.

The point I am making is this that when you are leasing land you have to lease a package to that farmer. It is not only leasing land. You have to make available

financing and you have **to** make sure that farmer is prepared to put the work in the land that is necessary to keep it clean. One of the reasons why Spring Hall has had problems is because the plots were too big, the farmers did not have the capital and then many of them were not full timers and could not put in the work, they and their families, and that was destined to failure.

*Aside.*

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: Some failed. I will tell you this. It is hard work to work half an acre of land. For a man to work half an acre of land by himself is hard work. You try doing it and see what happens. To **try** to keep that clean, to **try** to get crops out of it and try to make that half an acre productive is a lot of work. Two acres is a lot of work for a family. Four acres you need help if you **are** going to be productive and as you get more and more help then you have to spend more and more money so the economics of that has to be worked out otherwise you will create a lot of hardship and a lot of problems even to the people to whom you are leasing the land. Whereas in principle I do not have a problem with the Government making lands available that are Government owned lands on a leased basis to small farmers, I think it is important to offer a package and look at the totality of the picture otherwise you are going to run into serious problems.

The third point I want to make is on this question of markets. Everybody agrees that Cheapside market has to be dealt with. I have raised in this House the whole question of making sure that as many small people as possible benefit maximally from the public investment involved in the Highway 2A Development. I have seen and I know of other projects where people have secured lands for future development along that Highway. I believe that strategic small markets well landscaped off the Highway at strategic points...

*Aside.*

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: I am making it **aga** 1. It is **important** not only **from** the direct employment you will get out of it but from the stimulus you would give to other agricultural developments right along going from **St. Philip** right through to the North in St. Lucy.

*Aside.*

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: It was not an **industrial** access highway. It was a tourism highway, which was fair enough. It was one of those things that was wrongly conceived in the **first** instance because immediately the road was conceived then the manufacturing sector **took** a **downturn** but the tourism sector grew. It is a good project. There is no question about it.

I said that it was a misconception as an industrial access highway because of the problems with manufacturing that followed. Quite clearly what has happened now over time, and if I have to change my mind on anything I have no difficulty in changing my mind. It is a main arterial highway that serves tourism well. What is important is I think it can help open up the agricultural sector of Barbados as well through **market, development** strategically in relation to the highway and not at any major cost.

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

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: Why should anyone think that these ideas are strange? You see it all over the world. A highway as an infrastructure when you put it in can serve different purposes at different times. It is important to make sure that you get the maximum return for the infrastructure which Government puts in over time.

*Aside.*

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: I agree with you and that is why you do not want them to take all. You want to create opportunities for the small man to benefit.

*Aside.*

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: I agree with you. They do not like the small man.

The point I am making is this that the small **man** should get a little of the benefit for the kind of development that say **Julie'N** would bring and the focus that **Julie'N** would bring in terms of agricultural development in the area and it does not cost that much. You would be surprised to see how that kind of thing can have a crescendo effect throughout the whole agricultural sector.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member is asked to wind up. You can come back. You have the whole week.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: One final point I want to make is I wonder what new incentives the Minister has for new investment in agriculture. There is no point talking about agro-industrial development unless you can think of the kind of package that would facilitate this development.  
4.00 p.m.

There are other things which we will want to talk about later on, in terms of financing, long-term financing of agro-industrial development and various other market factors, locally and overseas.

We will be probing you, very carefully, to see if there is any depth or any **kind** of understanding of the future development of agriculture. And your Prime Minister cannot defend you all the time.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Chairman, Sir, I would like to make a brief contribution to this debate, if only to put very clearly the Government's position regarding the importation of sugar. But also before I do that, Sir, I just want to respond quickly to some of the points that were made by the Member for St. Michael South Central.

The Member for St. Michael South Central, Sir, is on record in this Parliament as saying that the lower the level of tax imposed on production of commodities or economic activities, Sir, the higher the level of economic activity.

I just want to say, Sir, that all of us who were responsible in 1987 for fighting that battle against the then Minister of Finance imposing taxes on cabbages, cucumbers, lettuce, string beans and so on, Sir, all of us who were responsible for forcing the Minister of Finance not to put that **tax on** domestic production of agricultural produce can claim credit for the resulting increase in production, in keeping with the theory of the Member for St. Michael South, that the lower the level of **taxes** the higher the level of production, Sir.

I count myself, Sir, as one of those persons, and the Member for St. Michael West **as** well, who had to stand on the Floor of this Parliament and stop **the** Member for St. Michael South Central from imposing a tax on local production of some vegetables, Sir. So all the credit, Sir, is due to those of us who were part of the struggle.

Sir, the Member for St. Michael West gave a very...

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: On a point of order, Sir. Would the Honourable Member present to this House any evidence whatsoever that there was a tax on any vegetables in Barbados at any time?

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: ...I would like to correct him, Sir, because the records are there. He almost dragged the Honourable Member for St. Michael West out of the House.

Sir, on the question of the importation policy for sugar, I want to get it very clearly. As it presently stands, Barbados has to meet a quota in the European Union of 54 000 tonnes. If we do not consistently meet the quota we can claim **force majeure** consideration, **as** one of the arguments, if the weather intervenes. But generally, a country will lose its quota if its supplies to the European market consistently fall short.

Barbados has been in the danger, in the past few years, of losing its quota to the European market because our production of sugar has been smaller than the quota of 54 000 tonnes. In 1995, Sir, at **38 000 tonnes**, we had to plead *force majeure*.

We are now in a position where there is the strong probability of our production for the European market of sugar being in excess of the 54 000 tonnes necessary to service the European Union quota. And the decision that had to be taken was whether we would use the surplus above the 54 000 tonnes to sell on the local market or use some other option.

We could have sold it, Sir, on the U.S. Market, but the price on the U.S. market is lower than the European market. We could have also, Sir, taken a decision in keeping with the practice and the policy in the area, that a country is entitled to build up reserves with the European Union to deal with the eventuality that a **day** may come when its production may fall below its quota. The recommendation was put to the Government, that we should have used all of this year's production above the 54 000 tonnes to send onward to build up our reserves in Europe.

Now our argument is simply, Sir, that we are asking the taxpayers to provide funding to expand production, as we did last year and we have done this year, to realise 75 000 tonnes. We take the decision, Sir, on the basis of probability and therefore, while we recognise the desirability of building up stock, we also recognise that we need not do it all at once if there is a probability that for the next few years we will continue to have enough sugar produced, in order to satisfy the European market. So therefore it was in that context, Sir, that we recognised that we should keep a reserve, for sure. But rather than commit all of the reserve to the European stock, we said that we would do it on a phased basis rather than on an all at once.

But there was even a more compelling argument as I said, Sir. The fact is that, although the Member for **St. Michael** South West said that the local price is artificially high, it is nonetheless the price. And the revenues of the sugar industry, out of which debt servicing and other things must come, depend upon the total revenue that derives from the sale of its output. The choice, therefore, Sir, is the choice between selling the **6 000 tonnes** on the local market, Sir, at a price higher than that which you can get from Europe with a view of maximizing revenue, or you sell all to Europe with a view to **try** to maximize net foreign exchange.

But you have also to take into account the fact that you have had over the course of the last two years, Sir, situations where you had difficulties sourcing sugar of a good quality. I am also, Sir, going to say this, that the world's market for sugar could become tighter and tighter

as countries like China, which have been historically low consumers of sugar, come into the world market and make those tight market situations tighter.

So, Sir, there are not necessarily of any net foreign exchange savings either, having a policy of exporting all your sugar and importing from the world market, because we note that the Guyanese were not in a position to say that they could supply the sugar and the reason why we had to go to Costa Rica is because in the Caribbean there is a shortage of sugar. That was a consideration that had to be borne in mind.

But the fact of the matter, Mr. Chairman, Sir, is that the Government of Barbados wants to move towards a policy where we can produce enough to meet the European quota and meet our domestic market, because our market, Sir, is still the highest price for our sugar.

I want to say this, Sir, that the Member for St. Michael West, as the Member for Christ Church South will tell you, knows the unique role that he has played in bringing the sugar industry of Barbados to its particular demise.

In the early 1970's Barbados had a sugar quota of 113,000 tonnes, under the old Commonwealth Sugar Agreement. There was a temporary hiatus in the market because of a world shortage of sugar. The Arabs came in, in a big way, Sir. The world market price shot up into the air and at the critical point when the decision had to be taken to transfer from the Commonwealth Sugar Agreement quota to the new European quota, the Member for St. Michael West chose, Sir,...

*Asides.*

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR:...at that time what the Government did, was to stop selling to the European Market and sell to the Arabs. And he believed that we would have had the Arab market indefinitely and he said as much.

And Barbados' quota, Sir, countries like Mauritius...

*Asides.*

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR:...That is a fact.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: On a point of order. The Honourable Member must not mislead the House. The Arab market came in 1975. The decision on the quotas was made long before 1975 and it was on the basis of the best advice given from the private sector that it was not in our interest because, as the Honourable Member himself has said, that there was commitment.

Once we have made the long-term commitment on the amount to be supplied to the European Economic Community as it then was, that was a dangerous position we were going into because, as the late **Errol** Barrow had said, only God could determine how much sugar we are going to produce. And therefore, Sir, we thought that 50 000 tonnes was a reasonable figure, Sir, and all man has agreed on that, since then, Sir.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Chairman, Sir, the reality is that Barbados has never been able to produce sugar in any sizable quantities unless it had premium markets, guaranteed quantities and guaranteed prices. And under the old Commonwealth Sugar Agreement, Sir, our quota was 113 000 tonnes. There were countries that had to make a decision at the time and you could have expanded the quota as Mauritius did, at the time. Mauritius decided, Sir, that it was going to seek to have a higher quota under the new LOME than they had under the Commonwealth Sugar Agreement.

But the Member for St. Michael West was captivated by the possibilities of the gold flowing in from the sale of sugar to the Arabs, and he decided, Sir, that rather than seek 113 000 tonnes quota, as they had under the old C.S.A., Sir, that Barbados was going to settle for a quota of 54 000 tonnes.

Now, Mr. Chairman, Sir, that one decision has structured the possibilities of the sugar industry because in that decision...

#### *Asides.*

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Sir, it simply means, Sir, that with guaranteed European market of 54 000 tonnes, a 14 000-tonne local consumption and a U.S. quota that could be between 4 000, 8 000 and 10 000 tonnes, that Barbados, could thereafter, not think in terms of producing more than 75 000 tonnes of sugar without having to face the volatility of the sugar production having to be sold in increasing increments on a world market, where in some areas, as we know, Sir, the price is such that it could not even cover the cost of gasoline for running the trucks.

And, Sir, that is...

#### *Asides.*

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Sir, there was a time when this country used to have a sugar industry that could go up to 100 000 tonnes, Sir, and we could be sure that we would be selling the sugar on guaranteed prices. But since, 1975, as a result of the decision consciously recommended and taken by the member for St. Michael West, every time our sugar industry goes beyond 75 000 tonnes, there is a

possibility of volatility in place in the world market conditions.

4.10 p.m.

That is a fact, and that is why, Sir, a lot of the factories in this country have had to close down one after the other like the small one-door shops in this country, precisely because of the decisions taken by the Member for St. Michael West when he had the unfortunate experience of having to serve in excess of his capabilities as a Minister of Trade and Industry of this country and that is a fact, Sir.

Sir, I really want to say that we have decided that we are going to commit a small amount of our sugar production to help build reserves for the European Union so that we will not then face the possibility of losing the quota but that incrementally we will use the excess of domestic production.

Sir, on the question of refined sugar, Barbados does not produce refined sugar for the soft drink industry. It has to be imported in any case. The question is whether it is going to be imported directly by the distributive sectors or whether it is going to be imported by the Barbados Agricultural Development and Marketing Corporation to be passed through the distributive sector with the margins of the BADMC added on to the cost of the sugar and then passed on to the soft drink and biscuit producers making those food products processed using sugar so secured more expensive than those produced in other parts of the Caribbean. We are saying, Sir, that the time has come when we are going to import the refined sugar anyhow.

That is not the point. The point is that we want by taking the BADMC and the middle man out of the situation to give all soft **drink** producers the possibility of being able to operate in this country without having to rely on the use of import licences as the only way in which we can hold CARICOM competitors at bay.

Now, Sir, that has been the sticking point on the part of the producers for some time, who have written Government time after time stating that they should be allowed to buy their inputs, because they have to be imported anyhow, under the same conditions as those that obtain for the benefit of producers in other Caribbean countries whom we have to compete with both in Barbados and within the region. I am saying to the House, Mr. Chairman, that, if we are going to import the refined sugar anyhow, we should allow the local soft drink producers and other food processors who have to use refined sugar to have the sugar as near to world market prices as possible.

There are a number of other small consumers of refined sugar, people who produce sugar cakes and so on who may need to have it but will not themselves

be interested in being the importers. Obviously, Sir, **arrangements** should be put in place to allow them also to have the refined sugar at reasonable prices. I thought I should clarify that point, Sir.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member has one more minute.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: I want in that one minute, Mr. Chairman, to say that the contribution Government is making in this year's estimates in increasing expenditure on the Scotland District goes hand in hand with the policy that the Government has announced to give special incentives for people who make investments in the Scotland District area.

The Member for St. Michael South Central has **called** upon the Minister to state the policy of Government. The Government has already, Sir, removed duties on inputs used by agriculturalists. In last year's budget we also removed the duty on energy products used in agriculture. We have reduced the cost of port charges on exports of merchandise. We have declared, and the legislation is coming, a special regime for investment in the Scotland District to go hand in hand with those incentives, Sir. Obviously there has to be work undertaken to stabilise the area and make it more attractive both for production and for settlement and if the Member wants to join in that debate as in other aspects of the debate on the reform of agriculture which are absolutely necessary, I would be glad to be part of that exercise with him.

Hon. R. C. EASTMOND: Mr. Chairman, this is by no means going to be the final contribution I am to making on this Head today. There were some matters which the Honourable Member for St. Lucy raised to which response must be given. The Honourable Member for St. Lucy raised the question of where certain entities should be located, where certain policy positions should be directed and such like. Specifically he mentioned the question of a need for an agro-processing plant and suggested that if he had his own way he would put it under the BAMC.

Mr. Chairman, an agro-processing plant is indeed a desirable entity for Barbados the point being of course that if farmers are to produce a surplus in a situation where they are producing perishables then they should have some outlet for their surplus produce where the short-term market does not easily absorb what you have to produce. However, Mr. Chairman, the point is that when the Honourable Member for St. Lucy mentions that in his mind the **agro**-processing plant should be located under the BAMC especially when he had said earlier that a cotton **ginnery** should also be located under the BAMC it seems to me that the Honourable Member for St. Lucy is saying that the BAMC's role in agriculture ought to be widened beyond what was really intended. The Barbados Agricultural

Management Company emerged to provide expert managerial services primarily for sugar agriculture.

Now, because the Barbados Agricultural Management Company finds itself with 40% of the plantations in Barbados to manage and because in the interest of good agricultural husbandry, to use that **term**, it is necessary to practise a measure of diversification to preserve the integrity of the estates the BAMC has indeed embarked on a measure of diversification whether to ensue proper rotation, whether to prevent soil exhaustion or whatever. The **BAMC's** role however is not, in my view, to go beyond its mandate into things like agro-processing.  
4.20 p.m.

In any event even though it is true in my view that an agro-processing plant is necessary, we still have to be very cautious with where we go. In recent years, we had an agro-processing plant at Fairy Valley. It had a very short life before it **came** to grief. Today as of March 19, 19% that client is indebted in the amount of \$7.9 million. I would suggest today that it is \$7.9 million with interest included. Mr. Chairman, in a situation where I believe all 3 parties are represented in this House or rather 2 parties are represented in this House along with the Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central will agree...

#### *Aside.*

Hon. R. C. EASTMOND: At no point did he refer to the NDP at all today. If you listened to the Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central, he spoke as an independent all day. At no point did he say National Democratic Party all day long.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: On a point of order, Sir. I do not purport to speak for any other than the Democratic Labour Party. But good political manners require that we acknowledge the National Democratic Party. Well, he was part of the three blind mice. I feel that the Honourable Member should give the NDP its proper due.

Hon. R. C. EASTMOND: This Government, as it is right now, is reluctant to want to provide any capital or finance in the form of Government equity in an **agro**-processing plant. One reason for this, Mr. Chairman, is because of Government-run ventures which are better managed by the private sector. However without at all being able to provide more detail, there has been a hint or perhaps going beyond being a suggestion that a reputable business concern already in existence which is doing well is interested in an agro-processing plant. But I cannot offer any more details at this point. Okay.

Now, Mr. Chairman, a question was also raised by the Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central whose last contribution came closer to being a

proper contribution before lunch. He asked the question of the plight of the **landless** farmers faced with problems of lack of land, lack of finance, and such like. We anticipate that sometime in the foreseeable future we are going to be able to provide some facility for **landless** farmers **especially** when we come to look at the new role of BADMC. What the Member for St. Michael South Central must tell his constituent farmers is that there is \$1.8 million in European funding available for persons who are involved in livestock and this is part of the EDF. It is \$1.8 million of virgin money untouched. If the farmers whose concerns the Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central is highlighting can make an approach to the Ministry, we shall be able to arrange something for them. At the same time, the Barbados National Bank's agricultural portfolio has not come to an end. You can still get a measure of unconcessionary funding out of the Barbados National Bank as a farming enterprise and the Honourable Members on that side worked closely with farmers and who have been getting involved with this action in recent times, not the Right Honourable Member for St. Michael South who is a specialist in the production of melons. But there are other Members over there who facilitate and encourage the activity of small farmers within their constituencies and I am aware of that.

The Honourable Member for St. Michael West seemed to have been commenting on page 55 when he mentioned the question of drainage and such like. Now generally **speaking**, Mr. Chairman, let me advise the Honourable Member for St. Michael West that sometime in the foreseeable future this Government will be setting up a special drainage unit in another Ministry for which I have no responsibility. But the Honourable Member for St. Michael West while looking at page 55 made much of some alluvial plain and the problems of flooding in this alluvial plain. But he was referring to page 55 which is about drainage in the Scotland District. The programme in which the Honourable Member for St. Michael West used as his point of departure is really specific to the Scotland District. But to satisfy the Honourable Member for St. Michael West who still finds time after several years in politics to find the energy to concentrate on local management in his constituency, I will advise him that there will be a drainage programme coming up and I hope he makes the approach to the Honourable Member for St. **Andrew**. I am aware that certain low lying areas outside the Scotland District in his constituency do not have this problem. In fact, the bulk of drainage is not a problem that is unique to the Scotland District. The problem of drainage goes very, very far in Barbados because apart from the inconvenience and the flooding other concerns also arise like mosquitoes and such like make people's lives miserable. So I would want to tell the Honourable Member that he can feel free later in the debate to come back with the point and direct his question more specifically to the Honourable Member for St. **Andrew**.

Mr. B. M. **TAITT**: If the Honourable Member will give way, Sir. I was merely taking the opportunity to use that golden thread of drainage which permeates the entire community to speak to his absent colleague to show that there is an **annexus** between drainage in the Scotland District and drainage for the rest of the country in keeping with my theme that there is only one Barbados – no **rural** or no urban.

Hon. R. C. **EASTMOND**: There is a matter that I think this Honourable Committee would want to get some information on and I think it was the Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central who queried whether there were certain technical problems associated with the production of cotton. Historically, there used to be some concerns that the production of cotton did in fact have certain adverse effects on soils. But in recent times the sort of training which our experts in the Ministry have undergone has permitted them to be able to enhance the soils **notwithstanding** the presence of cotton growing there. We have a youngster with a **Ph.D.** who is in **the** Ministry, a former Lodge School pupil and an opening batsman for Lodge School at one time, who has assured me that these days it is possible to have a cotton industry which would not be affecting the soils to any extent as years ago. In fact, I think that the comments of the Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central in relation to the management of cotton will have to be taken in good faith. I think that he was bang on in relation to the technical management of the industry. But we in Barbados are ready and poised to be able to improve the cotton industry but everything depends, as I said earlier, on the outcome of the Court case having to do with the assignment of the trademark. Of course, if we get the trademark to come our way, the next logical thing thereafter would be the winding up and liquidation of CARSICOT and a total new approach in relation to the integrated cotton plan to get the maximum benefit out of the industry. If you can get something sold at U.S. \$5.50 per pound, Mr. **Chairman**, you should do your best to **optimize** your output especially when that same commodity can help you diversify.

Mr. Chairman, the Honourable Member for St. Michael West made an observation to this effect that, if the price of sugar locally was indeed the best price or if indeed Barbados was the best market, then **Bajans** would have been deprived by having to rely on imported sugar in recent times.

Earlier you would have heard a comment, Mr. Chairman, that it is worthwhile thinking that if you can produce sugar for export to earn foreign exchange and after having done so you do not have enough to satisfy your local market, then so long as the price of the one you import is lower then you should look at the cost of the imported and compare it with the cost of the export and see what net benefit there is. However, as a matter of

policy, we are committed to returning Barbadian sugar to Barbadian **tables**. I believe that every Government has within its purview to determine its own policy.

We believe that Barbadians want to use Barbadian sugar. At the same time however we still have to be cautious because in a situation where we have to provide the European Union with 54 000 tonnes, we have to so manage as to ensure that every year we do have that 54 000 tonnes because we are not going to be able to plead as we did in **1995 force majeure** because of the drought in **1994**. Whilst we are at it, Mr. Chairman, I believe the whole question of sugar and the future of sugar, though often brawled in controversy in the past, is a question which is one that everybody in politics has to look at carefully. I have heard concerns in here expressed that where Government provides support for an industry that there should be a measure of accountability to ensure that any subsidy or support is applied the way that it should be applied. Last year in my Ministry I asked my officials to ask those who are benefiting **from** subsidies to give a report of how the subsidies were applied and I will be asking again this year that where you get support from Government that you indicate how it was applied so as to ensure that the purpose for which the funding was intended was indeed achieved, and nobody can quarrel with that. Okay. If a Government is providing any form of assistance, the Government is entitled to know how the assistance was applied.

Mr. Chairman, this is by no means my concluding contribution because there are matters which the Honourable Member for St. Lucy raised in his first speech to which I am yet to reply and which I will do later in the afternoon.  
4.30 p.m.

At this point, however, Mr. Chairman, I would say I am indeed very heartened by the interest Members of this Honourable Committee have shown in agriculture. Certainly in my time as a parliamentarian I can recall no occasion on which agriculture has been debated to this considerable degree. All sides so far are encouraging, showing that Honourable Members are indeed aware of the contribution agriculture can play. We await further contributions from Honourable Members on this side, such like the Honourable Member for St. George South who will have his input to make, the Honourable Member for St. Philip North, and certainly I would want to hear from one of the practising farmers in this Honourable House, the Right Honourable Member for St. Michael South.

Mr. L.~R. TULL: Mr. Chairman, a cursory look at these Estimates shows a number of words that keep coming back all the time. Chemicals, detergents, fertilizers, insecticides, germicides, pesticides, herbicides, and sometimes they go from the generic to the specific and we

**see** words like beticol and these things, but what is common to all this, a word that can capture them all is the word "biocide", something that kills life, whether it is killing insects, plants, weeds or whatever. Anyone who has taken the time to read the effect of all these biocides on human beings realise that they can have some very devastating effects.

Honourable Members have mentioned the potential for the cultivation of cotton to do serious damage to the soil, and certainly historically we know that there has been a lot of soil degradation as a result of the planting of cotton. The Minister a few moments ago said that there were experts in his Ministry who can now give some assurance that the damage that can be done to the soil as a result of the production of cotton has been seriously minimised. I want to question whether the same assurance can be given by the Minister in respect of the **damage** that is done to human beings as a result of this list I have just given that we call biocides.

I read only last night in one of the international magazines an article entitled: "Where have all the sperms gone?" Without getting a chance, since I got home late last night, to read the article, I gather that the purport of it was that throughout the world there was an increasing falling off in the sperm count of human beings, men, because of a number of these alien man-made chemicals that are being used. So that while we are concerned about the entomological and the environmental damage that is being done to Barbados as a result of cotton, I am going a step further to say that I am concerned both about the entomological and the environmental damage, the damage that is being done to the soil, to the fauna, to the flora, to the water supply, and in addition to that I am concerned about the damage that is being done to human beings. If something is not done about this, we are going to reap the whirlwind.

There is any amount of literature that deals with these matters. We know that there is a Pesticide Control Board in Barbados under the Ministry of Agriculture. I have heard a previous Minister of Agriculture say that the lab of the Board does not function properly and therefore the Ministry of Agriculture was not in a position at that time to do any good analysis of these biocides that were being imported into Barbados. It is also common knowledge, Mr. Chairman, that the United States Department of Agriculture has been giving its approval to many of these biocides for export to Third World countries. There is no doubt at all that there is an influx of these biocides in Third World countries that are not used in the United States.

I have noticed that these biocides, when they are used as sprays for herbicidal work and so on, do quite often get into the water supply of Barbados. I understand, and the experts can correct me if I am wrong, that when there

is a lot of spraying and then there is a lot of rain and flooding, these toxins get through the cracks in the coral and get into the water supply of Barbados. I have also been told, Sir, and again I could be put right if I **am** wrong, that there is a lot of residual effects of these things on the crops of Barbados. I am going to tie that in with the question of praedial larceny, a problem that has been plaguing Barbados for a long time, and despite the passage of the **Praedial Larceny Bill** in the last Parliament, I understand that there is still widespread praedial larceny in Barbados. I will tell you what that means, Sir. Quite often crops are sprayed with these toxins and one day people carry away the crops during the same night and they **are** paraded around the **sidewalks** and the small shops, and even the big ones, the following day for sale. I am told that you need a certain time after these crops are sprayed before they should be used for public consumption.

**Aside.**

Mr. L. R. TULL: It depends on what you use. Yes. One of the farmers on the other side tells me it depends on what you use. I am no farmer, but I do understand that the spraying of these crops one day, they *are* stolen as the praedial larcenists are doing the night and selling them the next day, they can work severe damage to the human body.

I am told, Sir, that there are over 500 chemicals that are used in the production of these biocides and that no fewer than 68 ingredients in pesticides and herbicides can cause cancer. It is also a fact that **water-borne** diseases are responsible for no less than 50% of all illnesses suffered by man, human beings.

4.40 p.m.

I tie that into the fact that these biocides are routinely getting into the water system and therefore by natural reasoning causing a lot of problems to the health of Barbadians. I saw recently a study that says that the children in the households of farmers in the United States who use chemicals on the farms are 7 times more likely to develop leukemia than the children of those who do not live on farms and do not therefore come into contact with these chemicals.

I **am** also advised that these toxins and biocides break down the cells in the human body at an alarming rate. So I am in this part of my contribution going to continue to deal with the **downside** of our agricultural development. We need to get a proper functioning lab at the Ministry of Agriculture and high on its priorities must be the proper testing of all poisons that are being inflicted on Barbadians day after day and the havoc they cause in the lives of people in this country. These biocides come in and there are directions as to use. The shortage of extension officers in the Ministry of Agriculture, experts who go around the

country and advise small farmers as to the use of pesticides, as to how they should use them, *are* in short supply.

So a number of small farmers and big ones too around Barbados wrongly use these pesticides, by that I mean in the wrong doses. I have heard someone in the industry say that people work out their own cocktail mix. They mix some of this and some of that in **all** kinds of amounts that they feel and spread them on the crops across Barbados because they do not have the guidance of extension officers of the Ministry of Agriculture to guide them as to the proper amounts they should use on crops in this country.

Sir, there is a failing in Barbados where a lot of people feel that more is better. It doesn't only happen with the use of herbicides and pesticides but in many other areas of human life and endeavour in this country there is this abiding feeling that more is better and therefore in this area I am advised, as the lawyers say, and **verily** believe that in many areas of Barbados that too much of these **things** are used to meet the need.

The English poet John Keats said somewhere in one of his odes: "The sedge is withered on the lake and no birds sing." He was talking about a situation in England when because of certain practices and also climatic problems the situation on the English countryside was losing its pristine grandeur and looking very burnt out and seared. Now all of us who are in my age group will remember that there used to be a number of birds that existed in Barbados in those days that you don't hear anything about any more. You don't hear about any gaulins, **wood** doves and even the common black birds you can hardly find nowadays. The **peewittler**, you don't **see** **anymore**. A lot of medicinal plants that used to grow in Barbados, you don't **see** **anymore**. I am not in a position, Mr. Chairman, with my lack of knowledge in that **area** to give any reason why they are disappearing; but it is certainly within the range of my competence to say that there is an alarming coincidence between the advent of all these man-made poisons that are liberally used in our environment and the fact that the fauna, the flora are changing considerably and also the loss of life of a lot of birds and animals that we used to know.

We **are** also confronted, Sir, with an amazing situation. Only this past weekend I heard one of my colleagues commenting **on** the fact that there were a lot of rats in Barbados and those of us who live in the country know that when you cut the canes the rats leave the canes and they head for the houses. My colleague was commenting on the fact that the cost of rat poison in Bridgetown was so expensive that it was prohibitive for use by ordinary households because they have to spend their money on the basics of living and they cannot spend them on rat poison.

I want to make an additional point, Sir. I **am** sure that the Minister of Agriculture will bear in mind the fact that we have this army of rats that are now making it extremely uncomfortable for households in Barbados. I **am** making the additional point that a lot of rat poison that was being used over the years is now ineffective in killing off rats. That suggests to me that the rats are now developing an immunity to **the** traditional rat poison that we have been using in Barbados. So we are wasting money on this rat poison if we cannot deal with these rats. They say a word to the wise is enough, so I won't go down that road any more I am just cautioning the Minister of Agriculture to not let us get carried away about the good things in agriculture without at the same time looking at the downside, the bad things that are wreaking havoc on the health of Barbadians. I will move on to rural development.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member has one more minute.

Mr. L. R. TULL: The question of rural development I will make in another intervention, but I just want to make one passing comment about the retention of Bulkeley Factory as an important and integral part of sugar activity in Barbados and also mention what Bulkeley means to the people of St. George. Bulkeley is not only a sugar factory, Bulkeley is a part of the ancient culture of St. George. To close **Bulkeley** Factory is like taking out one of the organs of St. George. It has not only an economic importance but it has a strong cultural and social importance to the people of St. George.

The previous Administration in its callousness and insensitivity to the well-being of the people of St. George – and my friend the Honourable Member for St. Lucy will agree with me – that they could show such callousness and insensitivity to sit down with a foreign company which knows nothing about Barbados and cares even less and decide to shut down Bulkeley Factory was an act of shame.

Mr. D. St. E. **KELLMAN**: Mr. Chairman, the Honourable Member for St. George South is misleading the House. He knows quite well that it was the BSIL which failed to **import** machinery for Bulkeley Factory over the years and that put Bulkeley in that condition and that is why it was going to be closed down. He knows very well that I have always defended the policy of Bulkeley remaining open so he cannot accuse the Democratic Labour Party of **trying** to close **Bulkeley**.  
4.50 p.m.

Mr. L. R. TULL: Mr. Chairman, I know my time is up but I want to thank the Honourable Member for St. Lucy for again stating on the floor of this House that he agreed with me all along that they should never have made any plans to close Bulkeley Factory.

*On the motion of Hon. R. C. EASTMOND, seconded by Hon. G. W. PAYNE, Mr. CHAIRMAN reported progress to His Honour, the SPEAKER, and asked for leave to sit again. Mr. SPEAKER resumed the Chair and reported accordingly.*

#### SUSPENSION OF SITTING

Hon. R. C. EASTMOND: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that this House be suspended until 5.15 p.m. today.

Hon. G. W. PAYNE: I beg to second that.

*The question that the House do now suspend until 5.15 p.m. today was put and resolved in the affirmative without division and Mr. SPEAKER suspended the House accordingly.*

#### RESUMPTION

Mr. SPEAKER: This sitting is resumed. When the suspension was taken the House was in Committee of Supply, to that it now reverts.

*Mr. SPEAKER left the Chair and Mr. W. C. C. CALLENDER resumed the Chair.*

#### COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY (Resumed)

Mr. CHAIRMAN: This House now reverts to Committee of Supply. The Honourable Member for St. Philip North.

Hon. R. N. GREENIDGE: Mr. Chairman, I believe that most of the issues which surround agriculture at a national level have already been touched upon by members who spoke before me. I will therefore concentrate my short presentation on the district of St. Philip and in particular to the Three Houses Spring and the problem which surrounds it.

Now, Three Houses Spring comes under the Three Houses Spring Act. It is an old Act, passed since 1713 and therefore it is some 280 years old. I do not know whether the persons who conceptualised the Three Houses Spring Act were persons who were encountering problems at the time in 1713 because I think it was passed primarily to benefit three plantations – Three Houses, Golden Grove and Wiltshires because that is the path through which the water runs. Perhaps it was simply that those who conceptualized the idea had the foresight to do it because they clearly envisaged that problems which we are experiencing today would some day materialize.

Now, what actually happens is that water from a natural spring at Three Houses runs a path towards the sea and as it goes on – as I said it used to touch lands belonging to three plantations but now we have about

a dozen farmers who cultivate the **lands** from the spring towards the sea. The main provisions in the Three Houses Spring Act are designed primarily to prevent those who are higher up the stream **from** damming up the water and using it and then preventing those at the other end from getting the water. Indeed, the law as it was ever since 1713 is that a person is not allowed to dam up that water for more than 48 hours. I believe that causes quite a few problems because if you dam it up very often it is done to the detriment of the others who are at the other end of the stream.

I believe that this problem would have been aired on the Floor of this House time after time. I would not be surprised if we were calling for amendments to the Three Houses Spring Act for maybe 30, 40 years or more and to me there has been no real enthusiasm to amend this legislation. I do not know if the reason why the enthusiasm is not there is because we are just dealing with three plantations but now it is 12 persons, just a few. I want to say that even though we are speaking about just a few people, we are speaking about **farmers** and therefore obviously some of those farmers employ people. They provide food for many. They sell to the benefit of a lot of people.

I believe, Sir, that the time has come when we must look at the Three Houses Spring Act once and for all. We cannot continue to put it on the back burner any longer. The entire Act now needs redrafting because there is a lot of confusion as to who is responsible for cleaning the spring and general administration. Nobody seems to know.

Now, under the Act, the Commissioner of Highways at the time in 1713 was the person responsible for cleaning the Three Houses Spring and looking after it but nowadays that is put in the hands of the Chief Technical Officer at **MTW**. He manages and is responsible for looking after it. There are now moves afoot, and I think they must be completed, that it is now to be administered by the Water Authority. I think this is a move in the right direction because I believe that the Water Authority will try to ensure that our water resources are maximized. Believe me, Sir, millions of gallons of water sometimes run into the sea. It is a lot of wastage, a tremendous wastage. I do not ~~know~~ if we can continue to allow millions of gallons of water on a daily basis to run into the sea at Three Houses. When it is really cleared and the water is gushing down, and runs into the sea, we have to dam it up at some point now and **try** to trap it and use it by pumping it somewhere else.

Now, where the confusion is concerned, as I said, very often when the farmers encounter a problem up there, whether it be to have the spring cleaned or whether they encounter a problem of any other nature, they usually contact the representative and then they rush to the Minister of Agriculture who can bear me out on this.

He has had to be there visiting them on quite a few occasions. Because they see themselves as farmers and obviously they turn to the Minister of Agriculture for assistance.

But looking at the Three Houses Spring Act, there is nothing in it that tells me that the Minister of Agriculture has any responsibility to them. And therefore those farmers are, very often, in a quandary as to exactly what they should do and who they should turn to. Obviously, the Minister of Agriculture responds, because he sees them as small farmers and he thinks that his duty is to assist them.

Now, as I said, Sir, under the Act you can dam up for 48 hours. That might have been all well and good in 1713. But nowadays when you are thinking about a farmer who has vegetables, I do not see how you can honestly cut off the water that reaches him for two days.

Then you have the other farmers with cattle. I do not see how you can cut the water off from him either. Therefore this is one of the reasons why, I keep saying, Sir, that you have to amend or repeal and get different regulations to govern the whole thing. But, Sir, it just cannot go on like this. It has gone on and it has caused a lot of negatives.

We have had a lot of negative reports in the newspaper where farmers were saying the one higher up had cut the water off and so on, and it could not reach them. We have had television reports about it, Sir, and so on. There is even some High Court litigation on it, Sir. It just cannot **continuc**. We have to act quickly to put it behind us.

There is a lot of over-growth and a lot of foreign objects as well and there is the general lack of cleaning. And in long periods of drought, in particular, when the water does not come on freely, that is where the problem arises. The water is not reaching them. It is just trickling down. And this is where you get a lot of problems. Perhaps, some time I plan to speak on it under another Head, and I will mention the whole problem of water resources. But that Three Houses Spring, as I said, it runs into Skeetes Bay, it runs into the sea.

I also want to say a few words on Skeetes Bay. Because, I am pleased to hear and pleased to know, that at long last we are going to have something positive done at Skeetes Bay. There had been a lot of talk before about it, but I believe that this is the time when we are actually going to realise that something will happen.

Now, in the district of Bayfield, fishing is the life blood of the inhabitants there. That district is a fishing district. I mean, almost every house in **Bayfield** has some connection to fishing and a lot of people have got

turned off by the facilities at Skeetes Bay. A lot of people have got turned off because the **actual** road on which you have to travel nothing was done with that over the last eight or so years, absolutely nothing. And the facility which we call a market, is indeed and in fact, only two or three columns with nothing like a roof on it, nothing has been done about that either. And therefore I look forward to the coming of this facility at Skeetes Bay.

Now, there **are** very few of what we call, "day boats," at Skeetes Bay **anymore**. People just do not fish like before. When the facility comes, I am sure that this is going to improve. We had people who were building **boats**, even for a living. In fact one of **the** chief boat builders at Skeetes Bay, was actually contracted to go to Tobago to build boats. I do not know the last day I saw a boat being built at Skeetes Bay. I believe it all happened because nothing really serious was happening in the area. Nothing at all was happening up there.

Fish sellers who used to get their living by going to the Bay getting the fish, walking the road and selling them, no longer are they working. It is not a change of interest it is because nothing was done for exactly eight years.

I believe that if we do not do something, very soon, about the facility a lot of the youngsters are going to continue to lose interest and that fishing village of **Bayfield** may not be a fishing village any longer. There are dozens of people in the **area**, who have sent their children to school, educated them at universities because of the fishing industry. People have built their homes because of it. I look forward, as I said, to the day when we have beautiful landscaping at **Skeetes** Bay and when we have a spanking new facility at Skeetes Bay.

I have also noticed, Mr. Chairman, that on numerous occasions, what used to be a haven, virtually, for tourists, is not this any longer. Because they would drive their mokes down there and when they see what down there looks like, they turn the mokes back and they go away. They do not hang around. And therefore I believe that when the new facility comes, all these things will be improved.

For the moment, Mr. Chairman, that is my contribution.

Rt. Hon. L. E. **SANDIFORD**: Mr. Chairman, I wish to make a very brief intervention in this debate, and I start by pointing out that this Committee is being asked to provide something in the order of approximately \$42 million for the work of the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, Sir. And that includes both the recurrent costs as well as lending on the capital.

I have listened, Sir, with interest to the interventions in the debate, to none **moreso**, than the contribution by my

friend, the Member for St. George South. I must confess, Sir, that I do not recall the last day in this Honourable Chamber that I have heard such a lugubrious, almost **Malthusian** kind of contribution and certainly not on agriculture, Sir.

He said that he was correcting the imbalance, Sir, because there were all good things being said about agriculture and he wanted to look on the other side. Maybe someone will bring back the balance and, I certainly, would like to **try** to make a contribution towards that particular outcome.

But let me say at the start, Sir, I believe that **agriculture** is such an important sector and such an important economic and social activity in this country, that it is really a pity that on these occasions there maybe efforts for Members to **try** to be divisive and controversial, and that does not add, Sir, to the kind of constructive posture, I believe, that we should be adopting in this country because agriculture is beneficial to all of us.

Let me give the premises, Sir, from which I stand and speak. I am a small farmer, Sir, a micro farmer. And more than that, Sir, I consider myself to be a research farmer, Sir, an experimental farmer.

5.35 p.m.

In my day, Sir, I have tried with some Broccoli. I have tried with soya bean. Sir, I even have, right now, the type of potato that is sometimes called English potato. I have three of them growing, Sir. I do all of that, Sir, without any **assistance** from the **extension** services of the Ministry of **Agriculture**. So, Sir, I lay my credentials on the table. Let me say that I believe that in terms of its contribution to economic development in this country, in terms of its contribution to employment and in terms of its contribution to social life, agriculture has a very important role to play.

We pass a lot of laws, Sir, but sometimes I think we are not as zealous in the enforcement of those laws. I do not recall off hand the year in which the law relating to the eradication of the love vine was put on the Statute Book but there is such a law and yet we see a proliferation of the love vine in Barbados.

I do not know if there is a law about cowitch but, Sir, there is a proliferation of cowitch in Barbados and I believe that these and other factors which operate in the agricultural sector can make conditions adverse for the full development of agriculture.

Now, I want, Sir, to make a point which uninitiated may sound peculiar but Barbados, contrary to the view that is expressed, as a small country is well endowed

with resources. We have our land which can be a productive land.

We have our water resources which, with improved management, can meet our needs in Barbados and we have our workers who can also be productive workers. More than that, Sir, we are capable of producing and we do produce a few of the most sought after crops in world agriculture because if we look at the statistics of **trade** in agricultural commodities, you will note that sugar is one of the major crops traded on the international market.

We note, Sir, that cotton is a very important crop and Barbados is one of the few countries that produce the long staple cotton which is the most sought after variety of cotton that is produced.

From the sugar cane, Sir, there is rum which also, to those who have the taste for it, is a well sought after product. I know the Minister may be learned in that area. I know the delicacy, Sir. The delicacy that I speak about though is the sea urchin – sea egg.

Sir, we hear about caviar. I am telling you, Sir, that if we were to market our sea egg, we first of all have to produce it. If we were to put everything in place to produce that, that would be another international winner that we would have.

For many years we have had the **Bellairs** Research Institute here and I believe they do valuable work but I think we have to redouble our efforts particularly at research because the research that other countries do and that other institutions do may not be the kind of research particularly of the operational kind and the developmental kind that may be of interest to us.  
5.45 p.m.

I would hope that the Minister could give us some information as to how active the National Research Council, if there is such a body, may be in the furtherance of our agricultural growth and development.

I indicated, Sir, that I was a farmer. I am trying with the **tandue** variety of melon. You have the Honourable Member for Christ Church South brought them to Barbados. That is all he did.

*Aside.*

Rt. Hon. L. E. SANDIFORD: I believe in this first intervention that I have to lay the ground work because I believe that if we can bring the resources in agriculture together, public and private, that we would be on the right track for keeping Barbados as the leading developing country in the world. I believe that it is possible but we have to get rid of all of the negativity and in this Chamber

in particular we have to realize that we have to work together. No Government has suffered more than the one that I had the honour to lead from this extreme partisanship and the divisiveness that tended to weaken the national spirit. Unless we can realize that our efforts are to work so that we can produce what is good for Barbados instead of seeking silly little ways to divide ourselves, I think it would be better for our country.

Sir, I am not going to attack the Leader of this country, the Member for St. Peter – the Right Honourable Member. I only attack him, Sir, when he attacks me. Having held the office, Sir, I know what deference should be given to the office. But in **all** innocence, Sir, I thought that I was making a contribution to the national debate when I called for the people of Barbados to use their best endeavours to ensure that cane fires were reduced. I went on to say, Sir, that sugar production was very important **for** us in this country and that my Government had targets of a low of 65 000 and a high of 100 000 tonnes. I quoted, Sir, from public documents corroborated from development **plans** in Barbados and from the leading document in political theory and practice, the Manifesto of the Democratic Labour Party to establish this.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Speaker, the Member is on the point of misleading the House. The Democratic Labour Party's Manifesto, 1994 does not speak of a target of 100 000 tonnes. There is no reference to it, Sir, and the Development Plan for Barbados for 1993 to the year 2000 at no point reference is made to any matter of 100 000 tonnes as the Member for St. Michael South would **now** want the House to accept. The Plan is a document of this House and he has access to it and he should read it at page 190 in order to see what the Plan says. The Plan speaks in terms of a target of 65 000 tonnes and it goes on to say what will have to happen for 75 000 to be regarded as an objective.

Rt. Hon. L. E. SANDIFORD: Sir, I will have to return on this matter. I quoted from two Development Plans and I said that a low of 65 000 tonnes was in the Development Plan 1993 – 2000, that in the 1988 – 93 Development Plan there was a reference – this is still the Democratic Labour Party, a continuing organization. I am telling you where our objectives were. But I am not making a division about that. It is a fact. You go and read the document. That is what it said and I quoted from that in a major political address at a major meeting in the constituency of St. Michael East. It was very revealing, Sir, the two Development Plans and then the Government said the figure was 75 000 tonnes, a figure that was remarkably similar to the one that was in the Manifesto of the Democratic Labour Party 1994 General Elections.

*Aside.*

Rt. Hon. L. E. SANDIFORD: I said between a low of 65 000 tonnes and a high of 100 000 tonnes. This is what the 1988-93 Manifesto said. These are documents, but I did not know that that would have riled the Prime Minister to that extent because all that was doing is setting out our vision and our hope. Now the Prime Minister is at liberty to say that the objectives or goals were unrealistic. He can criticize them but facts are facts and they are documented.

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

Rt. Hon. L. E. SANDIFORD: Yes, I will wind up on that point and I will have to come back. These are the facts and on that point I will rest my case until I return to build again.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Mr. Chairman, there is no doubt in my mind that the Democratic Labour Party had plans of producing more than 65 000 tonnes of sugar in this country. If one looks at the same Development Plan that the Prime Minister just referred to, one would see that...

*Aside.*

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The present Prime Minister has not been participating in this debate of late.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN:...Okay, that the former Prime Minister referred to, one would see that the sugar industry at its maximum would have had 32 500 acres in production and, if we use 30 tonnes to the acre, one would see that would give you 975 000 tonnes of cane. If you use a recovery of 8 tonnes of canes to one tonne of sugar, it is possible that when all of the sugar land is in production that you could reach 122 000 tonnes of sugar. Even if you use the recovery of nine tonnes of canes to one tonne of sugar, the evidence is here that you can get a production of 100 000 tonnes of sugar.

5.55 p.m.

But, Mr. Chairman, that is not the main reason why I am speaking in this debate. In August last year we had a situation where there was severe flooding in **Weston**, there was bad weather in the northern parishes of this country and boats were destroyed in St. Peter, in Half Moon Fort, in Six Men's and also at **Oistin's**. I would like to find out from the Minister of Agriculture whether these boat owners have been compensated or not, because to the best of my knowledge they have not been compensated. When you have a fishing industry that is reducing the import bill in this country, one would have figured that the Ministry would have done everything in its power to compensate those workers. When you look at the statistics, you will realise that the Democratic Labour Party made sure that the fishing industry, the tourism industry and the agricultural

industry were well served, and we predicted during the 1994 election that the foreign reserves of this country, by 1996, would reach their highest level. **One** of our main planks of the **stabilisation** programme is that we would have brought back tourism to its peak, the sugar industry to its peak and that the foreign reserves would have been back at a level where we could afford to do whatever we want. Therefore, Sir, my best prediction is that the foreign reserves today would have to be over **\$500 000**. I do not know the figure and I would ask the Right Honourable Prime Minister to tell me what is the figure now for the foreign reserves. If it is over **\$500 000**, then it means the predictions we made in St. Lucy and throughout Barbados were right.

Mr. Chairman, I am happy to say that if the cotton industry was given the support we were giving it, the foreign reserves of this country would have been even higher, but what we have is a situation where instead of producing the quantity of cotton we had predicted they cut back on the cotton production, saying **that** the Japanese farmers were not interested in buying our cotton. The evidence is here. They knew what the foreign reserves would have been and they tried to hold back on the cotton production to reduce the level of foreign reserves which we had predicted during the 1994 elections.

Mr. Chairman, we also have another situation under Rural Development. When the **first** supplementary was brought to this House I supported it and I said at the time it should not have been \$800 000 but at least \$10 million. I said the reason why I would support the \$10 million is that I know the Prime Minister would be spending a lot of money in St. Peter, which I would support, and that I expected the Prime Minister to spend some of that money in St. Lucy. Today I am an unhappy man. Even though I begged for more money for the Minister of Agriculture, none of that money is reaching past the Judge Gap. Instead of some of that money reaching past the Judge Gap, I am now hearing that there is a new concept to rural development and that at the **Arawak** Cement Plant we will get rural development in terms of a landfill. Nonsense, Mr. Chairman! We cannot accept that. When we talk about rural development we expect...

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. **Chairman**, Honourable Members of this House must not mislead this House. We have already in this House indicated that funds are being voted this year to establish a **landfill** at Greenland, and unless the Honourable Member for St. Luc, a hallucinating and believes that Greenland is in St. Lucy, he cannot now say that the funds we spent at a **landfill** at Greenland are funds to be spent at a **landfill** in St. Lucy. I would ask that the Member's remarks should not only be withdrawn, but should be struck from the record.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Mr. Chairman, I **am** quite happy to withdraw those remarks and I am proud to

hear the Prime Minister would like them to be struck from the record. I must congratulate the Prime Minister for informing me that that news report is wrong and that there will be no **landfill** in the beautiful constituency of St. Lucy. As you are aware, Sir, I have always said in this House that in St. Lucy there is room for tourism development, and to place a **landfill** in St. Lucy would destroy all the prospects for tourism in that beautiful constituency.

As you are aware, Sir, St. Lucy has a lot of land which is not far away **from** the marina in St. Peter. It is good land for villas and things like that. All of that is part of **rural** development. All we are asking you, Sir, is to just put in the necessary infrastructure and we will find the investors to create some jobs for you.

Mr. Chairman, I have pointed out already the Half Moon Fort area that can be developed under **rural** development. There is the Naval Base facility and I know the Prime Minister is quite happy to see places like these, Archer's Bay, Cove Bay, River Bay, as beautiful projects. Not only that, people get in here and talk about rural development as if it is something new, and I want to revisit a situation. We are still expecting a small airport that was to have been built in St. Lucy since the 1970s.

*Aside.*

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Yes, Mr. Barrow promised that. Mr. Barrow said many things and it took 25 years to see the vision. If we had a small airport in St. Lucy...  
6.05 p.m.

*Aside.*

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Yes that is all part of the land use policy. If we had a small airport in St. Lucy, places like North Point Hotel, the Naval Base Hotel - I like to refer to it as a hotel - these would be very viable projects and you would not even have to advertise for investors. People would be willing to invest in such projects.

You cannot have a property like North Point and the Naval Base and leave it lying like that. One of the main planks of a rural development plan should be to develop North Point and the naval base facility. Once you get investments for those projects as a spin-off from the marina in St. Peter you would see developments stretching right through. You cannot deny that and I **am** saying you have no other choice but to support me on this particular point. Thank you.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Chairman, I want to contribute to this debate to speak to the question as to what is necessary to bring sugar production in Barbados from the level of the last few years to 75 000 tonnes which is the

objective. I just want to say that during the last few minutes I was passing around to my Cabinet colleagues the most recent, today's output, the daily position of the Central Bank of Barbados showing the monetary authority's holding of foreign exchange reserves which at the 18th of March 1996 the gross holding of reserves by the monetary authority at \$505 million so that the fact that Barbados' holding of reserves has passed half billion dollars is a matter that I thought I should share with my Cabinet colleagues. If the microphones are sensitive enough for the member for St. Lucy to hear it..

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: On a point of order, Sir. The Honourable Member is misleading the House. I did not pick up anything on the microphone and he is giving the impression that I picked up information through the microphone.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: I would like to read the record, Sir, because the records are very important. I would like to look at the last few months of the Democratic Labour Party Administration. In June 1994 the reserves stood at \$405 million.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: On a point of order, Sir. Much as I would like to hear the information which the Minister of Finance did not give us during his Head, I **am** not sure that the information which he is purporting to give now relates to the Head and I draw it to Your Honour's attention.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Sir, I would just like to read into the records what happened in the last few months of the Democratic Labour Party Administration. In June of 1994 the holding of foreign assets by the monetary authority stood at \$405 million. It fell to \$389 million in July. It fell to \$374 million in August and by the end of September they had fallen to \$353 million. So Barbados' foreign exchange reserves fell by \$50 million in the last 3 months of the term of office of the Democratic Labour Party Administration. Sir, we have picked up reserves at \$350 million and in 18 months we have brought them over the \$500 million mark. Sir, the member for St. Lucy spoke in this debate on sugar and I want to say that the fortunes of the Barbados sugar industry have substantially improved since he ceased being the financial controller of Barbados Sugar Industries Ltd.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Sir, I can only say now that the Prime Minister of this country is deliberately misleading this House.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: You cannot use the word "deliberately".

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: He repeated this point on more than one occasion and I have corrected him and now he is coming to the House and he is using it again so I can only say that he is deliberately doing it.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member has to note that members cannot impute improper motives to other members. You have to withdraw the remark. It is unparliamentary.

Mr. D. St.E. KELLMAN: I will withdraw the remarks and I would like to say that he again, even though he has been corrected on many occasions, is misleading the House.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Chairman, Sir, it is a matter of public record that the member for St. Lucy was employed as a financial advisor to the Barbados Sugar Industries Limited. The industry encountered massive and increasing debt when the member for St. Lucy was engaged in that occupation to the point where the industry had to divest themselves of his influence and a **restructuring** programme for the industry was put in place coincidentally with the member for St. Lucy being divested of the financial influence that he was exercising on the decisions taken by that industry.

I thank God, Sir, that the financial advice that the member for St. Lucy was rendering then is not now being offered to the new and restructured Barbados sugar industry. I wish him well in his new occupation, but I hope that never again will the member for St. Lucy have any input to make whatsoever in the financial affairs of our sugar industry. He was the man responsible for the finances of the industry and if you want to understand why the debt of the industry has accrued and why the industry **became** bankrupt we should consult the man in charge of the finances, the member for St. Lucy. He alone singlehandedly after 300 years of experience put us in a position where the sugar industry in this country became bankrupt.

Sir, the member for St. Michael South made statements in relation to objectives of the Democratic Labour Party in relation to sugar production in this country. I have already made a ministerial statement to the effect that contrary to what the Democratic Labour Party may have put in its manifesto, and it did put in its manifesto that it might aim at **75 000 tonnes**, it accepted a recommendation that the sugar industry of Barbados should aim at a target of only **65 000 tonnes**.

Mr. Chairman, it would not be the first time and it may not be the last that the Democratic Labour Party will put things in its manifesto from which it will subsequently disassociate itself. In **1986**, the Democratic Labour Party put in its manifesto a give-away of a whole range of taxes and it came subsequently to say that those tax cuts were tax cuts that had not been properly appraised by the Party and did not enjoy the Party's support.

I am saying, Sir, that contrary to what the Democratic Labour Party may have stated in its manifesto it took a

decision to limit sugar production in this country only to **65 000 tonnes**, and we now have to find the resources to increase sugar production beyond the level that we found it at, **38 000 tonnes**, to the **75 000 tonnes** that we deem to be necessary for the development of this country. Mr. Chairman, it is one thing to set objectives. It is another thing to provide the financial resources for those objectives to be realised. The financing provided to the Barbados Agricultural Management Company and the industry was financing to allow the industry only to produce **65 000 tonnes** and if we are going to raise sugar production in Barbados from the levels of today and the levels of next year, the Government of Barbados is going to have to commit itself to providing continuous financial assistance to independent growers for them to bring back into production lands which have been idle but which can be used for the purpose of growing sugar. That is the point, Sir.

**6.15 p.m.**

The Democratic Labour Party can speak as grandly as they want to, but the reality is that the financing secured whether through the CDB, **Citibank** in Trinidad or wherever else was financing to support a **65 000 tonne** crop. Last year we provided assistance to the independent growers to enable them to bring additional lands into production to support production higher than a **65 000 tonne** crop.

Rt. Hon. L. E. SANDIFORD: Sir, I do not think the Prime Minister needs to continue on this line because he has just confirmed what I have been saying that we had the goal or the target of **75 000 tonnes** as said in the Manifesto, and a low of **65 000** or a high of **100 000** in the Development Plan. That is **all** I was saying.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Chairman, a lot of things were happening in **late 1993** and **throughout 1994** that **took** advantage of what the member for St. John called "institutional inertia in the **Government**." The Honourable Member for St. John has said as much. The Honourable Member for St. John **has** said that there was **institutional** fatigue in the Government and he said it more than once on the Floor of this House.

A lot of decisions were being taken in **1994** because people in the **Democratic Labour** Party recognised that the then Prime Minister was under pressure and that even though Cabinet may have said one thing they were free to do something entirely different.

The Honourable Member for St. Michael South will remember that he as Chairman of Cabinet caused his Cabinet to take a decision that there should be no casino gambling in Barbados, but yet his Minister of Finance as Chairman of the Foreign Exchange Committee went and established a committee...

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Mr. Chairman, on a point of order. Unless the casino was being built in a cane field how could this be relevant to the Ministry of Agriculture? Was it a casino in a cane field somewhere?

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Chairman, the point I want to make very specifically, and I have already established it in a statement to this House, is that the Government of the Democratic Labour Party administration was presented with a study by **Booker** Tate indicating that the Government of the day could pursue one of two options, a 65 000 tonne industry with 3 000 earmarked for other crops including cotton, and a 75 000 tonne industry.

The two different options raised different financial decisions because to move sugar production from 50 000 tonnes to 75 000 tonnes means that you have to spend a given amount of money per acre to bring back land into sugar. The DLP administration agreed in January 1994 to adopt the option of only a 65 000 tonne industry with lands earmarked for cotton. What we are now seeking to do, Sir, is to pursue the other option that was recommended to the Democratic Labour Party administration but which it rejected. That took place in January 1994 and it took place as a result of the involvement of a company called the Barbados Agricultural Management Company that reported to the Minister of Finance, and the decision was a decision arising out of recommendations made through the Barbados Agricultural Management Company Ltd.

Sir, I do not want to get into polemics because we have dollars and cents decisions to make. Last year we provided funds to assist independent growers to bring sugar lands back into production. These funds were not part of the original financing secured by the Democratic Labour Party, and I want to stress this point. The Democratic Labour Party secured funds from the Caribbean Development Bank and it negotiated a loan with **Citibank** of Trinidad to provide the financing for a 65 000 tonne crop. Last year we had to come to ask the House to vote funds to assist independent growers with a subsidy to bring lands back into production. We have had to do it again this year.

Mr. Chairman, the point of my intervention is to tell the Honourable Member for St. Michael South that next year as well we will also have to come to the House and ask it to agree to vote funds to help independent producers to bring sugar lands back into production because that was not part of the Democratic Labour Party administration's plan.

Mr. Chairman, I also want to stress the point that the decision to close Bulkeley was part of the decision to restrict sugar production in this country only to 65 000 tonnes. Once sugar production in Barbados is restricted to 65 000 tonnes, there will be no need for more than two

sugar factories because those two sugar factories have the capacity to deal with production up to...

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Mr. Chairman, on a point of order. The Prime Minister is quite aware that one of the plans in restructuring the sugar industry was a decision whether to build a new factory in the Bulkeley area and also to close Port Vale. Mr. **Chairman**, it must be pointed out that the reason why a new factory was contemplated in the Bulkeley area was because of the condition of the machinery found at Bulkeley when the **BAMC** took over the factories.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Chairman, a previous Prime Minister has once said about a former member for St. Lucy that he was hallucinating. The Honourable Member for St. Lucy is also hallucinating. The Democratic Labour Party had absolutely no plan to build any other factory at Bulkeley. The intention of the DLP was to have a 65 000 tonne industry with two factories, namely Port Vale and Andrews and the arrangement was that all of the farmers of the South would ship their cane to Bulkeley **and** then they would be transhipped from Bulkeley to Andrews. Those were the plans of the Democratic Labour Party and I submit to you, Sir, that the poor member for St. Lucy is hallucinating.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Mr. Chairman, on a point of order. The Honourable Member is misleading the House. That is not true, Sir. I will ask the Honourable **Prime** Minister how much it will cost to put Bulkeley in good working condition?

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Chairman, I feel a responsibility once again to read into the records of this House the Ministerial Statement I made.

#### *Aside.*

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: No, Mr. Chairman, these matters are too important. Sir, I want to repeat. In December 1992 . . .

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Mr. Chairman, I do not wish to get up, but you cannot make a statement to Parliament and then reread the statement in the same session. The Honourable Member must know that.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Sir, I want to use my Ministerial Statement to refresh my memory and that is all I want to do, and also to refresh the memory of the entire House. I recall saying to Parliament that in December of 1992 the then Government of Barbados retained **Booker** Tate to assist in planning all aspects of the rehabilitation of the sugar industry and that as part of that exercise a **five**-year operational plan was produced with two options,

namely Option A and Option B with industry capacities of **75 000 tonnes** as Option A, and **65 000 tonnes** as Option B.

**6.25 p.m.**

The Government of the **day**, Sir, I recalled saying they selected Option B which was an option for **65 000 tonnes** with provision for up to **3 000 acres**, Sir, of diversified agriculture within the industry, on the provision that only Andrews and Port Vale should operate. That decision, Sir, was consciously taken by the Democratic Labour Party, and it is in the file, Sir.

I just want to make the point very clear, Mr. Chairman, because this is a financial matter, that if we are to get sugar production up to **75 000 tonnes** we have to look beyond the financing for the industry that the Democratic Labour Party negotiated with the CDB. We have to look beyond the financing that it negotiated with the **Citibank** of Trinidad because that financing was financing for a **65 000 tonne** industry. The pragmatic matter that is facing us now, Sir, is to try to find the financing that is necessary to transform a **65 000 tonne industry** into a **75 000 tonne** industry and beyond.

And, Mr. Chairman, Sir, every time you bring a new acre of land back into sugar production, Sir, it costs, Mr. Chairman, sometimes thousands of dollars and it is going to cost millions of dollars, Sir, in support through the Budget and at taxpayers expense, to bring sugar production in this country back up to **75 000 tonnes**.

I have **gotten**, Sir, involved in this debate to tell the Member for St. Michael South, Sir, that I am expecting that the Democratic Labour Party is going to vote for the monies this year to support the planting programmes of **independent** farmers because last year, Sir, they voted against the Estimates.

I am also going to say, Sir, that next year when we have to come again and **ask** Parliament to provide more funds for independent farmers to bring land into sugar production, Sir, I will ask the Democratic Labour Party to support it again, because the financing they secured was financing only related to **65 000 tonnes**, Sir.

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

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Unless you want to hallucinate, like the Member for St. Lucy, Sir, there could be no **way** that you could have an objective to produce **75 000 tonnes** and provide financing, Sir, for only **65,000** without finding some source to bridge the gap between what you have provided for and what you want to achieve.

Rt. Hon. L. E. SANDIFORD: On a point of elucidation, Sir. The Minister has given way.

Sir, it is clear **that** his is an exercise in straight and crooked thinking.

*Asides.*

Rt. Hon. L. E. SANDIFORD: I am **talking** about crooked. Straight on this side **and** crooked on that side.

The argument is clearly being developed on different premises. **All** I have said, and I have also provided the documentation for what I have said, is that the Democratic Labour Party had an objective, planned goal of sugar production in a range between **65,000 tonnes**, on one hand, the lower end, and the upper end of **100 000 tonnes**. Now you can say that it is unrealistic. You can have whatever opinions you like about that, but you cannot tell this side what our plans were. I have documented it.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: I am saying, Sir, that that is a plan that is totally not borne out with reference to any document, to any plan drawn by the then Government, Sir, or any operational plan conceived of, and I want to read again. The Democratic Labour Party had a plan in **1965** to build an airport in St. Lucy. In **1961** it had a plan to build a plastic tube factory in Barbados, Sir. It had objectives, Sir.

*Asides.*

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Chairman, Sir, the **1993** to the year 2000 Plan, that informs what would happen in this period, that concerns us now. But the Democratic Labour Party, Sir, said that it wanted to increase, gradually, at page **90**, the volume of sugar production from the annual level of **50 000 tonnes** in **1993** to **65 000 tonnes** by the middle of the Plan period, and all of the financing that they paraded, Sir, was designed only for that period.

The Member for St. Michael South allowed the Member for St. John to hijack his Government on casino gambling, sugar production and a lot of other matters, Sir. He was not in charge, as the Member for St. John said, Sir, the Government had collapsed, they were suffering from institutional fatigue.

*Asides.*

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Order, please. You have one second left to speak.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: .. Sir, I want to say, Sir, that I . . .

Rt. Hon. L. E. SANDIFORD: On a point of order. Sir, I wish to make the record quite straight because we may be getting into some depths here, but let me say

that the Government which I had headed was not hijacked by the Member for St. John who was a loyal steadfast Member of my Government, and if there was any hijacking done, it was by the Barbados Labour Party Government which went in...

*Asides.*

Rt. Hon. L. E. **SANDIFORD**:...Anyhow, I leave it at that, Sir.

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

Rt. Hon. O. S. **ARTHUR**: Mr. Chairman, Sir, I want to say to the Member for St. Michael South that the Member for St. John has already said, on the Floor of this Parliament, that the DLP Government had collapsed, and part of the collapse, Sir, was his rejection of any objective that might have been set by the Member for St. John, Sir, his adoption of his own and it obtained, Sir, sadly to say, not only in relation to casino gambling but in **relation, Sir**, to the sugar production of Barbados. Sir, I am glad that the change of Government has relieved the Member for St. John of the heaviest cross that he had possibly ever to bear.

I am obliged to you, Mr. **Chairman**.

Mr. B. M. **TAITT**: Mr. Chairman, it is only fitting, Sir, that this evening should end with a political discussion. The Honourable Member, The Prime Minister, continues to mystify me with the utterances which he makes in regard to this Head in this House.

Mr. Chairman, what the Prime Minister has not told the public, and I will tell them for him, is that he made a political decision with regard to Bulkeley. He made a political decision which he is seeking to justify on economic grounds and now brings up this argument about what he found about 65 000 tonnes.

Mr. Chairman, if you go back to the history of the intervention of the Honourable Member for St. George South...

Rt. Hon. O. S. **ARTHUR**: Mr. Chairman, Sir, on a point of order, Sir. If the Honourable Member for St. Michael West is seeking to establish that the decision to have 65 000 tonnes, Sir, was a technical and economic decision, and that I took a political decision to move it to 75 000 tonnes, Sir, he is only confirming the point I want to establish that we inherited a 65 000 tonne industry objective.

Whether it was a political objective or not, Sir, is not the point. He is saying that I took a political decision and he is thereby acknowledging, Sir, that I had to take a decision to go to 75 000 tonnes.

Mr. B. M. **TAITT**: The political decision I am discussing is that the Honourable Member is arguing from the decision of moving back now to give the country the indication that he made this decision on the basis of some sound intellectual approach or by deductive reasoning.

The fact is that the Honourable Member for St. George South told the Honourable Member for St. Peter...

Rt. Hon. O. S. **ARTHUR**: On a point of order, Sir. The Member, Sir, is misleading the House. The advice rendered in relation to moving to 65 000 tonnes was not rendered at any stage by the Member for St. George South, but principally by the Sugar Industry Supervisors' Association, who established, Sir, that if you were to have a 75 000 tonne industry, with two factories alone, the sugar crop would have to operate for 36 weeks, pushing the industry into the wet season, and that you needed a **three-**factory industry in order to produce 75 000 tonnes in this country.

I have made that information, Sir, in my Ministerial Statement, Sir, and therefore the Member is misleading the House when he says that, that was a political decision, Sir. It was a technical decision that bore a direct relationship to the imperatives of the industry.

Mr. B. M. **TAITT**: Mr. Chairman, Sir, the Honourable Member could make my 15-minute speech by every **time** I make a half a sentence, he can get up and speak for three minutes and he can go on until we come to **7:00** o'clock.

The fact is, you know, Sir, there is a Hymn that you sing in the little villages, in places like St. George South, and it has a line "It ain't me, it is you, you confuse." You know that Hymn? I want him to sing it as he is going home. I cannot sing in the Chamber. "It **ain't** me, it is you, **you** confuse."  
**6.35 p.m.**

The Honourable Member for St. George South who sits in the back of the Government Members, that Honourable Member, if the reports that were made public and he was subsequently joined by the Honourable Member for St. George North who made a political issue of the closure of **Bulkeley**...

Rt. Hon. O. S. **ARTHUR**: The Honourable Member is misleading the House. Mr. Chairman, the view that Barbados should have three factories is not only a matter that is endorsed by the Member for St. George South and St. George North, but for most of the leading Members of the Barbados Sugar Industry, all of the people who have been involved in **the** management of factories of this country and we received a wide range of advice instructing us that the advice rendered by the Member for St. John

to the DLP was totally erroneous and that we should **return** it. Mr. Chairman, Sir, I accepted **the** advice and Cabinet accepted the advice of the Sugar Industry Supervisors Association, all of the growers in the industry and all those who had the welfare of the sugar industry of Barbados at heart.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Mr. Chairman, as I said, Sir, every time I get up he can do **three** minutes. But the facts cannot **be** removed. He said he took advice from wide and far but the only advice that frightened him apparently into making a decision was the advice from the Honourable Member for St. George South and then that was followed, not with the same strength of conviction or force because the Honourable Member for St. George South would not have had the experience and the depth to allow the Members in the Front Bench to recognise that a crisis was brewing. But the Honourable Member for St. George South made it clear to all and sundry that Bulkeley would close over his dead **body**.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Chairman, Sir, the records of this House must never be perverted and I am rising, Sir, to say that the Member is misleading the House. I want to make the point very carefully, Sir. Mr. Chairman, **Sir**, the Cabinet of this country makes decisions upon the basis of things submitted to it. It has always been that way, Sir and it will always and should always be that way. The only submissions rendered to Cabinet to serve as the basis upon which a decision could be taken ....

#### *Aside.*

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Chairman, Sir, I must correct the record because the records must not be **perverted**. Mr. Chairman, I have made a ministerial statement, Sir, the only recommendations submitted to Cabinet to serve as the basis upon which a decision should be taken as to whether or not there should be two factories or not were recommendations made by the officials of the Barbados Agricultural Management Company and officials of the Sugar Industry Supervisors Association. No submissions were made to Cabinet by the Member for St. George South or the Member for St. George North and I just want to say, Sir, that we must make sure that the records of this Parliament are not perverted by the misconception of Members who want to bring their own false perceptions to the issue.

The Government of Barbados **took** a decision on the basis of the best technical advice rendered to it and that advice is proving to have been invaluable advice because were it not for the existence of Bulkeley this year, Sir, we would not be able to get through a crop of the scale that we have now.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Mr. Chairman, I have no doubt that the Cabinet made the decision. I have no doubt

whatsoever but the Cabinet was informed by the knowledge. The Cabinet had the full knowledge that I have, that the Member for St. George South, aided and abetted by the Honourable Member for St. George North. The Honourable Member for St. George South said, "you close Bulkeley over my dead body". The Advocate Newspaper, the Nation Newspaper and the black and white press in Barbados knew. I am **sorry** that the Honourable Member for St. George South is not in his place because he would get up and confirm. The issue is not a two factory issue or a three factory issue. The issue is the closure of Bulkeley.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Chairman, on a point of order, Sir. I am pleased to be able to say, Sir, that on this side we have a sufficiently cohesive Parliamentary group as to be able to allow Members to render advice to the Government and I would wish, Sir, only that I learned the lesson well from the other side, Sir. I wish, Mr. Chairman, that there was a similar facility on the other side that had a former Prime Minister subject to the advice from his Back Benches, because had that been the case he would not be in the sorry state in which he is today.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: The Honourable Member is shifting ground now, Sir. He is moving from a two factory vs a three factory argument to who gives advice and who takes it. I wish to applaud the Honourable Member for taking the advice of a former Foreign Minister, Minister of Trade, Minister of **everything**, the Honourable Member for St. George South. I congratulate the Prime Minister for taking the advice, for recognising the inherent politics in determining not to close Bulkeley. The Honourable Member has sought to **frame** this discussion in **terms** of an economic decision about two factories versus three. I give him that that is **insufficient** justification for the position which he took. I accept **that** he found a pathological approach to how he could justify or change from the position that he had agreed to when he first became **Prime** Minister.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Chairman, I just want to draw to the attention of the House, Sir, that the Member for St. Michael West, as usual, is colliding with the views represented by the Member for St. Michael South because he is saying that he inherited a 55 000 tonne decision and the Member for St. Michael South is saying something else and both cannot be right. So the views of one must be **struck** from the record.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Let me show you, Sir, that even if we take what he has said so far, he read and said that the decision of the Democratic Labour Party was that we would reach 65 000 tonnes by the mid-term of the period. The period is from 1993 to 2000. What year is the mid-point? I have heard the most convoluted bogus concepts put forward here as arguments, talking about

having arranged the finance for 65 000 tonnes. You would not have to raise the finance for longer than mid-term.

Rt. Hon. **d. S. ARTHUR**: Mr. Chairman, I rise on a point of order. I was careful to state that the Democratic Labour Party conceived of a 5-year plan for the sugar industry and the five years stretched from 1993 to 1998. If the Member for St. Michael West can show me that 5 years stretches from 1993 to 2000 I would be pleased to be guided by his false arithmetic.

6.45 p.m.

I would just want to reinforce that his misconception in this matter that a 5-year plan should stretch from 1993 to the year 2000 is as misconceived as the views he had on the development of the St. Joseph Hospital.

Mr. B. M. **TAITT**: I know that it would not be long before the Honourable Member sought refuge in some other argumentation. Whenever the Honourable Member has his back to the wall, he goes like a dog that is cornered and starts not only snarling but biting his own tail. But we are not discussing health **care**. We are discussing the Honourable Member's capacity to take advice from his back bench. I am saying that the Honourable Member was told in no uncertain manner and all the people in Barbados are fully seized that the Honourable Member for St. George South told him that you will close Bulkeley's factory over my dead body which was a proper position for the Honourable Member for St. George South. Quite frankly the two-factory concept would make a lot more sense if you closed Portvale. **Portvale** is a half factory. **Portvale** has never been a new factory. It is an old factory that was put together in a new building in St. James.

Rt. Hon. O. S. **ARTHUR**: Mr. Chairman, we are bound by the Constitution of Barbados and the Constitution of Barbados provides for the collective responsibility of Cabinet. The Member for St. Michael West was **part** of a Cabinet that decided not to close Portvale. He cannot now come to this Parliament and profess that he did not then agree or subscribe to the decision of the Cabinet of which he was a part to keep **Portvale** open in preference to keeping Bulkeley open, Sir. This nonsense about it would have been preferable to keep **Portvale** open was **disagreed** entirely by the Democratic Labour Party Administration. But if the Member for St. Michael West now wants to break ranks with his Cabinet colleagues as he has done in so many different capacities to the embarrassment of his Prime Minister, he is **free** now I submit to Parliament to break ranks once again.

Mr. B. M. **TAITT**: I challenge the Honourable Member to cite one single time when I broke ranks as a Cabinet Minister with my colleagues. The Honourable Member has used about 6 different approaches to **ease** away from the reality of the fact that the Honourable

Member does not wish anybody in Barbados to know that having made a decision with his Cabinet that he was capable of being moved by anyone like the former Minister, the Member for St. George South. The reality is and the record as put out in the Barbados Labour Party column before the closure of Bulkeley became an issue is that the Barbados Labour Party Government had decided that they would close the Bulkeley factory and the canes would go from Bulkeley...

Rt. Hon. O. S. **ARTHUR**: Mr. Chairman, Sir, the Member is saying that I am rising frivolously. Cabinet decisions are serious matters. It was decided by the Democratic Labour Party Administration that Bulkeley should be closed at the end of the 1995 crop. We received a Cabinet submission recommending the closure of Bulkeley. We refused to accept that Cabinet decision. This Cabinet has at no stage ever agreed to close the Bulkeley factory and I want the reference by the Member for St. Michael West that says that this Cabinet and this Government agreed to close Bulkeley factory be struck from the record because it is a perversion of the facts. It is not true. Mr. Speaker, I am asking you to rule.

Mr. B. M. **TAITT**: If the Honourable Member wishes me to withdraw that the Cabinet made a decision, I said the Government had decided. I did not say that the Cabinet made a decision. I said the Government had decided. That Government meets on Sunday afternoons. It meets on **Wednesday** nights.

Rt. Hon. O. S. **ARTHUR**: Mr. Chairman, I am asking you to rule.

Mr. **CHAIRMAN**: In view of the fact that we have no evidence that...

Mr. B. M. **TAITT**: I withdraw any information against the Cabinet. I withdraw that easily, Sir. I am saying that the Barbados Labour Party made the decision. The Barbados Labour Party had committed itself to closing Bulkeley until the Honourable Member for St. George South made his way...

Rt. Hon. O. S. **ARTHUR**: Mr. Chairman, Sir, the only thing that the Barbados Labour Party Administration agreed to close was the St. Joseph Hospital. That is a matter of fact and that was agreed to on Sunday, Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday and Saturday, Sir. There was no decision ever by any Barbados Labour Party Government to close Bulkeley. I am asking that those untruthful remarks be struck from the record. He said the Government and the Government is represented by the Cabinet.

Mr. **CHAIRMAN**: He has withdrawn the word "Government".

Hon. Sir HAROLD St. JOHN: I am speaking now, Sir. The Honourable Member has been in here all day talking and repeating himself.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Are you rising on a point of order, Sir?

Hon. Sir HAROLD St. JOHN: No, Sir. I am making a speech. The Honourable Member sat down.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: You cannot make a speech yet. The Honourable Member had been interrupted. I do not think he has fully used up his 15 minutes.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: I have not finished a sentence. The Honourable Member has interrupted me consistently. I have not even finished a sentence. The Honourable Member even went to the ridiculous decision in which he as the representative for St. Peter closed the hospital and now he is bragging about it. He is the only representative who could close a hospital to prevent the people who live in his constituency from having access to health. He cares nothing about them. The decision to close the St. Joseph Hospital was made in the same way that they made the decision to go along with what he says that he found. But the decision was that they were going to keep Portvale, Andrews and that Bulkeley would be closed. I am stating categorically that I know that the Member for St. Peter only changed his mind about the Bulkeley situation when the Member for St. George South brought it forcibly to his contemplation that such a decision would be important to the poor barefoot people of St. George and the Honourable Member for St. Peter...

*Aside.*

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Will you please wind up?

Mr. B. M. TAITT: There is no movement away from the point that the Honourable Members do not wish me to state. I am saying categorically that I believe verily in my heart based on the information that has reached me that the Prime Minister and Minister of Finance in his capacity as Leader of the Barbados Labour Party had made the decision to go with the closure of Bulkeley until such time as counsel prevailed upon him, counsel in the name of the Honourable Member for St. George South that he must not...

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: On a point of order, Mr. Chairman. The Honourable Member for St. Michael West is misleading the House. Because in the Booker Tate Report the options considered – this Annex 2, page 11 – include the expansion of Bulkeley factory or the provision of a new factory located at Bulkeley.  
6.55 p.m.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: I am grateful to the Honourable Member for reminding me of the basis on which the decision was made to expand and develop the Bulkeley Factory.

Hon. Sir HAROLD St. JOHN: On a point of order, Sir. I believe that the truth must be told. What the Bulkeley Report said at page 11, 209 is this:

"Other less attractive options considered include the expansion of Bulkeley Factory and the provision of a new factory located at Bulkeley or elsewhere. Simple consideration of likely capital requirement is sufficient to enable these options to be disregarded."

I am disappointed that the Honourable Member for St. Lucy has now followed so many of his colleagues and only reads part of a sentence.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Mr. Chairman, the Honourable Member is misleading the House. I am extremely grateful to the Honourable Member for **Christ** Church South for pointing out exactly what I said earlier in my speech, that the keeping of Bulkeley will cause considerable cost to the sugar industry. I have asked that question of the Prime Minister and up to now the Prime Minister has not answered me on how much it would cost to keep Bulkeley in production.

*On the motion of Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER, seconded by Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS, Mr. CHAIRMAN reported progress and asked for leave to sit again, and Mr. SPEAKER resumed the Chair and reported accordingly.*

#### SUSPENSION OF SITTING

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that this sitting be **suspended** until 10 o'clock in the morning.

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

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

#### RESUMPTION

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

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

## COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY (RESUMED)

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The Committee of Supply now resumes.

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: Mr. Chairman, when the sitting was coming to a close yesterday evening, there was a significant amount of debate regarding the Honourable Member for St. George South, regarding his involvement in the determination of whether Bulkeley would have been closed or not.

I do not intend to proceed in that particular direction in this aspect of the debate. I would like to make one or two comments regarding agricultural development, as a whole, as it relates to the environment, and certainly I would want to discuss one or two issues which I think are relevant to the sustained development of the industry.

The Honourable Member for St. George South raised some pertinent questions regarding the use of chemicals in the system. But he did not elaborate, to the extent, that he would have made his position very clear as to where we stand as a developing country with the use of agrochemicals, *et cetera*.

I am suggesting and I am going to take this opportunity, I think that it is relevant at this time for us to have a brief debate on it, that just as in the 1960s when we saw it necessary to protect the ground water resources in Barbados from the ravages of bacteria, from sewage *et cetera*, I think now, because of the rampant use of **agro** chemicals, which are now threatening the drinking water supply in Barbados in addition to threatening the near-shore marine environment where we can see a departure from the shores of Barbados, as was discussed sometime ago in this debate, the, almost, eradication of the sea egg, the lobsters and the flying fish have all been deserting these waters **around** Barbados as a result of the marine pollution, by these agro chemicals that **are** washing into the sea.

Now, my research tells me, Mr. Chairman, that - I would like to refer to one instance to Mr. Aji Mansighn, this is part of an ongoing research and is not in the final stage, but I think that it is important for us to start looking at this aspect of our development. I should say, Mr. Chairman, that Mr. Mansighn is a renowned Caribbean Pesticide Specialist. He is considered to be one of the best, if not the best in the Caribbean in **terms** of advising these Caribbean countries on pesticides. Now, for example, he has indicated to the Caribbean countries and he has identified the level of use of chemicals in the whole Caribbean area.

Barbados, strangely enough, Mr. Chairman, uses an abnormal amount of agro chemicals. Some 1 035 788

kilogrammes of this, and when compared on a per **kilometer** basis, it is 2 409 grams per **kilometer** which is the highest in the Caribbean region, by far. And on a per capita basis it is 4.05 kilometer, which is again, the highest use of these chemicals in the region. This is alarming.

I will give you a few examples whereas 1 035 000 **kilogrammes** in Belize, which has a fairly substantial agricultural base, they only use some 65 680 **kilogrammes**. In St. Lucia, they only use 53 000 **kilogrammes**. In St. Vincent, 345 000 **kilogrammes** and in Trinidad, 983 000 **kilogrammes**.

So Barbados is significantly higher in use of these chemicals and I am suggesting that we are going to have to pay some attention to the overuse of these chemicals, and in particular, Sir, when we consider that we set about to set up a zoning system in the 1960's, where we have Zone 1, Zone **2**, those were the areas that were designated as water zone areas. And we thought that we would have to protect them from the contamination by sewage and chemicals, and so forth.

This is a serious problem, Mr. Chairman, because you would appreciate that at present, in Barbados, the level of nitrate in the water is still within the acceptable limit but it is considerably high. The nitrate, which you would appreciate is derived from the use of fertilizers and sewage at present in Barbados, the levels are between 6 and 8 milligrammes per litre of water. This is still considered to be an acceptable level but the limit is 10 milligrammes per litre. So you can see between 6 and 8 milligrammes, we are bordering, very close the overuse of nitrate in the water, at present. And I must say it for the records, because if we are **talking** about development, we must be clear in our minds, the consequences that might occur if we, in fact, have over contamination of nitrate in our water system.

There is a disease called "blue baby syndrome." I **think** you know about the "blue baby syndrome". That can happen, Sir, when babies are deprived of oxygen where there is so much nitrate in the water, that it deprives the component of its oxygen. Even if you boiled the water, Mr. Chairman, you would find that, that is still **not** enough. There is a very expensive process that the country would then have to go through to remove the level of nitrate in the system.

So these **are** considerations as we look at the development of our agricultural base that we cannot, just simply, ignore.

There are a few other substances in the system, such as sulphate, which is also derived from the fertilizer, that causes discoloration of the water. And the levels at the Belle are constant. There are constant, at present,

27 milligrammes per litre and at Applewhaites they are presently 22 milligrammes per litre. And on the West Coast the levels are increasing but within the 500 milligrammes per litre limit.

Atrazine, even though it is negligible, it is a pesticide that has been used in the sugar cane industry. That has been identified, even though a very nominal amount, probably about 1%, it is identified in the system. And as the Honourable Member for St. George South said yesterday, that this can, in fact, cause cancer to the human body *et cetera*. So these are not areas that we can easily ignore.

The other area, Sir, of course, would be **ammatrine** and there are several others but I would not want to list all of them, but the research is available. The general point that I am making is that these are conditions that cannot be ignored. I am going to go on to make the point, Mr. Chairman, that as we look at the development – we can talk about the economic argument about whether we move the production from here to **there** or where we move it to. That is one argument. I did not want to confuse the two so I sat out of the debate, when we were, in fact, taking an overview of the economic argument with regards to the development of the sugar industry.  
10.10 a.m.

But although I would say that I give full marks to the Democratic Labour Party for having taken the bold move to restructure the industry at a crucial time when it was clearly being sabotaged by a particular group in the society. I am not going to get in to take away any credit from the Barbados Labour Party or from the Democratic Labour Party because the facts are it has worked for Barbados over the years, a particular problem developed that caused it go into a severe slump, corrective measures were taken for the industry to be corrected and I am glad if the process can be continued under the new administration.

There are other considerations that are impacting on the system that we need to be aware of as debaters in Parliament because it makes no sense us putting all of this money at the disposal, looking at our foreign reserves and at the same time we are destroying our own environment. It makes absolutely no sense to me.

I am asking the Minister to probably look at the possibility of introducing a policy position on the protection of the ground water in the zone areas identified or he might want to redefine them but certainly some consideration should be given to quality determination as to use of these things. They just cannot be done indiscriminately. I really took the cue from the Honourable Member for St. George South and I wanted to continue that and add some more light to it.

Now there is another concern that I have, Mr. Chairman and I am not sure if I have enough time so I will probably have to come back but I really want to put it in the record. I am going to start any way.

The development of agriculture, Sir, and I note that in the Notes to the Head that one of the objectives of the Government, section 3 – to develop rural areas, to improve the **livelihood** of residents and to create sustainable employment in agriculture as well as increase output of agricultural products in **rural** areas. I have no problem with that. It is a good note and I think that what we need to do is to recognise that in the development of employment in the agricultural sector there are a lot of small farmers who are now presently unable to develop farming in their community because of the odour and scent that come off in the different districts.

There is technology available in Barbados. I am sure the **Minister** is aware of the technology the bio-digestives which are available. They are not expensive. They are not really capital intensive. They are simple systems that collect all of the waste, put it into a **tank** and allows it to break down naturally which can then create fertilizers, even emit bio-gases which people use for cooking. In fact there are some prisons within the Caribbean that are now taking the bio chemical waste and turning it into gases and using it for cooking, eliminating expenses and so forth.

In Barbados and in my constituency for argument's sake there is a situation in Hothersal Turning where the Town and Country Planning approved a housing development. I am not blaming any administration because it could have happened probably under the Democratic Labour Party's regime but I am just saying it is an anomaly in the system and it can be identified and probably used to correct a lot of wrongs throughout the whole system. But there is a farm in Hothersal Turning that satisfies all of the requirements of Town and Country Planning so they put up a farm in Hothersal Turning for a chicken farm and I believe they have some pigs there. Yet approval was granted for a housing development to be erected west to that farm. Now that clearly has to be a flaw. Something went wrong in the planning of that whole exercise because how can you give approval to a farm and then west of that you then give permission for housing development. Something has to be wrong because the residents, many of whom have returned from the United Kingdom are now discovering that they were misled into believing that they were in this environmentally free environment in the country yet to find out that they are at the west end of a chicken farm.

Now, part of the rural development programme should seek to **resite** or to make provision for some of those non-offending farmers who have found themselves in a predicament where they are to some extent

annoying residents down wind and it is not their fault. It is just a scenario that has developed and there are several cases. I am sure, throughout all of our constituencies, certainly in the constituency of the Honourable Chairman, I am aware of farms that are offensive to the whole community and this is a problem that I think we need to address because if we are talking about providing employment for small farmers throughout the country districts or even throughout some of the Christ Church constituencies and certainly within St. Michael I think we have to appreciate that they must understand technology is available.

The Caribbean Development Bank spent extensive time and money developing this technology and it is a waste of time if we do not sell and market that technology to the whole society where they can in fact have pigs, have chickens, keep sheep, whatever they want to do without offending their neighbours. The time has come where a lot of small people need to be involved in the system. They are going to be locked out of the system if we do not assist them. So part of the rural development finance, the money which is available, should be geared at **resiting** some of these offending farms, maybe putting them in areas where they would not offend their neighbours and to some extent to encourage individuals to access technology that would allow them to keep livestock, sheep, chickens, goats whatever they want to keep without offending their neighbours because we must still be environmentally conscious.

To say that we want to move in this direction is basically the contribution I wish to make and I will close by saying that we should look towards the future of producing organic sugar cane crops, free of any chemicals. Coming out of the Global Conference in 1994 the UN made funds available for small farmers or groups or associations who wanted to carry out exercises where they would produce food crops without the use of fertilizers.  
10.20 a.m.

There are simple little measures that we can use to avoid using chemicals. For example, you have ants on a lime tree. The simple techniques that they tell you to do is to plant some aloes around the lime tree and the ants will not go near the lime tree. So there is no chemical or fertilizer affecting that tree. There are techniques that you can produce organic products and I believe that in the future in light of the problems we **are** having with the over-use of chemicals in the system that we are creating another problem for yourself which is outside of the economic argument. We **are** going to have to look at these areas to some extent. There **is** the project behind Codrington which they are not getting the support. It is a serious project and I have gone to see the project but they cannot get it off the ground because **Codrington** High School or Codrington College would not even give them the water approval.

They would not let them use the water from the springs to get access to the project. I mean little things like this and you cannot get that kind of cooperation. So the country has to **refocus** its direction. I will probably have to come back, Mr. Chairman. But I am making my comment in all seriousness about the development of our country and I think that the Minister must at this crucial stage look at policy that will seek to protect the environment as we develop our agricultural product.

Mr. F. J. **STUART**: Mr. Chairman, I just want to make a very brief intervention in this debate. I believe that I can lay some claim to a right to participate in debate on agriculture because I was born in a parish which was one of the premier parishes for agricultural production in Barbados, the parish of St. **Philip**, and I have lived there all of my life. The village in which I grew up, when I got up in the morning and looked to the south, I saw Four Square Sugar Factory. If I looked to the west, I saw **Carrington** Sugar Factory. If I looked to the north, I saw Harrow Sugar Factory and if I looked into the distant northeast I saw Three Houses Sugar Factory where my late father worked and where he got killed on the last day of the sugar crop in 1960. Of course, during my school days to and from school, I passed next to Searles Sugar Factory. All of those sugar factories of course in my lifetime I have seen working and I have gone into all of them at some stage or another in my life while they were working. So I know something about sugar factories and I feel that I have to intervene in this debate at this stage to make a few points.

I believe that I am correct in saying that sugar cane was introduced into **Barbados** sometime in 1637 by I believe a Portuguese by the name of **Pieter Brower** who came over here from Brazil and sugar manufacturing was first attempted in Barbados around the year 1642. Now in those early years those persons who were involved in sugar owned the land on which the sugar was produced. They owned the mills which were used in the manufacturing of sugar and they actually owned the labour as well which was used in sugar production. They made decisions without reference to any Government. Governments were in fact bound by the decisions that they made and that situation continued in **Barbados** for upwards 300 years. All of the factories that I named earlier **are** now closed. Searles, Four Square, **Carrington**, Harrow, Three Houses, and there was one in St. John that used to work as well called Guinea, are all closed and all of these have been closed over the last 36 years because I have known all of them to be working at sometime or another during my lifetime.

I remember the St. Philip North by-election of 1975 when the then Barbados Labour Party candidate, the now Honourable Member for St. **Thomas**, wisely and foresightfully lamented the fact that the buildings of retired sugar factories were left to disfigure the landscape; to

be overgrown by bush, and put to no use that could be of benefit to the society. I remember him making that point very wisely and very foresightfully. That is significant for me now in light of the use being made of Four Square Factory in St. Philip. The now Honourable Member for St. Thomas was calling for alternative use to be made of sugar factories as long ago as 1975 and I can say that without fear of contradiction. But between 1991 and 1994 the Barbados sugar industry was restructured and for the first time in this country's history major decisions in the sugar industry can now be made by the Government of Barbados.

The decisions to close the factories that I just named were made by private people on private bases after looking at bottom lines. They were not concerned about how the closure of a factory would affect the communities around them. Nobody was concerned about how the closure of Four Square would affect the residents of Four Square Valley or how the closure of Searles would affect the residents of Searles Land, or how the closure of Three Houses would affect the people on Three Houses Hill or anything of the kind. They made those decisions on private bases and on the basis of a bottom line. The decision to restructure the industry and bring the industry more within the purview of Government's control in my view was one of the most progressive things to happen over the last 300 years. If it is true, because I have not tried to find out and I do not even want to find out, that the Democratic Labour Party between 1991 and 1994 contemplated a two-factory policy, that is a policy issue which at last can now be made by a Government of descendants of those who have historically worked in the sugar industry. If the Barbados Labour Party has now taken a decision to reverse the decision of the Democratic Labour Party and to opt for a three-factory policy, I am proud of that fact too because the Barbados Labour Party Government is made up of people who are the descendants of those who have historically worked in the sugar industry and not those who have traditionally owned the sugar industry.

That is the fact of historical and political significance for me that the decision making power in the industry has shifted to those who are now the authentic voices, not of those who owned the industry historically but those who worked in it. It is in that context that I think the closure of Bulkeley has to be analyzed. That is the context within which I think the closure of Bulkeley has to be analyzed that a Government composed of persons who have historically been the workers of the industry who have been treated badly over the years, and they have not surfaced in this debate at all, their voices can now be heard in the decision making corridors where the future of the sugar industry is concerned for the first time in the history of Barbados.

In that context, the fact that the best and most humanistic agreement ever secured on behalf of sugar workers in Barbados for the entire history of the sugar

industry which was secured this year by the Barbados Workers' Union is also a matter of historical importance and significance. That fact has to do as much with the fact that the Barbados Workers' Union has been negotiating with people who have a more humanistic perspective where labour in the sugar industry is concerned as it has to do with the fact that the control of the sugar industry has now shifted to the descendants of the workers. Therefore, I do not think that a serious parliament should be obsessing itself with the point scoring of whether or not one party decided to close Bulkeley and another party decided to keep it open. That is a policy difference.

10.30 a.m.

That fact is just a policy difference. There have always been policy differences between the Democratic Labour Party and the Barbados Labour Party. In 1966 the Democratic Labour Party thought the country should go independent alone; the Barbados Labour Party thought it should go independent within the context of some kind of federal arrangement. That is a policy difference. One policy perspective prevailed and the other had gone through the window. There will always be policy differences between the two parties, but we must not lose sight of the fact that what unites us on this issue is that you over there can now make decisions in relation to the sugar industry of Barbados that you could not make for over 300 years, and that in the dying days of our administration on this side we could make decisions for the sugar industry that we could not make over 300 years. That is the point of political importance, that is the point of historical importance.

When about a year ago I found myself in a court of law cross-examining a manager of one of these sugar factories on an issue related to one of the workers, that was the issue that was of importance to him. He was not saying that this person intended to close down Bulkeley and the other person intended to keep it open, he was bemoaning the fact that Government had now interfered so substantially with the sugar industry that rights he enjoyed over a long number of years have now been circumscribed or abridged. That was his concern, and I could understand that, but we seem concerned with, in my view, adolescent point scoring over who decided to close a factory. I have seen many factories closed in my lifetime and we could not complain about it. We had no say, we had to live with the fact that they were closed. Workers were cut adrift and had to go and restart their lives. All of that has now changed and the Honourable Member for St. James North, the Right Honourable Member for St. Peter and all of their colleagues on the front bench, and all the other influences on the back bench, can now decide what happens in the sugar industry of Barbados, and that is a fact of earth-shaking historical importance in Barbados, given how the sugar industry of Barbados has evolved.

I do not want to intervene in the debate beyond making that point. I think that it is sufficiently important

to be put on the record that the focus is wrong so far as the closure or the retention of **Bulkeley** is concerned. I think the focus should be that we can control the decision at **all**, and that has not happened over 300 years until now.

Mr. Chairman, I hope that we can get past this issue now. We on this side are reconciled to the fact that the Government is pursuing a three-factory policy. The Government has our support on that and we wish the Government well. We wish the **sugar industry** well, but the tiring repetitions of who signed this agreement to close what loses sight of the fact that the decisions can now be made by the descendants of those whose historical lot was to work in the sugar industry rather than to make any decisions on it. We have to be very careful about sweeping so many small issues into the field of vision that the larger issues are crowded out. The larger issue is who now makes decisions for the sugar industry, and that is a fact that recommends itself to me, the fact that the Honourable Member for St. James North, when he speaks in here on the sugar industry now he does not have to speak and look over his shoulder, he speaks as the authentic voice of the workers in the sugar industry.

I thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Mr. Chairman, Sir, I hear the high sounding words coming from the Honourable Deputy Leader of the Opposition. He finds himself alone in here today, his leader having found it possible to run away from Barbados at a time when we are having possibly the most...

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: Mr. Chairman, on a point of order. I do not want to interrupt the Honourable Member...

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: ...to fly away...

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: I don't think the Honourable Member will want to do that, because we can take the same position and say that the Minister of Health, who knew that blows were going to be shared in here this week, flew away too. I don't think the Honourable Member should go down that road, because we *are* not going to sit here idly by and allow those comments to pass. The Honourable Leader has left on *bona fide* business, which is in the interest of this country and we expect that he will be returning to this Chamber.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Mr. Chairman, I take back the words "run away". The Minister of Health is away on compassionate leave and she does not lead on this side. The Honourable Leader of the Opposition has seen it fit to fly away from Barbados, from what is arguably the most important debate in any given year in this Parliament.

There is nothing more important this week **than** debating the Estimates of Expenditure...

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: Mr. Chairman, we were aware of this deliberate ploy that they were about to set about. The Barbados Labour Party just will not stop this foolishness every time the Honourable Member has to go overseas. It is okay for the Minister of Health to be overseas on *bona fide* business, or on compassionate leave. She knew that licks would be shared in here this week and the Honourable Member must not go down that road. The Honourable Leader of the Democratic Labour Party is on *bona fide* business, and we have a good leader in place. It is foolishness going down this road all the time. Stop it! Talk your debate, man! **Talk** about agriculture or something, man! Foolishness, man! This PR foolishness has to stop!

*Asides.*

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Order, please.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Mr. Chairman, the Honourable Leader of the Opposition has seen it fit to fly away from Barbados at the time of the most important serious debate that we have in here on an annual basis. This leads up to the Budget debate. We **too** on this side have sat in Opposition, this is where the Opposition gets the one chance during the financial year to debate any and every Head of Expenditure. The Leader of the Opposition is not away on Government Business and as a parliamentarian I cannot think of any business that is more important than this for one who is leading on the other side. The fact is, Sir, he has left them all out there leaderless. They cannot handle any debate in here with or without the Leader of the Opposition, so I would take it that it does not really make any difference to them whether he is here or not.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: On a point of order, Mr. Chairman. The Honourable Member for the City is misleading the House. She said we cannot handle any debate and I want you to know that I will control **this** debate.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: You could always **try**. Mr. Chairman, I hear the high-sounding words coming **from** the Honourable Member for St. **Philip** South, but life is not only about high-sounding words. It is nice, it is **true** and it is a historical fact that our forebearers fought and struggled so that we could come to this place today that he describes, where those who work in the sugar industry today manage and **run** the sugar industry. That is not only true about the sugar industry, it is true about a whole host of other things that our forebearers worked for, so that is to state the obvious historical **fact**. But we have to go beyond that.

The Honourable Member is suggesting that there is a mere policy difference between the Barbados Labour Party and the Democratic Labour Party in respect of how the sugar industry is run or not run.

10.40 a.m.

I would suggest, Mr. Chairman, Sir, that this is so wide and fundamental a difference that it helps to constitute why they are over there at this time and we are over here at this time and why sugar finds itself at the level that it finds itself today in our economy.

The Democratic Labour Party, Mr. Chairman, Sir, apart from having this fundamental difference between the Barbados Labour Party and the Democratic Labour Party, has a poor and dismal record when it comes to the sugar industry. I can speak about my lifetime. The late Errol Barrow was heard to say that he would love to see the day when there was no cane blade in Barbados. It was the most damaging and destructive political statement that he ever made, in my opinion.

*Aside.*

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Pathos coming from the direction of the Honourable Member for St. Lucy.

It was the most damaging political statement ever made by the late Errol Barrow because it gave an impression to people that working the land was something to look down upon and to want to move away from. It gave the impression that sugar did not help Barbados up but rather helped it down...

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: The Honourable Member for the City is misleading the House again. I cannot see how anyone can state that to make a statement about the sugar industry is a reflection on agriculture, because the sugar industry is not the only aspect of the agricultural industry.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Mr. Chairman, Sir, these are interruptions for the sake of it. I was careful to say the sugar industry. The removal of good agricultural lands from sugar as opposed to non-sugar agriculture is something that is almost a trademark, a hallmark, of the Democratic Labour Party when it is in government in this country in my lifetime: the systematic removal of good agricultural land from the sugar industry.

When I was a child, Mr. Chairman, Sir, we were producing 160 000 tonnes of sugar a year.

*Aside.*

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: 200 000? Well, I am older than I think. 25 000 to 30 000 people were working in the sugar industry. Today, Mr. Chairman, Sir, you cannot make it to 5 000 people working in the sugar industry and if we can barely get to 60 000 tonnes we would be lucky. It is not that we didn't want it **anymore**, they were led to believe that they shouldn't want it **anymore**.

Let me tell you something about sugar.

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: On a point of order. It is common knowledge throughout the length and breadth of Barbados that workers in the sugar industry repeatedly said they were tired of that kind of work and wanted to get out of it. That is a common understanding throughout the system.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Mr. Chairman, they can interrupt me and you can permit them to interrupt me as much as they like. This is the point I am making. We have depended upon this industry. In all my lifetime, for all the 200 000 tonnes we have grown sugar at a loss but no other industry produced the foreign exchange. It is sugar that built roads and built the Deep Water Harbour and built the Grantley Adams Airport and the Queen Elizabeth Hospital and built all the secondary schools in this country. Sugar did that. That was a deliberate, policy direction pursued by the Barbados Labour Party when in government in the late 1940s and through the 1950s and even at the beginning of the 1960s.

Mr. Chairman, Sir, what I am saying is that the Democratic Labour Party has a long and dismal record and I have to say that I do not have my confidence when I can hear today that they wish the sugar industry well. I was in here in an earlier administration and when we sought to provide price support for the sugar industry we met nothing but opposition from the Democratic Labour Party. When they came into government in 1986, they did everything that they could to **dismantle** the price support that we had put in place for the sugar industry. So they don't have any good record when it comes to supporting this industry and those who work in it.

Mr. Chairman, Sir, from the days when I was a child and we were producing 200 000 tonnes I have come to a place now in my life where we have to import sugar for Barbadians to eat. I was the one who exposed on the Floor of this House the Guatemala sugar scam and we still have not got to the bottom of it. We came to a place in this country where we could barely produce enough sugar to keep our quotas alive in respect to Europe or the United States. We came to a place where we have to import molasses now for many years in order to keep our rum industry going. Imagine that! People don't know that. A lot of people in Barbados do not understand that they are drinking rum made with Guyanese molasses.

We have seen the sugar industry decline to that point in this country and the Democratic Labour Party – I have read the documentation myself too did in fact come to a place in this last Administration that they had where they were determined to put the sugar industry on a 2-factory basis. That is a fact. They have swallowed and accepted the advice that sugar is declining and will die and let it die. Even if the Democratic Labour Party accepted that, you would think that they would be looking then to uplift other sectors in the economy, but no. They were busy driving tourism into the ground, changing Ministers every 3 months and 3 weeks. They were busy only giving lip service but not giving the kind of support in terms of resources both human and financial to the offshore sector.

In September 1994, everybody outside of Barbados understood that the Barbados Labour Party was rescuing this country. In the last 18 months that I have been abroad on the Government's business I meet people everywhere. They keep saying, "Welcome back!" I am a little embarrassed and say I am not aware that Barbados went anywhere but thank you very much. They go on to tell you that they despaired for the tourism industry and the offshore sector. Of course, we saw where sugar was going.

Mr. Chairman, Sir, the Honourable Prime Minister made the point yesterday. The whole question of the importing and the exporting of sugar used to be within the province of the BSIL, the Barbados Sugar Industries Limited. That was their role and function. For reasons best known to those who chose to do it, this function was taken from the BSIL and given to what was then the BMC now the BADMC. It is not called BADMC for nothing. It is BADMC. I don't mean bad in the terms of local jargon that when you say bad it means good. I mean bad meaning worse.

I lived to see a situation in this country where a few people engaging in the importation of sugar for local consumption – because for all these past years we haven't been able to produce sugar sufficient for supplying local consumption.  
10.50 a.m.

For all these past years now we have not been able to produce sufficient sugar for local consumption that Barbadians, would pay more for sugar than they would pay if they were eating the sugar of their own manufacturing. We have lived to see all of this driven away by the destructive policies of the Democratic Labour Party. So when I hear the Honourable Member for St. Philip, South talking about it historically, it is so important that he did not think he did not say it but I am going to say it – that the poor working class black people would now run the industry. That is what our forbearers fought for, but it does not end there. Run it where?

#### *Aside.*

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: That has always been an issue that the DLP would run it into the ground? It was a deliberate policy on the part of the Democratic Labour Party to run it into the ground.

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: Mr. Chairman, I think that the Honourable Member, and I am elucidating at this point..

Mr. CHAIRMAN: On what do you rise?

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: Mr. Chairman, on a point of order. The Honourable Member cannot say that the Democratic Labour Party ran the sugar industry into the ground. It is a historical fact that when we assumed office we found a situation that was untenable.

#### *Aside.*

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: The Honourable Member is misleading the House when she seeks to suggest that the Democratic Labour Party ran the sugar industry into the ground. The fact remains that when we came into office we found an untenable situation where the sugar industry was being given price support by the taxpayers of this country, many of them indebted to the Barbados National Bank to the extent of almost \$300 million, a situation that could not continue, a situation where a new form of price support was recommended to the industry which was sabotaged to some extent by the same sugar producers which led to the restructuring of the industry. It has nothing to do with the Democratic Labour Party running any industry into the ground and those remarks should be struck from the record.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Mr. Chairman, I will not repent of...

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Chairman, on a point of elucidation. The record of the Democratic Labour Party between 1986 and 1994 needs to be told. The sugar crop for 1986 which was the last sugar crop under the old DLP was 111 000 tonnes. It fell to 83 000 tonnes in 1987. It fell to 80 000 tonnes in 1988. It went down to 66 000 tonnes in 1989. It went to 69 000 tonnes in 1990, 65 000 tonnes in 1991, 54 000 tonnes in 1992, 48 000 in 1993, 51 000 in 1991 and the last year in which they would have been responsible was 1995 it went down to 38 000 tonnes. If that is not a catastrophic record of running an industry down where an industry of 111 000 tonnes was cut down to at least 50 000 tonnes an average and 38 000 tonnes by conclusion, if that is not the most catastrophic record of a party running an industry into the ground, I would challenge the Member for St. Michael East who is more interested in putting houses in the Belle rather than canes in the Belle to tell me what the facts are. His record is

putting the houses in the Belle in the water zone but he is not interested in putting canes in the Belle, Sir.

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: The Honourable Member knows that there is a lot more involved in the demise of the industry and if he is fair he would not just simply relate figures to show decline or anything like that. The Honourable Member knows better than that. He obviously knows better than suggesting that I placed any houses in the Belle on a zone table. It is another lie and he said that he is going to tell a series of lies on me and that is now two or three but he is in his barking parade.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Mr. Chairman, the essential point I am making is that where the sugar industry is today has less to do with historical facts than it has to do with a deliberate policy on the part of the Democratic Labour Party. That is the point I am making, and I will sit on that point.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Mr. Chairman, I must first congratulate the Honourable Member for St. Peter for producing figures to show that over the years from since 1986 to now the sugar industry has declined.

*Aside.*

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: And I was the Financial Contoller. I was the Financial Contoller at the time the Honourable Member for St. Peter was at the "Bad MC" or the ADC.

Mr. Chairman, I will not allow them to sidetrack me because one missing point has been left out of this debate and it is that the sugar industry was in decline and also that the Democratic Labour Party in 1992 made the firm decision to restructure the sugar industry and also to give to the Honourable Member for St. Peter and all the others on that side control of the sugar industry. That is why today we have a situation – and we are not going to castigate him for that. If he has decided that Bulkeley will remain open I have no problem with that.

I would appreciate if he would tell this House also that in early 1990s and late 1980s when Haymans was about to be closed that there were people who stated that Haymans sugar factory should remain and that a new factory should have been built at Bulkeley and there were good reasons for that. The reason was that if you had kept Haymans in the North the sugar production of the North would not have reduced and also that Bulkeley, being the mecca of the sugar industry, would have allowed all of those farmers to have confidence in that area, and we would not be discussing today whether the sugar industry has declined or not, but there would have been confidence out there with the small farmers.

A lot of people might not know but the majority or nearly the majority of farmers...

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Chairman, the Honourable Member has given way. I should just like to ask the Member, Sir, if he could advise the House to the extent that the largest proportions of the new lands brought back into sugar have been in St. Lucy whether the sugar targets that he is recommending to the House would be affected by his desire to see an international airport built in St. Lucy?

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Mr. Chairman, one has to look at development and one has to look at the situation to see which development is going to be the more profitable of the two choices to this country. One only has to look at the mouthings of the Honourable Member for St. Michael North where he is complaining today in one section of the Press that the Airport is under seize and there is a need to expand the Airport.

Hon. R. St. C. TOPPIN: Mr. Chairman, on a point of order. I have not spoken on this issue.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Mr. Chairman, I am saying that there is evidence in Barbados today – if he does not want to acknowledge it, no problem. I can give the praise to somebody else – that there is room for the expansion of the airport services. I am saying that it does not make sense fooling yourself that we will continue to have one airport when there is need for another airport which would be able to relieve the Grantley Adams International Airport of the small aircraft, *et cetera*.

I am saying, Mr. Chairman, that the development I am speaking about would complement the marina in St. Peter and the Honourable Member for St. Peter is aware of this for a simple reason. If you get a smaller airport in St. Lucy which will be located, as the Honourable Member knows, between Spring Garden and Spring Hall, and that is what he is speaking about, it does not mean that you will necessarily take a large portion of land out of agricultural use. That is why he could afford to target us because he knows that the BAMC is in control of some of that land at Spring Hall.

11.00 a.m.

That is why I am saying that, I cannot understand why the Honourable Member for the City would criticise the Democratic Labour Party over their agricultural policy when there is evidence that the BAMC is performing well and that they will turn around the sugar industry.

The sugar industry will improve this year and in two years' time, under the management of the BAMC, from a crop of 38 000 tonnes to 60 000 tonnes. And it

is remarkable, **Mr. Chairman**. It is remarkable because the BAMC, in two years' time would have done what the BSIL could not do in five or six years with price support.

We also had a situation yesterday, Sir, where we were discussing whether we should export or import sugar. I want to make it quite clear from this side, Sir, that when you look at the carry forward sugar, when you look at the foreign exchange gains that we stand to gain, when you look at the fact that if you transfer the right to import sugar to the BAMC their revenues will increase, I am saying that if you go ahead with the decision to sell the sugar on the local market, you stand to lose on three grounds: (1) You stand to lose foreign exchange, (2) you stand to lose money that could have gone to the BAMC and (3) you stand to lose sugar that you could be holding as the carry forward sugar.

You see, **Mr. Chairman**, we are dealing with an industry that depends on the weather.

*Asides.*

**Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN:** That is a good point. We are dealing with an industry that depends on the weather and in an industry that you have that depends on the weather, you should be very careful to keep sugar in stock, just because, if you have a situation where the weather is not right next year you would have sugar to help you with your contractual arrangements.

But it goes further, Sir. It has been a long time that we have not had a situation where world market prices have gone up significantly, and we cannot tell when it will happen. But if we had sugar, and our carry forward stock, we could benefit from the market trends whenever they happen.

So there are four good reasons why we should keep carry forward stock. I know that people will laugh at that point but the Minister of Agriculture will not laugh at that. The people at BAMC will not laugh at that either. I know that if you sit down and discuss it with the experts at the BAMC, they will tell you that it is better to keep that sugar as carry forward stock, because you stand to gain four times.

This is not a political point, I have nothing to gain by making political points. But there was also a point made this morning that, instead of allowing BSIL to import the sugar, the Democratic Labour Party allowed the Barbados Agricultural Development and Management Company to import the sugar.

But you see people must understand that over the years the money that financed BSIL, price support, came

from the taxpayers of Barbados. And when the right was transferred to the "BAD MC," or whatever you want to call it, it was by the taxpayers' money that it was being subsidised because the BAMC belongs to the people of Barbados and it belongs to the Government of Barbados, but BSIL was owned by private people. So I cannot understand how people can argue on behalf of the sugar growers against the taxpayers of this country. I would like just to stop it.

Not only that, **Mr. Chairman**, there is another point that I would like to make, and the Honourable Member for St. Peter is aware of this too, that the bonds floated by BSIL were redeemed by the Government of Barbados, and I believe that the Honourable Prime Minister still has that problem, because he still has to redeem those bonds. So there is nothing wrong in the Honourable Prime Minister having the right to have his hands on those funds instead of BSIL, because he is the one who had to find the money to redeem the bonds. So he has the right to have the excess from the sugar difference when the sugar was imported into this country.

The next point I would also like to make. Yesterday I listened to the Honourable Member for St. Philip North.

*Certain remarks made by the Honourable Member for St. Lucy were ordered by the CHAIRMAN to be expunged from the record.*

And dealing with fishing harbours...

**Hon. R. N. GREENIDGE:** This is the first time I am rising on a point of order in this House, Sir. I never addressed the case of Consett Bay. Consett Bay is in St. John and I was speaking about a little nook in my constituency.

**Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN:** **Mr. Chairman**, I must apologise, I meant Skeetes Bay and not Consett Bay. I am sorry. I am glad that you corrected the name of the Bay but not the facts. I am very glad.

**Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR:** On a point of order, Sir. The Member is misleading the House, Sir. The Member for St. Philip North said that there is need for a facility in Skeetes Bay but the Member for St. Lucy is now conceding that there is no need for a fishing facility in Consett Bay. Nobody has today said that, Sir, but the decision to put a fishing facility at Consett Bay, Sir, was a DLP and a DLP decision.

He has told the House, Sir, that there is absolutely no need for a fishing facility at Consett Bay and we are agreeing with him, Sir. But we need to remind him that the Democratic Labour Party decided not to spend money that was granted to build a fishing complex in

**Speightstown** where there is a need in the North, and decided, Sir, to spend money on **Consett** Bay, where the Member for St. Lucy, who is shadow spokesman for agriculture, Sir, has conceded, on the basis of all the criteria that there is absolutely no need. I want to thank him, Sir, for the service that he is doing the good Government.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Mr. Chairman, I would like those struck from the records because I never said that. I said that those were the points made by the Honourable Member for St. **Philip** North.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: You meant Skeetes Bay instead of **Consett** Bay?

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: No, no, no, not the points, the name. Only the change in the name so you do not go down that road, Sir. But Mr...

*Asides.*

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: I was **talking** about Skeetes Bay. No, no, no. I said Mr. Chairman, when I got back up, I apologised to the House for saying **Consett** Bay when I meant Skeetes Bay. I made that quite clear.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: On a point of order, Sir. I am **asking** that all those remarks be struck from the record, Sir, because the member for St. **Philip** North had said that his contribution was to say that there was a need for...

*Asides.*

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: ...But the man represents Skeetes Bay. His contribution to the debate, Sir, was to establish that there is a need for a fishing facility at Skeetes Bay, the constituency that he represents.

The Member for St. Lucy, Sir, said that there is no need for a facility at **Consett** Bay. He could not therefore, Sir, have been properly representing the views of the Member for St. **Philip** North but only had the name wrong. If he wants to say to the House that there is no need for a facility at Skeetes Bay, Sir, we agree with him.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Mr. Chairman, we know that there is a need for a fishing facility at **Consett** Bay because they still have "**day** boats," they still have ice boats and they still have hawkers in **Consett** Bay. But what I am saying, Sir, is that the Honourable Member for St. **Philip** North said that there **are** not "day boats" up there **anymore**.

*Asides.*

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: ...it is at Skeetes Bay, that there **are** not "**day** boats" **anymore**. There are no ice boats

there, and the ice boats that are from St. **Philip** are fishing from Bridgetown, and that you hardly see hawkers **anymore**.

I am saying that they are fishing in Bridgetown. He said that.

Hon. R. N. GREENIDGE: On a point of order, Mr. Chairman. Just to say that the Honourable Member is misleading the House. The point which I was making was a cause and effort point. I was saying, Sir, that the lack of a facility there had caused those and that is exactly what I had said, Mr. Chairman. And therefore, the Honourable Member is really misleading the House.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Based on what the Honourable Member for St. **Philip** North had said, it therefore appears your remarks were misleading and this is not what he was saying, and therefore your **remarks** should therefore be withdrawn and expunged **from** the records.  
11.10 a.m.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: No. I said, Mr. Chairman, that based on the fact, he would not deny that he said that there **are** not day boats and that the fishing boats are in Bridgetown. I would not know that, Sir.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Honourable Member, the Chair is ruling that in view of the confusion of your presentation that those remarks with reference to what the Honourable Member for St. **Philip** North said be withdrawn and that you be allowed to make a speech in which it is clear exactly what you **are** saying.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Mr. Chairman, I have to abide with your ruling but I will start.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: That speech that you gave, in view of the contradictions I am asking that the record with relevance to what the Honourable Member said be withdrawn. I am therefore ruling that you be allowed to make a speech making clear reference to what you are saying otherwise the record will be confused. You have 15 minutes in which to make your speech.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Mr. Chairman, I think, and this is no reflection on the ruling of the House, Sir, but I believe that the records of the House should be called for in this case because there is conflict.

*Aside.*

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: I am not arguing with the Chair. I am just **asking** the Chair for guidance and that is why...

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The Chair is allowing you to make over your speech which was withdrawn from the record in view of the confusion and in view of the discrepancy in relation to what the Honourable Member for St. Philip North has said. I **am** therefore saying that you can begin your speech now.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Mr. Chairman, I am saying that the evidence is that at Skeetes Bay there are a number of day boats, that the **iceboats** are fishing in Bridgetown and that you can hardly find hawkers in the area. I am not attributing these remarks to anybody, but you can hardly find hawkers in Skeetes Bay and I **am** saying that in light of all that information that the opposite of what was said is happening in Half Moon Fort. I am saying that the finances would be better spent then based on what was said to be spent in Half Moon Fort.

I would also like, Sir, for some of the money to be spent on Consett Bay. I am also saying, Sir, that the Right Honourable Member for St. Peter should be happy that the planners did not go ahead with the idea of the fishing harbour in St. Peter. I am going to tell you why, Sir. Speightstown as you know, is a very small town and I believe that if you were to expand Speightstown that you would need to dredge Speightstown and reclaim some land in Speightstown. Then there is the possibility of cruise ship passengers coming to Speightstown. There is the ability that when you carry out that project that there will be need for more shops in Speightstown and seeing that there is an area in Half Moon Fort that can accommodate the fishing terminal I feel it would be better to have the fishing terminal at Half Moon Fort and allow Speightstown to serve its rightful purpose as the second town of Barbados. In light of having the Marina in Speightstown, in light of having the cruise ships coming to Speightstown it would be better if that fishing harbour goes to Half Moon Fort than in Speightstown. I nearly said Six Men's but then if it goes to Six Men's you would have to realign the roads in Six Men's and I know the Prime Minister will agree with me, on second thoughts, that it is better to have it in Half Moon Fort and not in Speightstown because it really interferes with the development of Speightstown.

Mr. Speaker, we also have another situation where I would like to see the land acreage to small farmers at the Spring Hall Land Lease Project reduced from 25 acres to 5 acres. There are a lot of people in Barbados who would like to get back into agriculture especially now that the Barbados Agricultural Management Company has been born so it is because of this interest in agriculture that I am asking the Minister of Agriculture to quickly change the policy at the Spring Hall Land Lease Project where he can encourage more farmers to get involved in agriculture by reducing their lots from 25 acres to 5 acres. Not only that, but he must, at the same time provide the market for the

farmers. That is why I will continue to call for an **agro** processing plant.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: I am not sure I understood the Honourable Member properly. Is the Honourable Member suggesting that Government should terminate the leases? If that is so then he is asking Government to commit illegal acts for which the Government would then be liable to compensate the lessees for the unexpired portion of the lease.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Mr. Chairman, no such thing. *All* I am asking the Minister of Agriculture to do is to go and negotiate with those farmers who have 25 acres of land and who would like only to farm 5 acres to give up the right without any cost to them or to the Ministry of Agriculture and divide that land to other farmers who are willing to work on the Spring Hall Land Lease Project.

So, Mr. Chairman, we have a situation in this country where we have agriculture about to take off and the evidence is there. The BAMC has completely **turned** around things. The BAMC, not the BADMC. Sugar production in one year's time has moved from 38 000 to 60 000. What a good record of BAMC. I am saying, Sir, that cotton production was also up under them but because of a change of policy, because somebody claimed that they could not find markets you probably will see a drop. I am sure, Sir, now that everybody knows that there are markets for the cotton crops that the cotton production will be up.

I also want to say something to the Minister of Agriculture. **Alleynedale** Plantation is a plantation that if the right planning goes into it, it can produce nearly all the vegetables you want on a yearly basis.

*Aside.*

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: No, I am not saying that. Nearly all the vegetables in the North and the Honourable Member for St. Peter is aware of why I **am** making the point. It is one of the few plantations in Barbados that has the capacity to produce vegetables on a yearly basis and I know the Minister of Agriculture understands what I am saying. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.  
11.20 a.m.

Hon. R. C. EASTMOND: Mr. Chairman, I beg to move that Head 25 stand part.

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

*The question that Head 25 stand part was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.*

**HEAD 42 – AS AMENDED – MINISTRY OF PUBLIC  
WORKS, TRANSPORTATION AND  
HOUSING – \$97 784 069**

Hon. G. W. PAYNE: Mr. Chairman, I beg to move that Head 42 stand part. Mr. Chairman, in this portion of the debate, I will be concentrating on the Division of Housing. As you know, the Ministry of Public Works also includes the Division of Housing, Division of Public Works and Transport. I would at the outset like to thank the officers within the Division of Housing for the excellent they have done during the past year. I think this is very important seeing that at times we tend to criticize the work of civil servants and I think that when they have performed well we owe it to them to compliment them for the good work which they have done. As the Honourable Member for St. Michael West would tell you, there are occasions even where we as Ministers sometimes go outside the bounds of our authority and even attempt sometimes to dismiss people when we do not have the authority to do so. I think these Estimates are instructive in that regard because it is only from these Estimates that I learned that a Minister of Government actually dismissed someone on the spot. That was a former Minister who is not in this Party. I understand that this officer is still working at the Transport Board and I had a discussion with him since I heard this in the Estimates and he has confirmed that his purported dismissal was not in order. The rules will not allow me to call the name of the Member over there as you very well know.

Mr. Chairman, I think that when one considers the officers within the Ministry of Housing were unable to work to their capacity prior to September 1994 because of the inactivity in the area of housing, it is a bigger reason why we should compliment them for a job well done. In the last financial year, there were a number of interventions by Government in order to ensure that the citizens of this country who have been affected by the bad housing conditions have been able to get some measure of relief. As you know, it is only when a Barbados Labour Party Administration is in Government that one sees an improvement in the area of housing in Barbados. One of the first interventions by this administration was to initiate a policy whereby marginal lands on the periphery of existing villages were acquired so that enough house spots would be acquired for persons needing these types of lots. This was needed for 3 main purposes – firstly, for those persons who were dispossessed as a result of the strictures of the Tenancies Freehold Purchase Act, which I will come to later, those persons in constituencies such as where I represent ~~who were~~ affected by the land slippage, and those persons in the lower income group who languished during the years of the last administration and were unable to obtain a house spot.

As a result, this administration was able to identify a number of areas after consultations with parliamentarians

both on this side and on this side, because we believe that the interests of the people are more important than the interests of the Members on that side. We were able to acquire land at Mt. Brevitor, St. Peter, Cottage, St. George, Arch Hall, St. Thomas, Parish Hill, St. Joseph, Farmers, St. Thomas, Apes Hill, Waterhall, Bakers, and Bush Hall in St. Michael. We are in the process of acquiring land even in the constituency of the Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central and other areas.

But with respect to the interventions, I did say that lands were needed for a variety of purposes. I did mention the question of the tenants relocation. As you know, a previous Barbados Labour Party Administration mindful of the fact that a number of plantation tenants over the years were disadvantaged as a result of certain promises which were made to them by plantation owners preceding our time had introduced the Tenancies Freehold Purchase Act. The last administration, influenced by their rich clients, had introduced an amendment in Parliament whereby persons who were landlords in areas where there were less than 5 tenants were no longer affected by the Tenancies Freehold Purchase Act. In other words, we found situations whereby overnight some persons who had security of tenure under the legislation that was passed by a previous Barbados Labour Party Administration were no longer qualified tenants. As a result, overnight they had to look for somewhere to live. The thing about that was that the last administration had introduced that amendment which meant, if you were a tenant and there were less than 5 tenants in that particular tenantry, you could be dispossessed by the landlord but they did not make adequate provision for the house spots to accommodate them.

One of the interventions by this administration would resolve that problem because we are hoping with this new policy to ensure not only that the people in St. Michael but the people in St. Joseph and St. Andrew, St. James, St. George, St. Philip and people all over the island are now able to have lots to which they can go as a result of this crude amendment. I say crude because of the fact that whatever the merits of the amendment, it should have taken into consideration the plight of those people who had nowhere to go.

The question of land slippage, Mr. Chairman, is also an area which affected us deeply. As you know, most of our representatives in Parliament on this side during the tenure of the last administration were from the country areas. No wonder they attack so bitterly the legislation dealing with the setting up of the Rural Development Commission. But I know for a fact that in St. Andrew which I represent, St. Joseph, St. Peter and those areas where they have a number of tenants who are affected by land slippage there were not enough lots to

accommodate them. As a result of our intervention, these persons will now be able to have lots to which they can relocate.

In addition to this, Mr. Chairman, there were some individuals like the low income earners like the constituents which the Honourable Member for St. Michael West represent who did not have the means to buy expensive lots. It is hoped that with our intervention those low income earners, including the constituents of the Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central, will now be able to buy at a fairly concessionary rate land in their constituency. I am appealing to the Honourable Member for St. Michael West and I had indicated to him already that he is free like all the other Members on the other side to identify lands in his constituency so that these low income earners would be able to buy a house spot and at least own a piece of Barbados. That is one of the interventions, Mr. Chairman, by this administration.

Another intervention is the Joint Venture Programme. You may recall that during a previous Barbados Labour Party Administration the Joint Venture Programme was a tremendous success and when you drive through West Terrace you can see the success of a previous Barbados Labour Party Administration where persons who never thought that they would have been able to own a home are now proud owners of their own home. We also had the situation of the starter homes in the Husbands area, all employing the Joint Venture Programme.

11.30 a.m.

In this joint venture approach what we will be doing from time to time is identifying the land, acquiring the land after consultation with the owner, Government will act as a **facilitator** - that will be the extent of our intervention - whether or not it is in the area of ensuring that all the formalities with respect to the Town and Country Planning legislation have been completed, or whether it is to assist in the area of the potential purchasers obtaining the necessary mortgage funds.

In some situations we will be acquiring the land, we will be doing all the infrastructure and then there will be two agreements whereby the prospective purchaser will agree to buy the land from the National Housing Corporation, after it is vested in the National Housing Corporation, and then there is a separate agreement between the prospective purchaser and the contractor. These **types** of contracts are outside the limits of the Financial Rules and we have no control as to which contractor a prospective purchaser might decide to choose. Therefore, there may be occasions when Members on the other side might question a particular contractor and the relationship of the National Housing Corporation, or the Ministry of Housing with respect to some particular contractor when there may be other contractors who might

be querying why they did not actually get the work. The National Housing Corporation and Government have absolutely no control in such situations. These **are** situations whereby a purchaser goes in and says: "I want Taitt & Co. to do my house", Taitt & Co. decides to enter into an arrangement with the prospective purchaser, but all we are concerned with is that we get the money from the prospective purchaser. These are the **type** of interventions we will be dealing with during the next financial year.

As I said, a past Labour Party administration has been very successful between the **period 1976 to 1986** with that type of approach. It was abandoned by the last administration because they obviously would not want to say that it is they type of project they would want to claim as theirs, and as a result very little has happened in the housing market during the past eight years.

It is also hoped, Mr. Chairman, that we will be able to continue the Urban Renewal Programme. This is another intervention by Government. As you know, there **are** a number of problems associated with housing in the urban areas. This is the first time you will be seeing an urban renewal programme actually put into a project. It is true that we as policy makers at times when we want to see certain projects implemented would want to tell our officers we would like to **see** a particular project in a particular **area** overnight, but when you **are** dealing with professional technocrats in the Ministry they want to make sure that every single detail with respect to the project has been completed.

In this respect I must compliment the officers within the Ministry of Housing for the work they have done so far with respect to the Urban Renewal Project. The Urban Renewal Project focuses **on** the Greater Bridgetown area and **seeks** to restore some of the more positive economic and social elements. It is a broad-based programme which impacts on a number of Ministries and other Government agencies. There are certain aspects of this Urban Renewal Programme which have been dealt with by the Deputy Prime Minister when she unveiled a plan for the revitalisation of Bridgetown.

For the benefit of those who have not been aware of this programme, I just want to tell you exactly what this programme includes.

Promoting Bridgetown **as** a leading regional service oriented centre offering a range of activities which support its economic progress and development and providing the opportunity for the greatest level of employment.

Facilitating the movement of pedestrians, vehicles and information in Bridgetown as the hub of transport

and communications by the year 2000 and beyond, within the context of their supporting the country's economic development policies and programmes.

Retaining and restoring those historic and architectural elements of the City which are considered important enough in terms of their natural heritage and economic potential.

Creating an environment in which good health for all is fostered and maintained.

For those of you who might have taken a visit through Bridgetown – and I do not necessarily mean the representative for the City and the Honourable Member for St. Michael North, who are familiar with those areas – I did a tour of the City area very early in my Ministry and I was shocked at some of the conditions that presently obtain in the City. This is why we in the Ministry are concerned about alleviating the plight of a number of persons in the City area. You will notice that in some areas the houses are so close that it is difficult to tell which particular boundary belongs to any particular person. In addition to that, there is the question of exploitation by certain landlords and I think it is a responsibility of Government to make sure that we do certain necessary acquisitions to ensure that these particular tenants **are** not in any way disadvantaged. There is also a number of vacant residences, there are problems relating to drainage, problems relating to construction and, of course, there is a need to improve these houses.

One of our interventions involved interviewing over 1500 tenants to ascertain their needs. At the same time we did a survey of vacant lots and dilapidated buildings in the Greater Bridgetown area. I was somewhat shocked at the number of buildings. As a matter of fact, in our survey we actually identified 1800 dilapidated, vacant, abandoned buildings spawning an area of about 600 acres in the St. Michael area. I would never have believed that this was possible. However, in this financial year you will notice \$1.2 million allocated towards a project under Urban Tenancies. We intend as a pilot project to use **Alleyne's** Land, Bush Hall and develop this area. This would involve the acquisition of tenantry lands, the identification of vacant lots and residences for reuse in residential development, the development of lots through the provision of basic access and the improvement of roads, the survey of lots for sale, the improvement of drainage and the provision of loan funds to assist purchasers in acquiring their lots. As I mentioned, there is a number of abandoned buildings and in keeping with what we will be doing in the City and the wider St. Michael area, to acquire these abandoned buildings.

One of our interventions since we came into office has also been the sale of Government buildings. We are setting an example and we are presently doing a list of

buildings throughout Barbados which are owned by Government and, wherever possible, we will be advertising or offering them to interested parties. In this respect, there is a number of buildings owned by Government and Government is not even aware that they are the owners. Wherever possible, if any of the Members on the other side identify with any person who is interested in a particular parcel of land or a particular building next to their house, Government is interested in disposing of those buildings or those parcels of land. It is part of our intervention in the housing market this year and certainly we will be continuing next year.

11.40 a.m.

We **are** hoping that the funds from the sale of these buildings will be allocated to the National Housing Corporation so that they will be able to continue. I can't say continue if I look back at the 8 years during the last Administration. I know the Member for St. Michael West, seeing that he has been deserted by the Honourable Member for St. John, does not want me to refer to this repeatedly but I **must emphasise** that...

Mr. B. M. **TAITT**: If the Honourable Member will give way. I was really saying to him that he is doing so well it would be a shame to spoil it by introducing nonsense into what he was saying.

Mr. **CHAIRMAN**: I thought you were rising on a point of order.

Hon. G. W. **PAYNE**: Among the interventions, Mr. Chairman, you may recall that in 1991 a number of Government workers were sent home. Some were sent on a 3-day week and you would notice that the way how we did things in the Ministry without a fuss is that there has been a resumption in the 5-day work week in the National Housing Corporation which has gone unnoticed. That is the way how we do things in the Ministry of Housing. No fuss.

We will be continuing the resumption of the 5-day week. We won't be laying off any of those persons whom we put on the 5-day week in the next financial year. This has cost us, for all the categories of workers, just about \$700 000. I spoke of the fact that most of the money from the sale of government buildings will go towards the National Housing Corporation, and I would like to set out just a few of the programmes which are planned by the National Housing Corporation. It is true that the National Housing Corporation during the last financial year came up with an ambitious capital works programme even in the last financial year but I did not have the opportunity to set it out because they did not get to this particular Head during the Estimates debate in the last financial year and I think it is only fair that we should spend a little bit of time on it.

They have come up with an even more ambitious programme for the **year** 1996-97, a \$20 million programme. As to whether or not they will be able to execute this programme depends on a lot of factors. It is true I must go back to the failure of the last Administration during their 8-year tenure to do anything in the housing market which has affected the implementation of this programme because of the fact that under the financial rules there is a tendering process. So you can have all the plans in a particular year. There is a certain process you must go through before a **project** can come to fruition.

Obviously, if we have a project relating to the construction of houses in a particular area **first** of all we have to acquire the land. Sometimes the acquisition could take as long as 6 months unless we do what the former administration did in that in many cases they entered on the land and then they did the legal...

Mr. B. M. TAITT: On a point of order. It is well known that one of the areas of divide between the Honourable Members on that side and this side was on the whole question of which methodology to use in the acquisition of land. The Honourable Member for Christ Church South will tell the Honourable Member that we had many a debate in here. It is the Barbados Labour Party that established the policy and believe that you should enter and take possession. Do not attach that to the Democratic Labour Party. I am not saying there is anything wrong with it, but it has been the policy of the Barbados Labour Party to do that. We came back down here and we put it in the records that we do not believe in going on the land before we have done all of the acquisitions.

Hon. G. W. PAYNE: Mr. Speaker, I have only been in this House since 1991 and fortunately for me I was in the House for 3 years and I saw the **workings** of the Democratic Labour Party Administration and I have a comparison in the way how we have been doing things. I have also been in **the** Ministry of Housing and right now we are trying to clear a backlog of about 100 applications that have been done during their time in the way that I was talking about. I know that there are a number of acquisitions which were done previously by Government in the past but it has been their style. You only have to look at Highway 2A for as a classic example.

Since I was the Minister I have brought more acquisitions in this House in the space of about 18 months than have been brought by the Ministers of Housing in the past 8 years **because** I have decided that the way how I would operate is to clear the backlog of these acquisitions. It has been part of the policy of the last Administration to go in and do the legal formalities after. There are many examples of this.

What we intend to do is to do the legal formalities first and then go in. There are certain situations where it would be difficult to do the legal formalities as in situations with the Bridgetown Road. Obviously, we will probably have to ask the landowners to accommodate us a little bit. It is part of the policy of this Administration to speak to the landowners, do the legal formalities and then go in. I am saying that as a result of this it means that if we have to go through the legal formalities and go through the tendering process because we have to be very careful with the tendering process. We have been very scrupulous in dealing with the tendering process and in following the recommendations of the Chairman of the Tenders Committee. We have been very scrupulous in ensuring that we do not prepare any Cabinet Papers with respect to the award of any tenders. You would have noticed that we have had the Kola Syrup debate in this House and the denial of public officers that they had anything to do with the preparation of a Cabinet Paper for the award of a tender. That will not be our policy. We will be very scrupulous. As a matter of fact that is part of the policy of this **Administration** to be very scrupulous in our dealings, in all matters. As a result of this, it means that a number of our projects, even though we might want them initiated during this financial year, might not be possible.

The National Housing Corporation with its ambitious programme of \$20 million might only come to fruition some time in 1998. **With** a little luck, by the end of the financial year or by the end of next year. But I just want you to note some of the projects of the National Housing Corporation. There is some commercial land at Free Hill, University Drive, St. Michael and we are hoping that we would be able to put in about 7 lots on that particular spot. We are selling that land at market value and that project is expected to cost us about \$200 000.

During this financial year, it is also expected that we will be **able** to alleviate some of the cramped conditions that the excellent officers at the National Housing Corporation were under, including the General Manager and his staff. I made a tour of the office and I could only compliment them for working in such conditions because it is not all of us who would want to work in those types of conditions without **invoking** some type of industrial action.

11.50 a.m.

I mean, you could be in an office and you could actually see rats running all over the place and this is something that the last administration did nothing about. We are hoping that in the next financial year we would be able to see the construction of a new building to house the National Housing Corporation. The estimated cost of this new building is **gc .g** to be \$5.8 million.

We have already completed Maynards, Phase 2. It is hoped that we will be able to go to Maynards, Phase 3, another example of projects which we had to dust off when this administration took over. There were a number of projects we had to actually dust off, conceptualized by a previous Barbados Labour Party administration, and the Democratic Labour Party administration did nothing for eight years. We had to dust off these particular projects. We have already completed Phase 2 and we are going to Phase 3.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Mr. Chairman, on a point of order. I just wish to be reminded, Sir. How long does the opening speaker have? A half an hour? The Honourable Member would seem to me to have...

Mr. CHAIRMAN: It is for the Chair.

Hon. G. W. PAYNE: We have already started this project. It is expected to lose 40 weeks and the total cost will be \$1.5 million to add to the housing stock. We are presently inundated with requests for terraced units. I cannot speak for the General Manager of the National Housing Corporation or the Chairman but in terms of the amount of requests to me as Minister there are about 100 requests for housing units. The General Manager of the National Housing Corporation and Chairman can tell you how many requests there actually are because there are a number of people who need terraced units and they do not even bother to go to the National Housing Corporation because they realize there are not any. We **are** trying to make sure that at no time will there be a period whereby units belonging to the National Housing Corporation are not being built.

We are also going to Flat Rock, St. George as well. You may recall, Mr. Chairman, that this project is expected to cost us about \$2 million.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member has one more minute.

Hon. G. W. PAYNE: I remember a few months ago there was a lot of talk in the Press about Government trying to rob a landowner of his land. This was not true. We kept quiet in the midst of all these allegations because it was totally untrue. My father has always taught me that silence is golden and there was no need to respond. What had happened in that particular situation was that a cricket club which had been occupying a particular parcel of land had already signed an affidavit, was about to go to court to disenfranchise a person who had claimed that he was the rightful owner of the land. As to whether or not there were true merits to their claim, we did not know. That is a matter for the court, the question of whether or not the evidence would have been accepted but we felt it would

have been unfair to this particular landowner for him to own land and not be able to actually reap the so-called sweets of his labour. What we did, after an arrangement with the **attorneys** of the cricket club we decided we would acquire. They decided they would withdraw their claim and we would have paid the proceeds to the particular landowner. It so happened that the landowner was dealing with one attorney and then another attorney – I understand that he is known to the Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central – for political purposes made a lot of noise and distorted the facts.

We **are** going to acquire it and for community purposes. We are going to put in lots for those people in the area who want lots. I must thank the Honourable Member for St. George North for giving us the necessary **information** so that we could actually **deal** with it. We are going to put up some terraced units so that we will improve the housing situation in that **area**.

I am just about one-tenth through and I will be back. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN:** Mr. Chairman, when one listens to the Minister of Housing, one gets the impression that in any equation that there is only one side to the equation and that is that the people who were living on people's land that they had rights but the small **farmers** who had land did not have rights. Mr. Chairman, I think it is downright unfair for anybody to tell me that any Government can pass legislation telling people that they should be deprived of their land just because someone else wants to have a house spot on that land. I think it would have been better, seeing that the Government is the largest landlord in this country, for the Government to provide land for those people who were residing on the properties of others. I strongly believe in that, and I believe the Honourable Members for Christ Church South and Christ Church West will agree with me on that policy.

Hon. Sir HAROLD St. JOHN: **Mr.** Chairman, on a point of order. I would like to say that the Honourable Member is abusing the rules of this House by imputing to me views that I do not have. I have always been a strong supporter of the Tenancies Freehold Purchase Act.

Hon. G. W. PAYNE: Mr. Chairman, on a point of order. I do not think the Honourable Member understood clearly what I said. It would appear as though he is using the Flat Rock situation in order to make his intervention. Outside of the Tenancies Freehold Purchase Act, nowhere in my presentation did I mention anything about Government passing legislation to acquire anybody's lands. You may recall that I also said that in each case where we acquire we actually consult with the landowners so I really do not know what the Honourable Member is speaking about.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Mr. **Chairman**, I have never said anything about passing legislation. What I was speaking about is the Freehold Tenancies Act where Government passed legislation that gave people the right that if they had three houses on a particular piece of property...

*Aside.*

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Mr. **Chairman**, one must understand, and we must not get away from this point. The Government is the largest landlord in this country and if anybody wants land, the Government has a right to give that person land and not take away the right from poor people, and that is all I **am** saying. It does not care where you travel in Barbados you can find land which is owned by Government.

Mr. **Chairman**, you might have a situation where the small man, as I now refer to them, whether it will be in St. Lucy, St. Andrew, St. Peter or St. James North, they have that piece of land and they might have five children. They have decided from the time they have acquired that piece of land that it is for those five children. Just because out of their mercy they allow three or five people to settle on that land automatically they lose it. I **am** saying that the people who were residing on that land that they are entitled to have a right to a piece of land but it does not necessarily mean that it has to be that piece of land. If Government feels so strongly that they have a right to have that piece of land they should give them some of the land they have. That is all I **am** saying.

Dealing with housing units, Sir, it has always been the policy of the Democratic Labour Party that it is better to provide cheap house spots, or low priced house spots for people and give them incentives to build their own houses than to encourage people with the policy where they have to come to National Housing and beg for favours. I believe any Government that has any foresight would be quite prepared to provide the lots for people, provide the necessary facilities instead of having to build the housing units.

Mr. **Chairman**, if this is the new policy of the Barbados Labour Party, that is their policy. The point is that the people of Barbados prefer to own their own land instead of having to rent. A good example of this is in the constituency of St. Lucy. There are no housing units in St. Lucy and no Member of Parliament for St. Lucy can risk putting housing units in St. Lucy. If they did that they would lose their seat the next time around because the people of St. Lucy believe they should own their own land and their own houses.

12.00 noon

So you cannot go to anybody from St. Lucy and offer them housing units. What I would like from you, is that the piece of land at Mt. **Poyers** near to **Harrises**, that the last Government started, I would like you to continue that project and to give the people the right to purchase those lots. We are not going to beg you for units. All we want you to do is to put in the necessary infrastructure and the people would buy the lots from you, and you can get ready cash.

There is also another policy we found, Sir, at National Housing, and that policy that, previously, when land was up for sale the cost of the land was not taken into the equation and we had to stop that. All the other sources were included in the cost but the cost of the land was not included, and we had to stop that.

If the Honourable Minister is telling me that, that policy was right and we were wrong, well I **am** prepared to give way on that.

But, Mr. **Chairman**, we also set about another policy at National Housing and that policy is wherever National Housing had land that was close to certain developments, we told them that they had to get the fair market price for that land. And the argument behind that, Mr. **Chairman**, is if you had land, let's say for example, in **Husbands** where there are certain developments, you stood the chance of getting between \$6 and \$7 a sq. ft. for that land. Then you could use the profits from that land to lower the cost for the poor people in this country.

If you are telling me that is a bad policy, well I have no problem with that. But we will live with that policy.

Hon. G. W. PAYNE: On a point of order. Mr. **Chairman**, he is introducing some new policy that I have never seen anywhere in the Ministry. I never said anything about any policy, about which he speaks, happening to be a bad policy.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: I am glad, Sir, that he is admitting that it is a good policy.

The next thing that was also suggested, Sir, that in the time when we were going through the economic programme, there was a strong belief that instead of just having the workers at National Housing coming to work and not having anything to do, that they would have been better **served** to go and identify poor people, National Housing should have identified poor people who had the money to build the houses but could not find the money for the labour.

I believe that any Government would go for a policy like that. So anybody who thinks that a policy like that

is wrong, well I have no problem because I am prepared to live with that policy. Because it does not make sense for any Government to take the taxpayers' money, encourage people to come to work, when there are poor people in the country who have money to build houses and the labour is there free and it is not utilised. And we in this country have to start utilising the labour. And, you know, people must understand that as a Government we sometimes have to set policies that **are** going to be in the interest of the people of this country, especially the small man.

I am saying that if that policy was implemented, there would have been a large number of houses in this country, **today**, because there are a lot of people in Barbados who can find the finance, because they have the house spots but they cannot find the money to build the houses, because of the labour aspect, but they have the facility to get the material.

So, Mr. Chairman, I am saying that if the Honourable Minister agrees that he is going to implement that, he would get my support on that one.

There is also a belief in this country that the Democratic Labour Party did not provide housing lots, and a lot of the projects that the Honourable Minister is accepting as his, are true and, in fact, projects left by the last Board that was appointed by the Democratic Labour Party.

The project at Husbands, the project at Haggatt Hall, the project...

*Asides.*

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Right. All of those projects, and many more, were left by the Democratic Labour Party. They were planned, executed, and only for sale. I would like to know, Mr. Chairman, what is the price of the lots at Husbands? And I have a particular reason for that. I would like to know the price of the lots at Husbands, St. James, for the simple reason, when I hear the price of those lots, then I will come back into this debate and explain certain things. But I am not prepared to say anything on Husbands until I get the price for the lots at Husbands.

We heard a lot about the development in Cane Garden and the impression is given that this is a new project. It is not a new project. It is a project left by the Democratic Labour Party, a project that was in dispute, a project that a decision was made that the people who should have constructed the houses, should have been placed in court. But now we are hearing of a situation where the decision has been reversed and those people, instead of our putting them in court, they are putting us in court.

I want to know who has changed that decision.

*Asides.*

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: So you see, Mr. Chairman, we have a situation in this country where people can fly here on jets, do foolishness, fly back out and then they talking about putting **us** in court. Let me tell you something, whoever have made the legal decision, I am asking the Minister to reverse it and he will get our support on this side. Because those people did us too many wrongs for us to be compensating them. Furthermore than us compensating them they should have been compensating us.

I am saying that they should have been compensating us.

*Asides.*

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: You know that I do not call names in this Parliament.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Order, please.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: I am saying these are the ones who flew in here, whenever there was a problem to beg for mercy, they should have been flying in here again on a jet, to beg us for mercy from taking them to court. I do not want to hear about any Government paying them compensation because they should have been paying us compensation. I will give way to the Minister to answer these questions because they are very important.

National Housing cannot afford to pay legal costs. That money, instead of paying legal costs should be money to re-employ those people who have been laid off. This is the second time in this Parliament I have to speak on **behalf** of people who have been laid off.

At NCC, the people who went on a **three-day** week went back to a five. But nothing was done about those people who were laid off, and now we **are** getting the same policy at NHC. So I am asking the Minister of Housing to reverse that policy and, not only deal with the **three-day** week, but to also deal with the five-day week.

Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Chairman, I rise to speak mainly because, having listened to the last speaker, I am surprised that he really said that he could speak, Sir, on the record of the Democratic Labour Party, as it relates to Housing in this country between 1986 and 1994. And that, perhaps, explains, Sir, why senior

Members of that Democratic Labour Party have failed to jump to the defense of their record. Because between 1991 and 1994, Sir, there were no single houses built in this country by the National Housing Corporation, Sir.

Sir, what is even more, except for Church Village which was started before 1991, because I well remember being in the Other Place, Sir, when Church Village finished sometime in late 1991 and when tenants were allowed to move into that.

But since they won the Government in 1991, Sir, they started no new housing units between 1991 and 1994.  
12.10 p.m.

I want to say this, Sir. I do not want to hear anything about structural adjustment or **stabilisation** because what they did not tell the public was that they had \$20 million sitting down in a Housing Credit Fund which was available to build housing units just as the Honourable Minister of Housing, the Member for St. **Andrew** has done with the units that he started at Maynards, St. Peter. That is the same money that this Government has used to start construction of housing units in this country but they sat down for three years, having access to over \$20 million, knowing that people were being sent home, knowing that people's salaries were cut, knowing that people could not get access to mortgages and did nothing to relieve the housing plight of people in this country.

Sir, do you know what is worst about it? In 1992, at a time when the results of the structural adjustment were at their worst? When people's salaries were cut? When they were being sent home? That at the **same** time they evicted over 556 tenants in 1992 alone. Sir the Barbados Labour Party evicted 180 last year and yet we can hear them calling and crying about us being heartless with the people of this country. We evicted 180 when the economy grew by 2% and, Sir, they evicted 556 when the economy declined 3% and 4% and 5%.

Mr. Chairman, Sir, I want to know really where the Democratic Labour Party gets off in this country talking about its record in housing especially, Sir, with its record of the people in St. Michael who continue to occupy the majority of housing estates in this country and who continue to live in conditions that are worse than others particularly because of the policy of the Democratic Labour Party. Sir, they may have built the Pine but you know what they did with the Pine, Sir? Mr. Chairman, they built the Pine but you know what is significant? Sir, I am sorry the Honourable Leader of the Opposition has found it upon himself to leave the country in what is the most important debate in the country. I would have loved to have gone and seen my parents in Bermuda **too**, Sir, but he has gone to Bermuda at a time when we are discussing the most important business in the country.

### *Asides.*

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Order, please.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Chairman, why I am sorry that the Honourable Leader of the Opposition is absent is this. On the 16th...

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Mr. Chairman, I am restraining myself because I think the youthful exuberance of the Honourable Member ought not to be restrained. In fact, the Honourable Member knows that it is improper to cast aspersions. For the Honourable Member to make comments on the absence of any Honourable Member here and ascribe reasons unto them is contrary to the practice of this House. The Honourable Member should not be doing that.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The Chair really has not heard any aspersions being cast.

*Certain remarks made by the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East were ordered to be struck from the record by Mr. CHAIRMAN.*

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Chairman, with respect, I am sorry that the Honourable Leader of the Opposition is not here because the Honourable Leader of the Opposition was a prime player in a decision of the Cabinet of the Democratic Labour Party, and I want to get the dates right, on the 16th of December, 1993 to raise the rents at the National Housing Corporation units in this country and that, Mr. Chairman, Cabinet decision was taken after the same Leader of the Opposition visited Washington to meet with the World Bank between the 7th and 9th December 1993, came back to Barbados and a Paper went to Cabinet recommending the increase of rents on an economic basis at the National Housing Corporation. A decision which the Cabinet wilfully took and only, Sir, on the 6th January, 1994 did the Cabinet then, in the light of the protest led then by the Honourable Prime Minister, when he was Leader of the Opposition, and indeed, Sir, I believe by the National Democratic Party, the Member for St. Michael South Central, did the then Government reverse. In fact they did not even reverse. I apologise. They then took a decision to delay the implementation of those rents. They never even reversed it. They took a decision, Mr. Chairman, that they would delay only to be able to meet with the social partners and to be able to explain the objectives and purposes of measures for the increase in the rents and that they fully expected, as was evidenced in the communication from a public officer of this country to the International Monetary Fund, that they would then be able to proceed with those increases.

Mr. Chairman, Sir, I want to speak in here about this matter with a certain level of equanimity. Sir, what we have seen has been a level of duplicitous behaviour by

the Democratic Labour Party that has seen it fit now, Sir, since it has been out of Government, to talk about the Barbados Labour Party's record in housing at a time when this Minister, not only has started, but started and completed 15 units at Maynards, has more starting down there, has some starting at **Pondside** in this Financial Year which by the way, Sir, they restricted from 75 units to less than thirty something when they won office in 1986 because they did not care anything about the people in the City having access to housing. And, **Sir**, this Minister has seen a resumption of the sites and services project which was abandoned by the Democratic Labour Party.

12.20 p.m.

Not a single house between 1991 and 1994, not a single Sites and **Services** Programme executed for the benefit of the people of this country, yet every week and you would know too, Sir, people coming to you week after week because they cannot find decent housing in this country or access to lots. And we are going to **talk** about somebody having a heart in this country or somebody caring about poor black people.

Sir, the only thing they know about housing is to send squatters to the Belle and leave them without services. I want to be very straight with this, Sir, and I want to **talk** too about urban renewal. I want to say a few words about urban renewal. This Government for the very first time is establishing a division which is concentrating on urban renewal and in this financial year we are going to see the first pilot project. I would like to thank the Honourable Minister of Housing because I understand that pilot project will be in Bush Hall, **Alleyne's Land**, **Stuarts Land**, **Richards Land** and **Maycocks Land**. Sir, I **am** informed because I had the fortune to go with them and to point out the needs. We spent over 2½ hours walking around there looking at the exact needs to deal with them to improve the living conditions of persons in those districts. There are a number of things that will be proceeded with in this pilot project. I understand that funds will be made available for loans to residents in those areas for home improvements and the acquisition of lots. I further understand, Mr. Chairman, that they have started to identify all vacant lots and derelict buildings in that area and that there will be a project to get those vacant lots and derelict buildings back into residential properties by ensuring that persons can access for ownership those vacant lots and derelict properties and they will be able to borrow **from** a fund which will ensure they will be able to do the necessary repairs or construction. There will also, Sir, be the development of lots through the provision of basic access and the improvement of roads and footpaths. I will tell you why this is critical, Mr. **Chairman**. There is an area called **Richards Land** that has over 10 to 12 houses on it, that has no road access whatsoever, that is caught between Bush Hall-Yard Gap and the Stadium and indeed there are over 4 pensioners living alone up in there. If one of them, God

forbid, fell sick today and they needed an ambulance to get up in there, the ambulance could not get up in there. If there was a fire, the Fire Service could not get up in there. Not even the Sanitation Service Authority can get up in there to collect their daily refuse. Sir, the circumstances are some of the worst that you can find in this country in terms of denial to basic access to services. I therefore welcome that we will be pursuing a policy that will see these people living in **Richards Land** and indeed other areas of that part of **Bush Hall** being able to having access to improved roads and footpaths. There are a number of other tenancies that you really cannot push a road through. Anybody who represents a **St. Michael** constituency would be familiar with these plights and therefore the ability to put a concrete footpath in to make sure that these people can **walk** out when the rain is falling without having to put plastic bags on their feet because they do not want to get soiled or indeed that they do not have to fall on an uneven rock as sometimes happens. I **am talking** about parts of **St. Michael** that are worse than **Drax Hall**.

#### *Aside.*

Hon. Miss M. A. **MOTTLEY**: Sir, there are houses in **St. Michael** that still have dirt floors and still have pit toilets and we believe in this Government that those people must be allowed to have access to a decent standard of living however restricted that might be in terms of their economic power to improve their own lot for themselves.

We are also going to be assisting in the surveying of lots for sale and we will also most importantly be dealing with the improvement of drainage. Right now in **Bush Hall** we have a situation where there are certain parts of **Bush Hall** where the water does not drain away. It stays there and becomes stagnant and indeed recent outbreak in dengue late last year it was a cause for great concern. That is why I was so happy that the Honourable Minister of Health and the Environment was able to implement the debushing campaign which was able to alleviate what would otherwise have been a double-edge attack between the **bush** and the stagnant water remaining as a result of the lack of drainage.

I want also to say that we believe that those persons who still have to convert pit toilets to water borne toilets should have the ability to access either loans where they are working and grants where they are not **working** or may be pensioners or some other form of disability. I want to say this, Sir. We have been saying this for the last 10 years while we were out of Government. In fact, I remember in 1991 Members of the Democratic Labour Party across the campaign in this country were cursing us, when the Honourable Member for **Christ Church West** was leader, and making the point that that had to be a central plank about bringing back to **St. Michael** into the modern

20th century. We were cursed and pilloried for that. Sir, I am happy that it is not only happening in that part of the country but I note that the Minister of Health is making sure with the South Coast Sewerage Project that those persons in those parts of St. Michael and Christ Church that are affected will have the opportunity to do that type of upgrading one time once and for all.

**Mr. B. M. TAITT:** Sir, on a point of order. I do not wish the Honourable Member to mislead this House. That forms part of the project and the project document requires it. The money was actually put into the project to do exactly that. So do not let it form from your mouth like the Minister made a policy decision. That was determined long before the Minister became Minister. Let us keep the record reasonably straight.

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

**Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY:** When it was put in the project document, it never extended to his constituency of St. Michael West and he never did anything to make sure that his constituents could have access to it. That is his problem.

**Mr. B. M. TAITT:** On a point of order, Sir. How does she want me to put the South Coast Sewerage Project in St. Michael West? Do you expect me to put the South Coast Sewerage Project in St. Michael West?

*Aside.*

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

**Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY:** Sir, we did not only do it with the South Coast Sewerage Project. That is the fundamental point I am making. That is part and parcel of the Urban Renewal Programme of which the pilot programme is starting this year which is to extend that capability to residents outside of the South Coast Sewerage Project. I am castigating the Democratic Labour Party for failing to do so for the thousands of people in St. Michael who may need access to that service.

**Mr. B. M. TAITT:** Again, to set the record straight. Part of the negotiations for the South Coast Sewerage Project and the West Coast Preliminary Project was being delayed because under the Bridgetown Sewerage Project a number of connections were to be made had not been made and, as a result, funds were included to provide an almost free service to bring forward the connections for those persons in the area such that we could have a high enough percentage for the project of the South Coast and West Coast to go through. That is why you have people in the

urban area being able to benefit from the project that has been set up.

**Mr. CHAIRMAN:** Your time is up.

**Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY:** Sir, I can come back later. But I want to thank the Ministry of Housing for the excellent job that they have been doing, Sir.

**Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER:** **Mr. Chairman,** Sir, I beg to move...

**Dr. R. C. HAYNES:** **Mr. Chairman,** I rise... whatever you are going to do, I **am** speaking to the Chairman first. So please take your seat.

*Aside.*

**Dr. R. C. HAYNES:** The Chairman had better get his left eye examined.

**Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER:** One thing you are not an ophthalmologist.

*Aside.*

**Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER:** **Mr. Chairman,** Sir, I beg to move...

*Aside.*

**Dr. R. C. HAYNES:** **Mr. Chairman,** I wish to make the point on the floor of this House that one should be given adequate time to examine the Estimates or I might as well go home. You might as well send me out in that case.

*Aside.*

**Mr. CHAIRMAN:** Order please'.  
12.30 p.m.

**Dr. R. C. HAYNES:** I want to know that my position is established to speak first when this Committee resumes.

*Asides.*

**Dr. R. C. HAYNES:** I wish him to catch my eye and then I will sit down and you can speak.

*Asides.*

**Mr. CHAIRMAN rose.**

**Dr. R. C. HAYNES:** **Mr. Chairman,** the point I am making is, it is quite within your prerogative to catch

my eye, then I will sit and she can move the motion to suspend the Sitting.

*Asides.*

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: It is simple. Just catch my eye, let me sit and then she can move the motion to suspend the Sitting.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Order, please. Order, please. Order, please! The Chair wishes to note the following and I am quoting from Standing Order 28(14):

"If two or more Members rise at the same time, the Speaker or Chairman shall call upon the Member who first catches his eye."

That eye is the eye of the Speaker or the Chairman.

I also wish to note, for the benefit of Members of this Committee, that Members have 15 minutes to speak and they can speak as often as they wish, once they catch my eye. This debate has until Friday and I therefore deem it as dishonourable conduct in this House by the Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central. I am giving him a warning, I am letting him know that I have the authority to send him out if this kind of conduct continues.

*On the motion of Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER, seconded by Hon. G. W. PAYNE, Mr. CHAIRMAN reported progress and asked for leave to sit again, and Mr. SPEAKER resumed the Chair and reported accordingly.*

*Asides.*

Mr. SPEAKER: Order, please. Order, please. Honourable Members, please! Order, please.

#### SUSPENSION OF SITTING

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that this sitting be suspended until 1.30 in the afternoon.

Hon. G. W. PAYNE: I beg to second that, Sir.

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

#### RESUMPTION

Mr. SPEAKER: The sitting is resumed. When the Suspension was taken, the House was in Committee of Supply. To that it will now revert.

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

Mr. CHAIRMAN: This Committee is now in session.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: There are some things, Mr. Chairman, that are pre-eminently self-evident and need no urging on this Honourable House. Among those things is the clear necessity for vigilance on the part of the Leader of the National Democratic Party to ensure that the voice of those 16 000 people who sent him here are properly and respectfully heard at all times.

From time to time I read my Bible and according to Genesis there was an act of creation by the Almighty. He created heaven and earth and all things therein. Every time I listen to the Barbados Labour Party it would appear to me that they wish to pre-empt that act of creation and you would not believe that Barbados existed before the particular day on which a presentation is made in this House; that they are creating housing in Barbados, they are creating housing policy, they are creating everything! They are creating the world, they are creating humanity, they are creating human beings.

When one looks at the appalling state of housing, especially in the St. Michael area, which has been very adequately articulated and I need not repeat what the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East said, I fully agree with everything she said about housing in St. Michael, but those housing conditions existed since the 1930s in those houses, and it is a tragedy that today people in the St. Michael area and in the City of Bridgetown are living in the same conditions as they lived, despite 25 years of Barbados Labour Party rule, since the 1930s. No wonder the extensive cynicism about politics in this country!

My No. 1 reason for standing here, Mr. Chairman, this afternoon is to plead with the Honourable Minister of Transport and Works to recognise, firstly, that I have made minimal demands on that Ministry in respect of my constituency because due to my hard work over many years since 1978 extensive **infrastructural** work has been done in St. Michael South Central for many years. One of the residual problems relates to the roads in **Delamere** Land and Bannister Land, not due to any negligence on my part but because when the roads in St. Michael were being done, due to my efforts at the time, gas mains were being laid and the problem is that the road has not been resurfaced since then and with each shower of rain the road is deteriorating and it is going to cost the Government more and more.

I sincerely hoped that the Honourable Minister would have included in this year's Estimates the small sum

of money that is required for that particular purpose. I am asking for nothing else. Out of the \$1.2 billion or whatever amount we are spending, I am asking for absolutely nothing else in terms of physical development but the resurfacing of a few narrow roads. What do I have to do to get it done? It is not unreasonable. I am not asking for a big, long road to be done, I am asking for a few narrow roads to be resurfaced in Delamere Land and Bannister Land. If I can get that done this year, I will be perfectly happy, but I will tell you this. If I don't get it done, I am going to make it a *delenda est Carthago cause célèbre* type of approach in this House.

1.35 p.m.

Every single speech will be finished with the call to get those roads done and every single road speech will be made whenever I conclude a speech in this House. There will be a call to get those roads fixed until they are. Remember what I said: it will be a *delenda est Carthago cause célèbre*.

*Aside.*

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: If I may explain, Sir. A famous Roman senator and statesman believed in a particular cause and in order to get it accepted by the legislature every speech that he made he finished it with the words "*delenda est Carthago*" – Carthage must be destroyed... I am not destroying anything. The cause *célèbre* as far as I am aware is part of the English language now. Now, that is the single most important point that I wish to make under this particular Head.

Under the area of Housing, there can be no question in my mind that housing represents a very important priority situation in Barbados. First of all, focus has to be placed on those people who can help themselves. That is one sector. I am really pleased and heartened to see the Minister of Housing make a call for 100% mortgages in Barbados. It was a very wise call. Unfortunately, when the National Democratic Party placed that on the agenda for national debate and included it in its manifesto we were ridiculed and they said it was impossible. Now we see a bank in Bridgetown offering 95% mortgages. What is the difference between a 95% mortgage and a 100% mortgage?

When you consider in Barbados the ridiculous transaction charges that people have to pay in terms of acquiring land, fees for conveyances and fees for the mortgages, the taxes they have to pay, it amounts to more than the 5%. I agree, as we have advocated again and again that the attention has to be paid to the transaction costs involved in acquiring properties and transferring properties in Barbados especially as they affect the ability of young people, especially, to own homes.

What do we do to a young couple when we tell them they have to find a 10% deposit or whatever? Let me tell you what happens. A young couple who would qualify for a mortgage but do not have a deposit on a house, you tell them they have to find the 10% deposit so they have to go and pay rent somewhere else. At the end of 12 years they have been paying rent and they still don't have the 10% deposit. They could have had a 100% mortgage and that money could have gone towards home ownership. So all you are doing is, that by not encouraging financial institutions to enter into the area of 100% housing, you are debarring a lot of young people from the opportunity, particularly young couples from the opportunity of owning their homes.

I believe that the mortgage market needs to be expanded and that is why we have constantly said we need to look at development of a secondary mortgage market in Barbados so that the outstanding mortgages can be rolled over and create another investment tool for the people of Barbados in the purchase of secondary mortgages. The NDP has also made the point that we have a problem of housing in Barbados where a lot of elderly people living on a pension are unable to repair their homes and they are unable to maintain their homes and what happens to them is that they have an asset in the form of a house, the mortgage has been paid off and they do not have cash. They have health problems and all sorts of problems and they need cash at that time in their lives.

What we need to establish is a system of reverse mortgages where at that time in their lives they can access the equity in their homes and that cash can help them to live a better life in the evening of their years benefiting from the asset which they have created earlier in their lives. I am talking about a reverse mortgage. Let's say someone is 70 years old and is in a situation where the person owns his or her home living only on a pension but has other cash demands. What I am saying is that person should be able to take out a mortgage on the understanding that that mortgage will never be repaid. What will happen over time is that whoever inherits that house from them will inherit the house subject to mortgage or the house will be sold and whatever the balance is will be taken out but the persons will not have to move out of their homes during that period. There are a lot of creative things that can be done in terms of housing for those who can help themselves. What they need is the support of the Government and they need the financial instruments in place in this country and that would take care of a substantial amount of the houses in Barbados.

As far as Government housing is concerned, as far as I can see all the programmes that I have heard the Minister talk about are basically programmes that have been in place over the years and I think that there needs to be an expansion of those programmes because we are

dealing with a completely different level of people who cannot help themselves and need other levels of help like house spots, other avenues to non-market type credit for housing and so on. These are the things that the Minister has been *talking* about and I don't think I need to deal with that at this particular point in time during my presentation.

One point that I wish to make clear is this question of the amendment to the Tenancies Freehold Act which exempted from the Tenancies Freehold Act those persons owning 5 house spots or less. That was a very desirable amendment and I do not wish to see it reversed, because often what happens in Barbados is that *individuals* out of the goodness of their heart, poor persons who owned a small area of land, allowed other people to rent *from* them but they had designated those particular areas for their children and their grandchildren and under the original Tenancies Freehold Act prior to the amendment they got caught in that situation. I think the amendment was a legitimate one in preserving the constitutional rights of those people.

I am quite sure that it was not the purpose and intent of the original Tenancies Freehold Act to capture those small holdings.  
1.45 p.m.

I agree with the Minister that since that right was removed from those who rent it from those small spots that an arrangement should be made at the same time for other facilities to be made available to them. No one should tamper with the Constitution again in that manner.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Mr. Chairman, I have been very disappointed..

*Aside.*

Hon. G. W. PAYNE: Mr. Chairman, I am very surprised that the Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central who just spoke was a Member of Government, a former Minister of Finance, a man who has been portrayed in this House and elsewhere as the No. 2 man in Barbados, could speak so eloquently about housing and when he was Minister of Finance in 1986 he cut the housing vote from the National Housing Corporation by almost \$6 million. The Honourable Member who just spoke cut the National Housing Corporation vote by \$6 million and all of a sudden the National Democratic Party which was a nonentity at that time – I would not say that it is now...

*Aside.*

Hon. G. W. PAYNE: I do not know about that. The Honourable Member speaks about 100 per cent *mortgages*

but he should understand that the Manifesto of the Barbados Labour Party *started* before **1991** and the Barbados Labour Party's Manifesto was very instructive toward the creation of the type of mortgages that every Barbadian could benefit from.

Mr. Chairman, when I finished my presentation I was *talking* about the policies of the National Housing Corporation and less they be lost, I want to complete them. I did say that in this financial year we will be resuming the interventions by the Ministry of Housing which were done during the last financial year. One of the interventions by this administration relating to the *tenancies'* relocation relates to the grant to tenants who have been dispossessed as a result of the strictures of the Tenancies Freehold Purchase Act to which *the* Honourable Member referred in situations whereby there were less than five tenants on one parcel of land.

Since September 1994 we introduced a provision where a person who is to be relocated will be given a grant of \$15 000. Now, the Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central talks about *thieving*. We in this administration had to introduce the \$15 000 grant to stop a lot of the *thieving* that took place in the past. We had some scandalous situations in the past whereby people who were being relocated – and the Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central would know what I was talking about because he was part of the last administration between 1986 and 1987. The Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central was part of that administration where a chattel house costing about \$10 000 cost about \$210 000 to move in St. John. That is *stealing*.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: Mr. Chairman, on a point of order. I have absolutely no knowledge of what the Honourable Member is talking about.

Hon. G. W. PAYNE: This is the type of *thieving* or *stealing* that we in this administration want to stamp out and this is why we have been introducing...

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Mr. Chairman, on a point of order. The incident that the Honourable Member is speaking of was not a situation where anybody was *stealing* any money. It is exactly what I was *speaking* about before, Sir, where you had a situation where you were in a programme and the National Housing Corporation was putting people on work sites even though there was not any work for them to do and charging the costs to the project so there was no *stealing*. The matter was fully investigated and nothing wrong was done by the workers.

Hon. G. W. PAYNE: Mr. Chairman, I really do not know what was the purpose of that intervention.

During the next financial year we will also be instituting a policy whereby lands which are owned by the Ministry will be vested in the National Housing Corporation in situations whereby they are rented out to tenants. I am speaking about residential **tenantries**. We will also be instituting a policy whereby lands which are rented out for residential purposes and which are owned by other statutory corporations will also be transferred to the National Housing Corporation. One can think of a number of houses owned by the Agricultural Development Corporation which will be transferred to the National Housing Corporation and they will be the principal tenants.

We will also be instituting a policy of having all tenants in the terraced units being able to purchase their particular unit. As you could see, in recent times we have been changing the type of structure in the terraced units. In the past there was one roof. What we will be doing is that for each unit there will be a central wall so that there would not be any problems when the transfer is effected in terms of the condominium **type** legislation. We expect that most of the terraced units will be done in this fashion. At the moment there are about 3 800 terraced units. Of course, all of them will not be able to accommodate in this fashion.

Mr. Chairman, with respect to the acquisitions, a sum of \$4 million has been included in the Estimates to cover the acquisitions which we will be doing during the next financial year. It may be necessary for us to come back for a further supplementary during the mid-term because this figure only covers the actual amounts which will be outstanding at this particular point in time.

With reference to office accommodation, a number of requests have been received from a number of Government departments seeking accommodation and it is planned to construct a new office block in the area of Warrens on land which already is owned by Government during the next financial year.  
1.55 p.m.

It is hoped that with this new structure we will be able to accommodate most of the requests for office accommodation which we have received during the course of this financial year.

Mr. Chairman, I will come back later on, Sir.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: I am very grateful to the Honourable Member for giving me an opportunity in this debate, Mr. Chairman, to speak. I was most surprised and disappointed **that** the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East, the Minister of Education, would intervene in this debate in the manner which she did.

I really was disappointed, Sir, because I believe that a Ministry that has nearly \$90 million to spend should have

an accounting, and that the Minister attempted in his presentation to give some indication how the Government intends to spend the money, which is being called upon, to be allocated.

I really did not understand why the Minister of Education had any feeling that there should be obfuscation and to revert to political rhetoric in a matter of this nature. I was really disappointed. But I have subsequently **learnt** that one of our distinguished colleagues on this side was going to be, apparently, interviewed on radio and television, or radio, about evictions in the Pine and therefore knowing the Minister of Education as I do, and the Government, apparently her intervention was to help to give some balance to the telling blows which he **would** be putting into the Government for evicting poor people in the Pine who can't find any work, and therefore she put information in here which...

*Aside.*

Mr. B. M. TAITT: I beg your pardon, Sir?

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member is on a point of order.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Okay. I am sorry.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: On a point of order, Sir. The Honourable Member for St. Michael West is, as usual, misleading this Honourable Chamber. Sir, the Honourable Member cannot determine what is the reason I made the statement that I did. I was not responding to any statement, from whoever or whatever. I was simply stating a fact, which is supplied by the National Housing Corporation's record, that 556 persons were evicted, were served notices to quit in 1992 at a time of the height of the structural adjustment period.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Mr. Chairman, if the National Housing Corporation supplied her with that information it is corrupt. It is corrupt because, Sir, this is the report and if there were evictions, there should be in this report. And if they provide her with information to that effect, which I doubt, I doubt it. I doubt that the National Housing Corporation could supply her. This is the report for 1990.

We went through the report 1990, 1991, 1992, 1993 and all of a sudden they could come in here and say they have information from the National Housing Corporation. It should be published.

If they have information and they have not published it, that is corrupt.

Don't come in here with any bogus information. That is a public organisation that is funded by the

taxpayers. You cannot come here with that kind of information that is not true, that you can come in here and say that you got it from the National Housing Corporation. It has to be published.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Order, please.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Chairman, on a point of order... The Honourable Member for St. Michael West would know about corruption, Sir. So when he said that the NHC is corrupt, he knows what he is talking about. The Honourable Member knows what he is **talking** about.

*Asides.*

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Sir, I said, just now, on a point of order, and I repeat and I make this now a document of the House, a letter dated 20th March, 1996 from the General Manager of the National Housing Corporation to the Minister of Housing, stating that in 1992 there were 556 notices to quit served. I said so just now.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Mr. Chairman, she said evictions. I want to see it, Sir. I want to see the document. If it is a document of the House, I want to see it. I do not trust anything she says. Bring it and let me see it. I do not trust her.

Now, Sir, we are hearing that there were notices to quit and, Mr. Chairman, she said evictions. You said evictions. The record would show she said evictions and she stands condemned. She stands condemned for trying to catch the "World at One," by suggesting, but she stands condemned.

Bring it here. The "World at One." That is what it was all about. I know I would catch you.

The Honourable Member for Christ Church South would tell you that the old denizens would know where to go to smoke them out, Sir.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: We are now hearing that these were notices to quit. The earlier statement was that these people were evicted. I wonder whether the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East would want to correct her earlier statement by this one.

Hon. M. A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Chairman, on a point of elucidation. If I said so I meant notice to quit. I said notice to quit and I said there were going to be evicted. And even just now, Mr. Chairman, on my first intervention on a point of order on the Honourable Member for St. Michael West's statement, I said 556 notices to quit just now and the second one, I produced the document, Mr. Chairman. I do not understand.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: So the record should state – notices to quit – in both instances.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: I may resume my normal tone, Sir.

*Asides.*

**Mr. B. M. TAITT:** I know that the National Housing Corporation is not corrupt. I was saying that, if in fact, there had been 500 and something evictions, and the National Housing Corporation had not included it in this report, that would have been corrupt. And I know that the National Housing Corporation is not corrupt.

We went for the report and we could find no evidence of any 500 and something evictions. As a matter of fact, my information is that there were a mere 20 or 22 evictions out of all these notices to quit. And I really think that it is a travesty...

*Aside.*

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Listen, we went and put them on television when I was a Minister. We put them on television, this notice to quit...

*Aside.*

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Nearly cut off their heads and the Minister of the day had to apologise to the Cabinet for putting poor people on television, because it is no business of the Government to be **embarrassing** people. That is no responsibility of the Government, and private people ask you to quit every day. Because people are renting from the National Housing Corporation, which is a statutory corporation, it has no business under the DLP, BLP, NDP or any "P."

*Asides.*

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Sorry.

*Asides.*

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Under any Government, no one has the right to embarrass people who, more times than not, through no fault of their own – It was done under both Governments, and I hope that we will desist from that foolishness of trying to embarrass ordinary citizens.

I represent poor people and they have allowed me to represent them for a long time and that is why when the Honourable Member said five hundred and something people were evicted it evoked a certain response from me.

But, Mr. Chairman, in the course of the presentation by the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East...

*Aside.*

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Mr. Chairman, I know she wants an elucidation.

*Asides.*

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Listen, the Honourable Member for Christ Church South knows...

*Asides.*

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Well good. If he doesn't want me to deal with that. He is my friend.

Mr. Chairman the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East went on to talk about housing and she said that nary a single unit was built since 1991. Then when we rumbled, from over here, she ~~corrected~~ herself, ~~except~~ for the houses at Church Village which she said may have been completed in 1991, but the gravamen of her statement was that between 1991 and 1994 no houses were built in a housing estate.

2.05 p.m.

Let us take that as given, Sir. Let us even accept that on this occasion the Honourable Member, the Minister of Education, paragon of virtue, has spoken the truth. Let us say that is true. The Democratic Labour Party could be excused, during a time of structural adjustment for not building a house. The Democratic Labour Party was the first organised entity in this country that brought a paradigm shift in the concept of what kind of houses people of ordinary stature should live in. The Honourable Members of the Barbados Labour Party ought not to make housing one of their beacons.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: On a point of order, Sir. The Honourable Member is misleading the Chamber. I may not have been born in the fifties, Sir, but my recollection and my understanding of history was that the Barbados Labour Party built a housing estate in Belleplaine long before the Democratic Labour Party ever became the Government of this country and that, as I understand, was one of the first models for modern housing development in this country.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: The Honourable Member admits to her fallibility based on her not having been in existence and I accept that, Sir. But by the year 1955 the Housing Board as it then was, the total production of houses amounted to 390 units on 4 housing estates and included 30 aided self-help houses. A typical example for someone who

grew up where I grew up can be found in Jones Land, Black Rock, Deacons Road and Princess Royal Avenue in the Pine. The Princess Royal Avenue houses have been described by my Honourable Friend from St. Michael South Central as cow pens. The houses at that time reflected the design, the social **thinking** and the attitudes of that day and offered very little improvement in amenities as evidenced by the **backyard** privy provided for the tenants of both upper and ground floor apartments. That is what the Barbados Labour Party gave to the people of Princess Royal Avenue.

The Housing Authority created in 1956 continued to provide a limited programme of housing, offering the minimum level of sheltered amenities. It was not until 1961 when the Democratic Labour Party had operation take over that we had a paradigm shift in the concept of the quality of housing that should be provided for ordinary people. We had to go and fit doors to the bedrooms in the houses which the Barbados Labour Party had built. Never let it be forgotten, the first order of business was putting doors on the bedrooms, such was the thinking of the Barbados Labour Party. Do not use housing as any item. You have already admitted to not being around so I am not going to take anything you have said. It was when the Democratic Labour Party came to office that we started having housing. I invite the Honourable Members to go to Fernihurst, the Farm, Rosemont, Deacon's Farm, Sayes Court, Silver Hill, Wildey, Wotton. Mr. Chairman, Sir, in my 15 minutes I could spend it calling the names of places. The last Honourable Member for St. Michael North, **Philip** Greaves, must go down in history as being the best housing Minister the country has ever had. He built so many houses of different quality, he built terraced houses, bungalows, single houses, ask anybody who is anybody who came from anywhere and they will tell you that the Democratic Labour Party over extended itself when it came to producing housing from the public sector in this country.

I was disappointed that the Barbados Labour Party would choose housing as a battleground. You have to wheel and come again.

*Aside.*

Mr. B. M. TAITT: I have defended you. I am known to have defended you. Even on my side I defend you. So it is alright. I can defend the indefensible but the fact is that today it is an easy defense.

*Aside.*

Mr. B. M. TAITT: The Honourable Member for the City knows that **Pondside** was merely a concept until the Democratic Labour Party took it.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: No, no, no, Sir. We have allowed the Honourable Member a lot of poetic licence because we know that he is strapped to the deck burning alone. But to say that there was no concept to the Pondside. The original concept to the Pondside was desecrated and destroyed by the Democratic Labour Party and Phase 2 of the Pondside that will start in this Financial year, Mr. Chairman, Sir, will restore the Pondside to its former pristine glory.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Sir, you never saw anything in the City until the Honourable Member came. There is no one like the Honourable Member for the City. The only person I have ever seen like the Honourable Member is the Honourable Member. I have no quarrel with that. That is a fact until she meets Peter. Every time she sees Peter, she gets upset and that is why she gets so angry with me. It was not my fault.

Mr. Chairman, I want to return to the debate now, Sir, to the Ministry of Housing which has a large quantity of money to be spent. The Minister in the opening statements made some comments which need some examination. Let me just wind up, Sir, by saying that I intend to spend some time with the Minister on the specific Estimates which have been brought here because I would like to say to him that he has a story which he can tell. He needs not embellish it with political rhetoric. He can talk his story. If he is attempting to make something of the Ministry of Housing, then he should make his point. When the Honourable Member starts throwing in rhetoric he runs into danger. For example, it is not well known that the present Chairman of the National Housing Corporation on the question of the appointment of a Deputy Chairman...

*Aside.*

Mr. B. M. TAITT: I am only responding to what you suggested. The Honourable Member did say that he cannot speak for the National Housing Corporation or some other agency under his portfolio but before the Honourable Member starts discussing propriety in relation to how they operate, examine how the present Deputy General Manager of the National Housing Corporation was appointed. When I come back next time I would be willing to hear the Honourable Member. If he is going to discuss these matters in political terms, explain how the Deputy General Manager was appointed. Explain how you can have an application for a job before the terms of reference or the advertisement is out.  
2.15 p.m

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: Mr. Chairman, I rise in this debate to look at contributions made by the Ministry of Housing over the last 4 or more years but more in particular over the last 18 months. The last speaker wanted to find out when housing estates started in this country. But

if I refer to the White Paper on Housing in 1982 which is already a document in this House on page 3 it is stated:

"The bad conditions of the forties spurred the Barbados Labour Party Government in the late 1940s to start the Pine Housing Estate and widen the..."

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Sir, what document are you quoting from?

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: It is the White Paper on Housing 1982 which is already a document of this House. I go on:

"And following the hurricane of 1955 when houses were destroyed or damaged all over the island to establish the Barbados Housing Authority whose primary interest was the provision of low cost housing units for rental and purchase by low income families. A large number of houses were built at the Pine, Grazettes, Gall Hill, Christ Church and housing areas were pumped in every parish. Land schemes - where parcels of land were provided for rental by persons who already had houses were also started."

Mr. Chairman, it goes on to say that since 1961 the Democratic Labour Party continued the programme that was started by the Barbados Labour Party. But one must see...

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: Mr. Chairman, on a point of elucidation. If that statement is inside there, I can tell this House categorically it is a totally incorrect statement about continuing things that were started. Do not forget that I served on the Urban Development Corporation for many years and therefore I would know that that statement is incorrect and that whole Northern St. Michael Public Sector Housing Development and Public Sector Infrastructure for the second development took place under the Urban Development Corporation. Remember that.

Mr. H. deB. FORDE: On a point of order, Sir. The Honourable Member really is not giving the House the full picture at all. The Honourable Member has to tell this House that the Barbados Labour Party was instrumental in acquiring the land under which an Italian company then developed the housing in the Paradise Heights area. He is talking about a Mr. Pacchino, the Cave Hill area. The Urban Development Corporation did not have responsibility at the time for low income houses.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: Mr. Chairman, the Honourable Member is misleading the House. He should speak to the Honourable Member for Christ Church South who could tell him all about Paradise Heights and tell him that he is completely wrong. The only person that knows more than me about that is Bree.

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: The Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central is indeed a landlord in his own right. He knows that he was responsible for a large number of agricultural lands being cut up all across St. George and parts of Christ Church.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: Mr. Chairman, I do not want to get into this. But I just wish to make it clear that I have never at **anytime** in my entire life cut up agricultural land or any other kind of land in Barbados.

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: I am sure that the Honourable Member is familiar with the whole of St. George.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: On a point of order, Sir. The Honourable Member is again misleading the House. I was a member of a corporation that acquired The Hope, St. George after it was subdivided by a Mr. Nigel Barrow.

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: Mr. Chairman, nevertheless housing development actually took off during the latter part of the seventies when the Labour Party formed the Government and between 1976-86 tremendous improvements in the housing stock in this country took place. In fact, I would think that the modern era of housing actually started after 1976. A number of micro-economic policies were put in place to re-organize the housing stock of this country.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: On a point of order, Sir. The Honourable Member is a faithful representative and I think he made a tactical slip. I do not want to say that he is misleading the House, Sir, but back up before 1976 so we will not have any quarrel.

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: Prior to 1976 we saw actually a decline in the housing stock. Nevertheless, I would want to make a few points in this important debate. I want to say, Sir, that Members have alluded to the fact that for the first time in a long time there is an Urban Renewal Committee or Unit, whatever you want to call it, and this will be given \$1.4 million to carry out its functions. Now the Member for St. Michael North East, St. Michael South Central and the Honourable Minister spoke at length on this point. But we cannot forget the majority of poor people and poverty stricken people and the number of derelict buildings, a number of wells that are uncovered, poor drainage facilities, poor water and so on and the people's needs must be addressed. These are things that took place over the last 10 years and even before and the Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central spoke in terms of building cow sheds and so on in the 1950s. One has to understand that at that period of time the housing stock represented the culture of the people at the time. So therefore one would not expect water facilities in every home or solar water heaters in homes. But today because

of the developments that have taken place within the island we now would expect urban and rural development to take place. Within this year's budget when you have \$1.2 million to start a pilot project as the Member for St. Michael East alluded to...

#### *Aside.*

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: The point is that we will not necessarily build houses out of that \$1.2 million. But there are a number of small things within St. Michael that need to be done. Now I know that the Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central does not really go through his constituency such as **Martindales** Road to **see** what is going on in that **area**. I passed through that **area** quite recently...

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: Mr. Chairman, on a point of order. I have never heard anyone so deliberately and, if it were not for the rules of this House, I would have said maliciously misinform the House about the activities of a Member. There is not a single house in St. Michael South Central that I have not visited at least 20 times.

#### *Aside.*

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member is asked to note that the word "deliberately" should be withdrawn.

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: If the Honourable Member would visit his area, he would have known that places in **Martindales** Road drainage have been put in your constituency within the last year or so and a number of developments have taken place in St. Michael South Central.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: On a point of order, Sir. If the Honourable Member would **speak** to his Minister and be respectful to his Minister, he would know the interventions I made with members of the staff of MTW in the past year in the same area. So it is a complete untruth and the records of the Ministry will demonstrate that it is a major untruth and in respect of the same matters.  
2.25 p.m.

Mr. H. deB. FORDE: On a point of order, Sir. The Honourable Member has just accused an Honourable Member of this House of speaking an untruth. In my view that is **unparliamentary**. He really cannot make that allegation which says he is a liar. The Honourable Member has been in this House too long to be using his constant interventions for throwing Honourable Members off and telling them they are telling deliberate lies and that sort of thing. That is not parliamentary. The Honourable Member has to raise the level of the debate.

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: Mr. Chairman, I want to proceed. Since 1976 a number of activities have

taken place to strengthen the housing stock of this country and I want to speak to 2 important aspects that have taken place.

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

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: The Housing Credit Fund. I think I will have to come back in this debate because my time has run out. I will speak to it another time.

Mr. L. A. WEEKES: Mr. Chairman, from time immemorial, man had 3 main things to do – food, clothing and shelter. It has always been at the forefront to develop generally you must have proper shelter. I don't really see the need of rehashing what has taken place by one government after the other. If I could find the document that housing development is massive. I happen to live in the same development and I believe it was under the Democratic Labour Party's time before the university was built there was a concept and a plan actually put in booklet that the houses would stretch from the university past West Terrace going down to Sunset Crest. That concept was a general one for bringing a social consciousness to the people where you would have a mix of people of all levels of development. That was the concept, and I think Barbadians would have been proud of that. Somehow that study was not feasible and we now have what we call the Wanstead Heights and those areas.

What was significant about that development was that the cost of land was made so much easier for people within what one would call the lower middle class to purchase that land. So we had a development that people are using now for social division, because when you get into Paradise Heights people think that they are different from other people. I say that just to conclude that housing has always been a priority of Barbadians in whichever government it was and efforts were made; but my main concern today is not who built the most houses or who built the best of houses. That is no help to us. What is really important to me in this debate is the current things that are happening. Let me tell you what is a real concern of mine. This is the financial year 1992-93 and it talks about rental of houses. It also includes the period of 1976 and what I am concerned about is the number of people who applied for housing between April 1, 1956 to the...

*Aside.*

Mr. L. A. WEEKES: I am giving the context. There is not another document beside this.

*Aside.*

Mr. L. A. WEEKES: Up to 1993 the number of people who applied for houses was 44 655. The number of

people who could get houses amounted to 9 000 which suggests to me that just under 30 000 could not get houses. If this was up to 1993 would you not have to believe that more people would be added to that list and so compound the problem of housing? We have taken care of the upper groups, the middle groups and the groups in between there. We come to the lowly paid worker who would never ever in my view working for \$150 own any chattel or what. It is the responsibility of any government to make sure that people have proper housing, because our educational system has allowed some prominent people to come from that group. If they do not have proper housing their social conditions and environment would in some way be compromised. My view is that we should be here talking about how we will handle those people in the very low income groups.

I can tell you a scenario. I represent 3 housing areas. I don't think any other representative represents as many as I do. I represent 3 or 4 housing areas, including the very first one that was built by the Conservative Government. If you go there you will still see some of the chattel houses there. Sometimes we wonder if it may not be a signal that proper maintenance of some of those chattel houses will probably outlast some modern types of buildings.

What I am saying Sir, is that I want the Minister to tell me what provisions he is making to relieve his backlog and what funds if any are in the pipeline to provide housing for these people. They are usually the people with the largest families. They are usually the children of single parents and we are reaching the stage where some of the children are suffering because as soon as they get 18 years or more whether working or not they start to make a family and they are all huddled together. I am sure that if you check your Ministry you will find that there are some applications that show overcrowding, and these are the people of my concern. What embarrasses me most is that they make the application and they are then unsure as to whether the application would be considered. They travel to the office every day or whenever they have the chance and the answer is that there is no housing, come back. Why not tell the people the truth? Don't make them walk every week making them believe that a house is going to be available. Some of them even go and look for house numbers that are empty and then they go up and the biggest disappointment is that when they give in the house number believing that they have a chance somebody takes the house number and gives it to somebody else.

What is happening now is your responsibility. Whenever a government changes, a Minister has total responsibility and whatever you have you could never foster on any other Minister. You have to deal with the problem. My problem is that I am not sure that a proper arrangement or method has been worked out to stop these people from...

Mr. **Chairman**, I believe you may be in the same position as I am in because housing is a desperate need for a number of people.

2.35 p.m.

Sometimes I doubt whether it is true or not. A person comes to me for a recommendation for a house. I ask: "But why come to me? The Corporation is there and it should have the **kind** of structure to handle your problem." You know what comes back to me? "Somebody tells them if I give them a letter." Any department that shifts that kind of responsibility in a political way starts to politicize the whole organisation and that is why I have no doubt that this debate started to get a little political tinge because we are casting it in that way.

Mr. Chairman, I believe there should be a straightforward way to tell people when they apply what their chances are of getting one or how they should go about getting it because the other device is that they have to wait on the Committee and when they ask me when is the Committee going to function I cannot even tell them anything. I do not even know who are the members of the Committee so these are frustrating things for underprivileged people who have no other way but to apply to the National Housing Corporation for a house. I tell you, Sir, it is desperate. There are some people who are paying through their noses exorbitant rents that do not relate to their **salaries** and they have to go and pay these rents as such.

I am not saying, Sir, that the Government should **provide** all the houses for them but we ought to have a method or some approach. We cannot send them to sleep under the bridge **anymore**. **All** I can say is that it is the Government's responsibility to meet the challenge of its citizens. They **need** housing. No matter what you come with, no matter how you think about it, you have to find a solution and it is not reasonable to expect that people of that category would feel comfortable being made to believe that nobody is taking care of them.

There is one other point I want to raise in respect of those who are in the units. I have never yet condoned telling anybody not to pay. I have never done it but there are times when organisations need to look at things more in depth. There are some people who have been living in these estates until they reach the pensionable age of 60 so they are not **working**. I remember some time ago a suggestion was made that people of that age group ought to be able to be exempted. I am not so sure if that is still so but people, come to me and ask me about it. But it is clear that if you live in a house for **25** or 30 years and you are no longer working, you just cannot take up that person and say you are going to send them up in a Soroptimist Home. You are really devastating that person because his entire life has been spent there.

I am saying these are areas which I believe we have humane people in the National Housing Corporation and they would try and come up with some solution to help those disadvantaged persons. I genuinely believe that this debate should not go into any rehashing about who did this and that. I think it should centre on what we can do to relieve some of those overcrowded homes in some of the units, how best we can find finance to construct homes for them so that the children of those parents are in no way disadvantaged.

I am pleased to say, Sir, that many people will pay for their units. If you check you will find that a large percentage of people would pay their rents and you ought not to penalize them in any way to make them feel that they are guilty of not playing their part. The point I want to make is this. Whenever some of the maintenance is required, toilet bowls, sinks and that sort of thing, it is very difficult to get the officers to come and deal with them. They seem to say that some people are not paying so they are all the same but that is not true. There are some people who pay and should not be given that kind of treatment.

The last point I will raise before I sit down is the roofing. In the older housing units there are lots of people who are very concerned about the asbestos roofing. I am not going to tell the Minister that he should do it today or tomorrow but I think he should give some indication that there is a desire in some way, if gradually or stage by stage, to get those units done.

Mr. Chairman, I think those are genuine concerns I have aired. I believe that the Minister should spend more time, even with his officers, trying to relieve some of these conditions I have mentioned that exist.

Mr. H. deB. **FORDE**: Mr. Chairman, let me begin by saying that very few people recognise that there are about 80 000 dwellings in Barbados. If those dwellings were all in good condition, we would find that we possibly have enough housing in order to house the population, almost enough, according to the UN data to house the population of Barbados. When you look at our housing stock, what has happened is that quite a lot of the stock, particularly for people in the lower **socio-economic** range, as well as those in a little higher income bracket, has become dilapidated and run down.

We have particularly in the urban areas and in the suburban areas a good deal of housing stock that is now either in disuse, has fallen into disrepair or sometimes is plainly abandoned. What the Government has to decide in its mind is whether or not it is going to compulsorily acquire some of these homes, reconstitute them and rebuild them because we are a country of small size and we cannot just keep taking up agricultural land for this purpose,

or whether we are going to go up in the air to the extent that we need further expansion.

As I understand it, this Government has clearly set out in very clear terms in the words of the Minister, in the Parliamentary Secretary, that Government intends, particularly in the urban and suburban areas, to reconstitute this housing stock, renovate it and improve it and obviously make it available on the market to those persons who have the resources to pay for it over a period of time, or to make it available on other terms for those persons who will never have the resources to pay for it. I can see nothing wrong with that policy. I would have thought that if Honourable Members of this House are serious about discussing housing, they would concentrate on those very vital policy changes that have been announced in here by the Honourable Minister and his Parliamentary Secretary.

Mr. Chairman, it is also a mistake to assume that the only way in which Government can provide housing for people is to build low income houses at all times and not explore alternative ways of making those people own their own houses. Barbadians have traditionally paid tremendous respect to home ownership and, in fact, the most revolutionary step taken by this Government when it formed the Government in the period 1976 to 1986 was the acquisition of land by means of the Freehold Purchase Act in order to pass on to the plantation tenancies the right to own their house spots at the low price of .10¢ per square foot. That legislation is one of the most radical and democratic socialistic pieces of legislation that has ever passed through this House. It manifests quite clearly the philosophy of the Barbados Labour Party.

*Aside.*

Mr. H. deB. FORDE: I am very glad the Honourable Member has applauded. Now he recognizes where he should be, on this side.

It shows very clearly the philosophy of the Barbados Labour Party from its inception. When we brought the measures to this House, we suffered the slings and arrows of outrageous opponents and fortunes because we were attacked most seriously.

*Aside.*

Mr. H. deB. FORDE: The year was 1978. Honourable Members will remember when we first brought the legislation here. We were attacked for it. But, Mr. Chairman, I am pleased to have been in this House and in this country long enough to see that those smallholders have converted from chattel homes.

2.45 p.m.

They are now expanding, and particularly at this crop time, you will see that they start building from the back to the front and they use their small earnings, of which the Honourable Member for St. Michael West Central have just spoken. Their initiative and their pride, so that today Barbadians, in the country districts particularly, and I **speak** of the parish of St. John where I live, are now better housed than they have been.

But you see the Honourable Members would not give the Barbados Labour Party credit. The Honourable Member is not going to give the Barbados Labour Party credit for this type of dramatic change which it has brought. Mr. Chairman, Sir, it was not only dramatic change, it was not only, Sir, in that way that the Barbados Labour Party made a difference, the then Prime Minister, The Right Honourable Tom Adams, one of the most maligned people in this country, was able to negotiate with the **First** National City Bank and with the help of the United States Government, by way of guarantee, a **US\$20** million revolving loan which has gone into the Credit Housing Fund.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: On a point of order. The Honourable Member forgot what he said about Tom Adams at the Students Centre in London in 1959 or 1960?

Mr. H. deB. FORDE: I said then, Sir,...

*Asides.*

Mr. H. deB. FORDE: Sir, the Honourable Member wants to put me off, Sir. Just let me get to the point, Sir.

We negotiated **US\$20** million credit ~~loan~~ which has been used, specifically for housing, in the lower income sector. Now that loan has been disbursed over the years and if you look at the reports which have been laid in this House, you will see that they have been disbursed, principally, through the Barbados Mortgage Finance, through the Barbados National Bank, through the Public Workers' Credit Union Fund and through a few other of the commercial companies. Now I believe that fund now has something like \$28 million, available now, in the revolving fund.

People have been honouring their commitments to that fund. What is lacking, even among some Members of this Honourable House, is that Members do not know to advise their constituents to access the funds which are available. Now I am going further, Sir, the Public Workers' Credit Union, for instance, got a loan of \$10 million from the National Insurance Fund. We have just made a further loan to them of \$5 million and I believe they got from the this fund another loan of \$3.5 million, all for housing. And to their credit, they used it, not in people who are

looking to build houses at the level of \$300 000 and that sort of thing, but people who are in the range from \$70 000 to about \$150 000. So they are catering for a very important part of the market and you are a member of the credit union, at the same time, and you have certain protection there. Now these are funds that are being made available, Sir.

So I am satisfied that the possibility of mortgage funds on reasonable terms can be available and are available. In addition, Sir, part of the Government's strategy for dealing with the problem of housing is this, that the Government, particularly in the period 1976 to 1986 and since then, has gone ahead at a great speed making sites and services available, all over the place. The Honourable Member wants to know where, Sir. I will take him up in Clapham and I will take him up in Simmons Land.

#### *Asides.*

Mr. H. deB. FORDE. I am taking him. He asked me where, Sir. The Honourable Member should listen. He must not only try to hackle. Listen and learn. I am here to teach you. You must open your mind. The Honourable Member must know that in these areas, and I have only cited two, Parish Land, for instance, that this Government has been providing, consistently, sites and services.

The Honourable Minister spoke this morning about the number of acquisitions that he has brought to this house and we have voted on them in here, including the Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central, in order to be able to put in more sites and services so as to make the houses with lots available to people.

In my own constituency, Sir, the Honourable Member is now a beneficiary of that constituency on the western side of Clapham. My advice to his constituents now is, build the house first, keep renting the land and when you have got your house and you have gone somewhere, we then buy the land from the National Housing Corporation. So they are not carrying the interest charges and they are not carrying the land tax for that period of time.

And if the Honourable Member, if he says that he visits up there twenty times, at least twenty times, I can tell him some of them who have not seen him for a long time, but they have converted and are converting their homes into wonderful houses, Sir. And I applaud the initiative of Barbadians in this respect.

I want to talk about the housing areas, Sir, because I also represent an area that has two of, probably, the best housing areas. I am talking about Bonnetts. Bonnetts is a tribute to Barbadian initiative and pride. Come and see our Festival of Lights, at Christmas, come and see how our

tenants have got together and by their cooperative enterprise are putting in cultural activities. We took the initiative, and the assistance from the National Housing Corporation, we painted the units up there. This is a fact, Sir. We do not go and look at it as to whether somebody is BLP or DLP.

I use my position, as well, and contacts to help them in this respect and I want to make a plea to the Minister, Sir, to encourage the Tenants Associations, do not allow the Tenants Associations to become political interest groups. That is one of the things that we have avoided in Bonnetts. But I would encourage the Tenants Associations, because they are restoring community life to our society, and one of the things about Bonnetts, that you would notice too, Sir, is that Bonnetts has people of all socio-economic groupings, from the middle right down. You find the postman, a policeman, somebody working at the port, labour right down the line and they are able to work together constructively.

Finally, Sir, because I believe my time is running out, let me speak, Sir, about the problem of the suburban tenantry, Sir. I have tremendous concern that the area of St. Michael and Christ Church, the two most densely populated areas, and parts of St. James, there are a large number of tenancies, small tenancies, those were the ones that we were not able to deal with under the Freehold Tenancy Purchase Act, but we established a framework to permit the Government to go and to improve the roads, the sidewalks, the lighting, the drainage as well.

There has been a certain slow down in the way in dealing with the problems in those tenancies. I have them right here in the heart of Dayrells Road, Ashby Land is one. I have managed to solve the problem at Rockley. I have it in Worthing View, right next to Rockley Hotel, Sir. I have it a bit further, Sir, up in Bonnetts, in the Rollins Road area and I can go on. I have it in Fordes Road, in Bradshaw Land.

What we need now from the Ministry, and the assistance of the Government, is (1) surveying services, (2) the determination to move people in order to put in the roads that are needed and relocate and (3) we need a sort of conveying system to deal, quickly, with the conveyancing problems which are occurring.  
2.55 p.m.

I believe, Sir, against that framework, that the Barbadian who has always wanted his children to be well educated, his family to be well housed and well fed, will find himself back with the pride and the community feeling for which this country has been known.

I was born in a little street called Water Street in similar conditions, in chattel housing, and many of us

in here will probably forget that because that is our origin but it has not stopped any of us from moving onwards and upwards, Sir, and I believe that this Government with its policies, with its foresight, with its determination, will keep pushing this country onwards and upwards in its economic and social developing including housing. Thank you, Sir.

His Honour R. D. MARSHALL: Mr. Chairman, I rise to support the vote on this Head before this House. Mr. Chairman, the Barbados Labour Party has a distinguished record where housing for Barbadian people is concerned. I heard the Member for St. Lucy mentioning that in his estimation a Manifesto is not a social contract.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Mr. Chairman, no where did I mention that, Sir.

His Honour R. D. MARSHALL: Mr. Chairman, not only him, but the other Members on that side they have the notion that it is not a social contract but we on this side, we always say that our Manifesto is a social contract between the people of Barbados and we on this side. I was part of a team in 1994 that went around the St. Michael area and we made a plan and we saw what was happening in St. Michael where housing was concerned. Since we were given that mandate we are sticking to our contract with the people of Barbados.

I am grateful to the Minister responsible for housing for looking out, not only for people in St. Michael but for Barbadians and offering adequate housing. Housing is one of the basic needs of all Barbadian people. St. Michael is a very densely populated area and there are mainly chattel houses. Many of these chattel houses are rented by the people who live in them. Many of them are not insured. There is also a lot of overcrowding in these houses and to alleviate this problem we have to make sure that we give the people adequate housing in order to improve their standard of living.

In St. Michael the tenantry areas do not fall under the ambit of the Tenancies Freehold Purchase Act of 10 cents per square foot. Sometimes there are tenancies where for every 10 spots you could have about 5 owners and sometimes when the people who rent the land and own these houses approach the owners of the land to put down the facility of having a water toilet added to the house they are not given the opportunity, by some landlords, to acquire these facilities. Some of these tenancies do not have adequate roads and sometimes you can see some of the pipes running on the surface. In these areas we do not have any proper water mains. Sometimes people apply to have electricity in the house but then it cannot be done because of a problem with poles.

I am happy to see that the Minister has embarked on a programme of offering the people proper sites and services. One can look around and see where throughout Barbados these sites and services are being offered to the people. In St. Michael it is also being done and I am glad to see that in my area we will soon be having some 5 acres of land being made available to the people so that they too can benefit from this project offered by the Barbados Labour Party.

The National Housing Corporation offers Barbadian people, who are working for under \$20 000 a year, a facility where they can approach the Corporation and they can borrow money in order to have their own homes. I would also like to say, Sir, that Barbadians do not realise that when they are going to put up a chattel house that they have to get the permission of the Town and Country Planning Department. I would like to draw to their attention that before they embark on any kind of structure that they make application to the Town and Country Planning Department to get permission to do so.

I would also like to mention, Sir, the amount of house fires that we have in Barbados. There are many uninsured timber houses and I remember some time ago it was under the late Rt. Hon. "Tom" Adams, through the Insurance Corporation of Barbados, that a plan was offered where chattel houses could be insured at a very reasonable price. I am hoping that we, on this side, would be able to offer something to these people again.

Mr. Chairman, one would remember that not too long ago, I think it was last year August, during the rainy season we had some serious problems in Barbados with flooding. 3.05 p.m.

One could remember the Weston area where many houses were washed away and the loss of one life. Now before the rainy season comes we know for sure right now that the Minister responsible has put in place a drainage unit which is employing some 90 persons to take care of cleaning the gullies and wells and digging new wells in Barbados and we must compliment him on that. I would hope that before the rainy season gets in fully that this Drainage Unit will be in full gear to make sure that what happened last year will not happen again. As I said, Mr. Chairman, I compliment the Minister and his Ministry for the work that they have been doing and the opportunity that they are giving to poor Barbadian people to own their own homes and their own piece of land. I thank you.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Mr. Chairman, I want to ask the Minister a few questions about the Estimates. Earlier under a different Head, I started to discuss the whole question of drainage and you will recall, Mr. Chairman, it was suggested that I wait until we get to this Head. Now I think the time is right now for me to ask the Minister to give

a definitive answer or statement concerning the drainage of the area surrounding Goodland. It includes both St. Michael North West and St. Michael West and St. Michael West Central. It is some considerable time now since decisions were made, as I understand it, in the Ministry responsible for Public Works to locate a series of new wells in the Goodland area and indeed in the area one of the wells was supposed to go somewhere in Waterloo which would eliminate much of the considerable flooding which occurs in that area when we have a heavy down-pour. The canalization that runs from St. Michael West Central and comes through Bridge Gap and goes down to the sea at Lands End I believe has started to be done. I believe that just after Black Rock Road and into St. Michael North West, that is behind the church by the side of the road before you reach that point, as the canal comes out of Estwick Pasture and moves behind the Eagle Hall Infants' School, they have started to fix the canal and I am not certain that it has been completed.

I have written to one of his officials under separate cover, but I would like the Minister to indicate whether he will give consideration finally to covering that open canal that runs into Bridge Gap from the top of Black Rock Road to Goodland. It is dangerous especially since lighting in the area is not at the best, but more particularly the drainage. It has been a source of concern. The Ministry very efficiently dealt with the massive flooding that used to occur in the Bank Hall area and I would like to go on record on behalf of the constituents and this has stretched over a long period of time, but the Ministry had made the commitment during the time when we had the Government that they would look after the canalization and they have done a magnificent job. The design of the canal that comes through the Garden Land and empties into the Constitution River bed has been successful. I think there are one or two hitches of design, but compared with what used to be I think it is a job for which the public officers can take due credit. But that was part of an overall programme to relieve those low line areas and the Estimates make reference to provision for drainage in the low line areas and I am therefore raising the issue to get the Minister's word on it.

Regarding that whole area coming from the Garden Land and sweeping towards the west comes through Taylor's Gap which takes in all of the area of Waterloo and it picks up part of Goodland, there is massive flooding when there is a flash flood. The people who live in Brewster Road have been suffering constantly from a continuing pool of water which remains after the flooding and especially the people who live in Third Avenue, Upper Goodland have had this problem. The St. Leonard's School has also had this problem. I do not expect and none of us expect that these things will be fixed in any one year, but I would like to know what progress is being made and if it is intended to include the continuation of that work during this year's programme. Because it is very important in terms of the health of the people who live in Crawford

Bottom, which is in the Honourable Member's constituency of St. Michael North West. Crawford Bottom is just at the back of the Catholic Church on Black Rock Road. Those people have had a fairly difficult time with the swampy condition and I believe in fact it was a special project of the Environmental Division of the Ministry of Health operating out of the Black Rock Polyclinic to see if they could get that whole area cleared up. The two Ministries were working together and my understanding was that the sinking of new wells had been identified by the Ministry as one part of the solution to that problem.

I would like the Minister to allude to that and give us some idea what is going to be happening because constituents from the 3 constituencies are concerned about the problem. I am not raising this as a criticism. As I said, it is part of...

#### *Aside.*

Mr. B. M. TAITT: That is a definite criticism. There is no question about that. That is a response to the political insult which you make and I was merely showing that we too have information that we can raise of a political nature. I was merely firing a shot across the bow, but this is serious business to do with my constituency of a different meaning.

Sir, I am giving the Minister an opportunity to shine. I want him to tell me exactly what is happening. The other thing I want to raise is this. I noticed that the renovation work at Parliament Buildings is caught at page 209 under the Sub-programme Statement. My understanding was that a sum of money identified by the Management Commission for the renovation of Parliament Buildings would have been voted under Parliament. I would like the Minister to indicate whether in fact this Section on page 209 includes monies for the work to be done to Parliament on the West Wing or if this is a mere statement of repetition from the previous years Estimates. We have not yet discussed Parliament and I have not seen any money nor have I seen in the amendment any indication of that money.

On the question of street lighting in all parishes, the Deep Water Harbour and the Wharf, page 211, I regret that I have to raise this question on the Floor of the House. But there are a couple of areas in St. Michael West that are known locations for criminal activity.  
3.15 p.m.

When the Honourable Member for St. Michael East was Minister, I made representations to him a number of times and on one occasion he got me on the telephone with the lady who it was alleged was responsible for seeing that these things were done and we had a 3-way conversation. That, as you will know, Sir, is nearly 2 years ago. I

have given the number of the pole and my Constituency Assistant has given the number of the pole to about 6 people at the Barbados Light and Power Company and about 11 people in the Ministry responsible for street lighting. I would like to know from the Minister if I have to bring the number of the pole to him personally in order to get a single street light in 1st Avenue Peterkin.

I would like the Minister to drive through there after **the** sun goes down and tell me if there is any citizen in Barbados who should have to go without a street light in that place. The people who just moved into an area in St. Thomas – this would have to be an upper middle class area – I know of my own knowledge that they were able to call the representative for St. Thomas and within the shortest possible time, lights like peas.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: That represents the difference between power and powerlessness.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: I admit that. Sir, when we call the Honourable Member the *de facto* power behind the throne he gets upset. The Honourable Member has now put it in the records that he has real power. I do not deny that. I am pleading from a position of powerlessness I am **asking** the Minister to help me and any other Honourable Members who might have this problem. After I have been **asking** for a light in Peterkin for 3 years I feel that...

*Aside.*

Mr. B. M. TAITT: The Barbados Labour Party had me without any amenities for 12 years but I understood that. When I was in St. Michael South West, I understood from the old Greek tragedies and the Greek plays that to the victor belongs the spoils. I don't have a problem with that. When Tom Adams was Prime Minister he used to stand up from his position and tell me bluntly to expect nothing so ye should not be disappointed. So I had no problem. Soon thereafter when the people had had enough and we became the Government we started to get a little something but I **am** not what they call a "cravacious" person when it comes to representation. I just want that the poor people who live in some of these areas to have a light. I am willing to pay for it, if it comes to that. But put it in.

I have called and begged them. I have written and entreated them. I have cursed. Of course, as a Christian I cannot curse very well. The constituents know because I have even **taken** one of the constituents in hand and had her call to explain. There is another one not far down in Peterkin Gardens.

Let me put it this way. I have asked for roads, but I know in the nature of things that I have to take my place

but if the Honourable Member gives me the 2 lights in Peterkin I will not bother him until the next Estimates. Just 2 lights. You know, a light on a pole that shines at night where people pass. That is all. No more, no less. You don't have to do another thing. Just put in the lights. One is in the 1st Avenue. In case the person who comes cannot read, when you come from Bank Hall going down Peterkin, the first gap on the left. As you go up in the corner the pole number is on record – by Hank's old shop. My friend knows where.

All I am **asking** is to put a light. Do you know what happens, Mr. Chairman – I don't know if it happens to you – but when you call the Ministry of Transport and Works they tell you it is no problem. When you call the Barbados Light and Power they say, "You know, we cannot make a move until we hear from the Ministry of Transport and Works."

*Aside.*

Mr. B. M. TAITT: All I **am asking** is that these citizens... If it wasn't a case where one or two people who don't live in the neighbourhood, come from outside wherever they come from and when the citizens are on their way to church and market they rob them. That is my concern. One person who was attacked by that dark corner – it is a *kind of* U-turn where the 1st Avenue goes into the 2nd Avenue – was physically harmed. So I figured that during the Estimates I had a duty and responsibility to draw it to your attention and I give you my solemn word I will not raise it on the floor of the House again. If they don't put in the light I am going to get a delegation and you can tell me if you want me to camp on your doorstep or Mr. McConney's doorstep. That is the next position for me because when it comes to representation I have a clear-cut idea of what I am to do. Mr. McConney will either give me the light or the Minister will give me the light but somebody has to put a light in 1st Avenue and somebody has to **put** one in Peterkin Gardens. I can assure them: I am not overburdened and I have a lot of time so if they wish me to show them exactly where I will be happy to do that.

Mr. Chairman, there is just one other thing. I would like if the Minister speaks before I come back for him to address the Transport Board in terms of the state of affairs at the Transport Board. I can speak about the Transport Board as one who has made a substantial contribution to their revenue over the years. This year will be our annual excursion. It is in its 25th year. I have paid over \$100 000 to the Transport Board over the years. Check the records. I really would like to know what the position is with the Board. I am not criticising the Board. I wish to know because the question of how much money the Board would need as a subsidy was one with which the Government was concerned for a substantial amount of time. I wish to know what is the position. The

international agencies had been leaning on the Transport Board because they have their own agenda and they do not always understand the attitudes of governments like ours. I would like to know what is the real level of the subsidy, whether the accounts are up-to-date, whether a number of the questions that were raised in the past had been answered or can now be answered. The Minister may even be a little political if he wishes. I don't mind. I just want to know what the facts are and I will speak to that when I come back unless the Minister has dealt with it already. I am grateful to you, Sir.

Hon. Sir HAROLD St. JOHN: Mr. Chairman, I just want to intervene in this debate for 3 principal purposes. The first one is to put the record right. I am sorry the Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central is not here. The facts are in relation to the **Oxnards**, Cave Hill area, that the late Sir Ronald Mapp as Minister of Housing and Public Works in this country was the Minister at a relevant time when the decision was taken to have in Barbados a greater Bridgetown plan and somewhere between 1958 and 1961 when the Labour Party was no longer in office a series of land acquisition notices were published in Barbados for the purpose of acquiring that land and the acquisition started with the property of the late Douglas Haynes.

3.25 p.m.

Then one has Mrs. Birch and later a Mr. Moms' land on top the hill which was acquired by it as part and parcel of a master plan known as "The Greater Bridgetown Plan." Buttressing the land acquisition notices was the introduction of the Town and Country Planning Laws of Barbados. If you look at the Town and Country Planning Interim Control Orders, you will see specifically that an Order was made to encompass this area. After the Barbados Labour Party demitted office, the Democratic Labour Party came in and an Urban Development Corporation was created.

*Aside.*

Hon. Sir HAROLD St. JOHN: I am telling you the history. I cannot depend on you to give the real facts.

The Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central was a member of the Urban Development Corporation. The Urban Development Corporation was headed by the late Senator Carew. Some of the first houses that were built on that land which was acquired by the Barbados Labour Party were built in the area on top of what is now Paradise Heights. That is a fact. The first houses cost around \$22 000 so that is the history of that area.

It is one of the things as a politician you must accept that the greatest schemes you have for people, if the people

do not want you they will throw you out and that is what happened in that area. The Labour Party created that wonderful concept of the Greater Bridgetown **area**, did all the **infrastructural** work and then the Urban Development Corporation. Sir, once it was fully developed the Urban Development Corporation was then disbanded. I remember that very well.

Sir, what I want to say now is that it is time for us, in my opinion, in Barbados to have another look at our concept of the provision of housing for lower income people in Barbados. Now, I am acutely aware of the needs in this **area**. I am convinced that Government will continue to have a major role to play, and particularly the leading role to play, if one is to ensure that housing will be delivered to young people and also to people whose income is such that they cannot afford to purchase houses for a considerable period of their time.

What we have to do, Sir, is to refashion this programme to ensure that, given the scarcity of land in Barbados – I heard the Honourable Member for Christ Church West mention it – there is an acute shortage of land in Christ Church on the coastal areas, in St. Michael at the first level of our landscape down into St. James, as a matter of fact, running right down to St. Peter and the Half Moon Fort area in St. Lucy. We have to educate the public of Barbados living in those areas that they must have housing of a minimum of three storeys. We just have to do it because there is no land available, and particularly if you must have a certain level of amenities attached to any major housing area you just have to go up and have a greater density in relation to your land **area**.

I am all in favour of carrying out that educational process. I have repeatedly told the people who live around Oistins, the people who live in **Pegwell**, the people who live in **Maxwell** and in those areas not to come to me and ask me about any house spots. I am not encouraging anybody to subdivide any land up there for house spots because I cannot satisfy the demands they have within that area. You have houses track-a-block so that when a fire occurs there is a lot of devastation and things of that kind. We must have a policy and I hope the Government is bold enough to **start** discussing and educating the public in those areas with respect to the need and the reasons therefor.

Now, Sir, it is not impossible or inconsistent with any other policy the Government should have and that is to encourage people to buy their own units, to have three storey housing. Many countries in the world have cooperative housing units. They have Condominium laws. We have a Condominium Law on our books which is adaptable both for the townhouse concept and the strata type concept where you can have horizontal and vertical unit subdivisions, so again we have to carry through an education process.

I well recall that when Mr. Lionel Craig was Minister of Housing we had tried to subdivide land with some of the terraced units, particularly some of the newer ones like Fernihurst and the ones in Gall Hill in particular. It was found that it was difficult to draw a plan because there was no centre wall subdividing them and it could have been done if you used a leasehold tenure like is done in England if you use a long lease and with a company that owns the whole thing but that is a little too complicated for us.

I believe the decision was taken at that time that in future if we are building terraced units that we would build them with the walls separating them so that it would be an easier subdivision because the surveying advice we got at the time was that they would be able to demark the unit with a reasonable degree of **accuracy**. I would like to see that continued because I know there are many people who have been living in those areas in Gall Hill who like the terraced units. They like the security of having people living next to them particularly as they are getting older, and they would like to buy the unit. Again, it is not necessary to have a single unit in order to pursue the policy of encouraging people to purchase their own unit.

Now, Sir, the third area is the area of finance. I am exceedingly glad to see that the Government has been able to pick back up where we left off in this important area of encouraging financial institutions to lend money in smaller lots than they wanted normally to lend so that people could indulge in provision of their own housing. I remember when the Housing Credit Fund was created and I remember the fight we had at that time both with the United States Agency for International Development and with the local financial institutions. The Prime Minister was a consultant to that scheme. I believe it was he and another public servant at that time. We had tremendous fights to convince them.

*Aside.*

Hon. Sir HAROLD St. JOHN: There was no confusion. It is Washington that may have been confused but I am certain that we were not confused. We always knew what we wanted. In the end a project was fashioned out which was satisfactory to us and Government took the decision, and this is very important, that the Treasury would be responsible for the repayments because all of the **reflows** that were coming back in, both the capital element and the interest element, would stay into the fund and it would be a revolving fund so that we would have a permanent amount of money there that could be lent out.

*Aside.*

Hon. Sir HAROLD St. JOHN: It is \$25 million at the present moment.

Sir, that is a very important point. Obviously the category of income that made one eligible at that particular period of time would have to be increased if the same range of people would be able to benefit.

3.35 p.m.

In those days I believe it was \$12 000 a year. It is now \$25 000. We were saying a flow of funds would be available to this institution and the commercial banks were to be the principal lenders of that money, but they would have a secondary source to recoup themselves, their own money that they lent them.

I remember we had to have a meeting at the **Hilton** Hotel to explain it to the bankers. I remember that meeting very clearly and I remember that there was a certain banker, who got **up** and said that she wanted to make it clear that their bank had enough funds and they did not need Government funds, and we went through it. But, I tell you this, I know that within the first three months of operations that very bank was the greatest, reclamer of money for money lent out.

So it had an important contribution to make because people were not lending bankers and financial institutions, other than the Barbados Mortgage Finance Company and the Housing Authority, Sir, money to people in that income group. They were not lending it.

I am very happy to see that the record of that fund can be there and it could have a demonstration effect to bankers and others that people in that income group can repay. I have always remembered when the greatest amount of mortgages that was lent out in **Barbados** was lent out by solicitors. And if there was one thing the older solicitors would tell you is that it was better to lend money to lower income group people than to lend money to middle class people. They used to say that.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member has one minute to finish.

Hon. Sir HAROLD St. JOHN: So, Sir, I know that the Barbados Labour Party's contribution, in that respect will be continued.

The last point I want to make, Sir, is on drainage and street lights. I want to say, Sir, that those are very important areas. Every Member of Parliament, in here, will have constituents who will have problems in relation to drainage and street lights, and I would like to see a system set up where, annually, everybody gets a touch up.

We have enough street lights in Barbados, now, that there are only isolated areas where we are able to do it. We have, Sir, to understand, Sir, that if this matter is not satisfactorily settled that the pressure is going to be

so great that a Parliamentary Committee will have to be appointed in here to deal with this on a continuous basis. That is a fact, Sir. I want all the functionaries to understand that this is an area that people feel very strongly on. There is nothing that gives more pressure, to Members of Parliament, than their constituents harassing them and telling them that they want an area drained. I want to commend the Government on the creation of a new drainage unit. I am looking forward to all of my low lying areas being dealt with, before June every year with all the wells cleaned up.

I remember when there was an officer called Mr. De Caries, in the Ministry of Transport and Works, who used to be in charge of drainage, and every year you could write and say "The rains are coming in, I want this well or that well..." As a result of that programme, all the wells in Barbados were numbered. I am not sure whether it is so now but I know that there used to be numbers of all the wells.

I commend the Government for recreating that unit, Sir. I hope that next year I will be able to commend them, further, as a **result** of the work they have done in the ensuing year.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: Mr. Chairman, I am very glad that the Honourable Member for Christ Church South has **clarified** two very important matters. I did tell the House that he had more information about the development of that northern area of St. Michael than anybody else. I was a little sorry that he did not give the House all the information, but he has a fund of information that is only available to him and nobody else in this Honourable House. I will not go into those details. I am quite sure that he is better informed on that matter than anybody else.

On the area of financing. I am very glad that the Honourable Member recognised that an important source of revolving financing for lower income housing is the sale of existing units. And basically, you can look at two categories of present occupants of Government housing. There are those who are still in a position where they cannot buy and they will continue to rent. But there is a large number, probably more than **50%**, if they are given adequate access to financing, who will be able to buy their properties. I have advocated a long time ago and it was part of our Manifesto in 1991, that as an integral part of housing policy, to create that large revolving fund, after repairing those houses.

#### *Asides.*

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: Mr. Chairman, the Honourable Member for St. **Andrew** seems to be quite capable of giving more trouble than I thought. I have to watch him very carefully.

Anyhow I am getting back to the point. Those tenants who can afford to buy the existing space, which they occupy, should be given an opportunity to buy it. And therefore I think that where there is a need for repair that appropriate repairs should be done. I believe that some consideration can be given to the rent paid over the years, and to some extent capitalise that, so that you can get that transfer of title. That does two things. That creates a significant fund of money, and you **talking** about a lot of money when you take **all** the Government estates around the country, if only 50% are sold, and that same money can be used for further development of housing for lower income people. In other words, Government has a substantial asset.

#### *Aside.*

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: On a point of order. Mr. Chairman, I am going to have to send him by registered post, this time, copies of the **NDP** Manifesto. I do not know whether he would read them though. You think it is worthwhile spending the money?

Anyhow Sir, the point is, Sir, that Government already has a significant investment, a significant asset in terms of **all** those units. The point is to be able to use those assets along with new inputs of financing to finance further development. Now, it is not easy.

Since we have on the books a Condominium Act, then more and more of those units, not only the separate ones, but even the ones that are joined together can be sold and there is a legal framework, in Barbados, where you can transfer title and, I believe, that in conjunction with the 100% mortgage, that we **talked** about, and in this case you would not even need that if you were going to convert some of the rents paid into equity in terms of the purchases of the houses. I think, Sir, that would also relieve another burden, the burden of repair and maintenance as a landlord, by the Government, of those same units because that cost now will have to be borne by the persons who own the units.

So, what you have done you have made use of an existing asset, that amounts to probably hundreds of millions of dollars, and if only you could mobilise a part of that asset, \$100 million of that, through sales over time, and when that money can roll over you might find that you will have a self-financing situation that can grow, very substantially, to meet the cost of lower income housing. But it requires some creativity, it requires some imagination. I am not so sure whether the Minister would be able to bring those qualities to bear on that kind of development.

The second point I want to **talk** about, Sir, is the question of the provision of houses, to make houses

readily available to fire victims. This is a matter that is raised in this House, again and again.

*Asides.*

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: I had a problem on Sunday. I had a problem about four Sundays ago. Exactly what I told you, Sir. I have to watch this gentleman very carefully.

And in both instances, houses were not readily available. But I must congratulate the Welfare Department. In both instances, I must say this, Sir, within 24 hours, those persons were able to get vouchers and so on to go to get clothing along with their relatives to get some kind of house shelter.

Hon. G. W. PAYNE: On a point order. It is generally known that we do not have enough houses to satisfy the housing needs of everybody and the National Housing Corporation appreciates that.  
**3.45 p.m.**

In the current financial year what we will be doing is fairly novel to Barbados in terms of policy in the past. We will be establishing a few hostels. Two of them have been identified, the former St. Thomas Primary School and Lancaster House just above the old school meals department. What we will be doing, is that in situations where we do not have a house available we will be putting these fire victims in hostels. I guess hostel may not be the correct word. Maybe the Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central who is more versed in the English Language and the Honourable Member for St. Michael West would probably help me with a better word, but we will be putting them in these units during that period. It is not always possible to get a unit and this project would go a long way towards alleviating some of the problems that you **are** referring to.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: I sincerely hope that this will be put in place as soon as possible. On the question of high rise developments, that **depends** very much on the infrastructure in terms of utilities and so on in place. When the Barbados Labour Party speaks about high rise development, and I am sorry the Honourable Member for the City is not in her place. I recall only too vividly in **1975** that that was an important plank of the Housing Development for the City of Bridgetown. I recall going to a public meeting in Lightfoot Lane and I recall the Honourable Member for the City, the Honourable Member for Christ Church West, the then Honourable Member for St. Thomas, one after another they spoke and they said that they were going to put high rise buildings in Bridgetown

for the poor people, that they would all have elevators, that they would have door men standing by the elevators in their livery so that when they come home from shopping they would not have to carry their groceries upstairs they would be taken upstairs by the door man.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Mr. Chairman, after **26** years or **27** years in law I learnt very well when a witness says he recalls or cannot recall, watch out a big one coming. The Honourable Member has taken the opportunity when Tom Adams is dead, the Honourable Member for the City is out of here and the Honourable Member for Christ Church West is not in his place to make all kinds of outlandish allegations. I was very close to that campaign in **1976** and I can assert, as a fact, that the allegations just made, Sir, are totally untrue.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Mr. Chairman, Sir, the Honourable Member and I campaigned together. I wish to corroborate the statement by the Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central. I listened to the tape. I heard the voice of the Honourable Member for the City. They **talked** about high rise and we made it a point of discussion for the rest of the campaign. The late Tom Adams, the Honourable Member for Christ Church West, yes, the Honourable Member for the City told them.... As a matter of fact they were to have a swimming pool at Kensington Lodge. They were going to have dryers and a Laundromat, the works. That was the former Minister and Leader of the House, Lionel **Craigg**. We do not forget but the Leader of the House has been telling those kinds of promises to the people of the City for years. I am **sorry** she is not here. She would have told you that it is **true**, but what.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: Mr. Chairman, I am very fair when I speak on these matters and I told the Honourable Member for the City that I was going to speak about it and I told her several times today so I am not doing anything behind her back. It is my clear recollection. I was at that meeting and I remember how everybody pranced up about this wonderful urban development that was going to take place. None has taken place. I have seen none around **so** we will wait and see what this new urban development plan will bring about.

The other area, Sir, I want to talk about is **this** question of drainage. Now I am very sorry that the Honourable Minister of Agriculture is not in his place because I distinctly remember yesterday, during debate, that he indicated to the Honourable Member for St. Michael West that virtually **drainage** is not an agricultural problem. If you look at Barbados and you look at the ancient drainage maps of Barbados you would discover that the primary problem with drainage in Barbados today relates to **agriculture**.

Hon. R. C. EASTMOND: On a point of elucidation. I think the Honourable Member is misinterpreting what the Honourable Minister said when he said that the question of drainage is not an agricultural problem. What the Honourable Member actually meant to say was that it is not a problem for the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development. It is because problems relating to drainage are problems for the Ministry of Public Works and they are included in these Estimates but I would not want to take up the Member's time to discuss that matter right now.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: Well you have taken up 5 minutes of it already so that is all right. If you want a little more you can have a little more too. It is not a problem once it is added on at the end. The point I am trying to make is this. With the removal of so much land from cane cultivation and with the lack of finance available to plantations to maintain their fields in the state in which they were maintained before and with the change of cultivation of cane land from cane holes to the present method of cultivation that that has resulted in vast amounts of water running off those fields on to the roads and more roads have been paved now and therefore the water travels at a greater velocity into the low lying areas. So that it is significantly an agricultural problem. I think if we are going to deal with the problem of drainage of the island certainly all of the wells in the low lying areas where people live will have to be cleaned. It is important to clean the existing wells in the higher areas, to clean the wells that relate to the cane fields and to get the plantations...

Hon. G. W. PAYNE: I would like the Honourable Member to give way. As I said I might not have the opportunity to respond to this but I think it is a misconception on the part of many people, no less the Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central, that the Ministry of Public Works has the power to go into people's lands and clean wells. The Ministry of Public Works and the Attorney General have been sued for going on private lands **trying** to clear water courses and wells. One of the objectives for the purposes of the drainage unit is to have certain amendments to the existing legislation so that the Chief Technical Officer within the Ministry of Public Works should actually go on private lands and do the type of clearing that the Honourable Member is speaking about. 3.55 p.m.

So that the Chief Technical Officer within the Ministry of Public Works could actually go on private land and do the type of clearing that the Honourable Member is speaking about. As the law presently stands, there is no power on the part of the Division of Public Works to actually go and clean wells in the manner in which he refers.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: Mr. Chairman, that is exactly the point I am making and that is why I think it is so important

for the Minister of Agriculture to understand that he has a very significant role to play in dealing with the fundamental problems of drainage. In the first instance, you are dealing with Government owned estates and that covers a significant **area** of the land mass of Barbados. So you can intervene on Government lands with the permission of the landlord which is the Government.

In the other areas, Sir, those plantations as you know are being run by a company now which is largely financed by Government and a policy position can be put in place whereby you can get those wells on the plantations cleaned and that will take off a whole lot of the water. Another very important thing that needs to be done is the restoration of those hedgerows because the hedgerows with guinea grass and so on around them also serves as a kind holding point and slowing down the pace of any water that escapes from the wells and the cane holes.

Sir, I have done a lot of work on this. I have studied the contour maps of Barbados. I have gone to the Barbados Museum and this was on the occasion of the flooding in St. Peter. I have talked to a whole lot of hydrologists, so I know what I am talking about. I did it as a matter of interest and you will find the original contour maps of Barbados in the Museum. Now the interesting thing that I am saying is this that, if you do not focus on making sure that that very large escarpment up there which can capture so much of the water that falls is taken care of as best as we can, you are still going to have a considerable run off of water in the other lower areas where people tend to live. So it is important to approach this matter from a scientific point of view and make sure that you deal with the basic problems that are surfacing now in relation to drainage with the development of Barbados over the years. I am quite sure there are people in your Ministry and people in the Ministry of Agriculture who might have a better understanding of these problems than I have. But I can assure you that you have to go to those contour maps and you have to understand the hydrology of Barbados if you are going to deal effectively with the problem of drainage in the long term.

The third point I want to make is this that we keep hearing that there is a shortage of land in Barbados. We keep hearing that there are so many tenancies which require roads and utilities. We know that there are over 600 paved miles in Barbados. For the life of me I can never understand that, if you are going to go into St. Thomas, St. Philip or wherever and you are going to put in a road 2 miles long to reach a tenancy that has 12 houses, you are going to put in electricity, water and maybe gas as well. So you have a road 2 miles long to reach 12 houses!...

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

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: Do I have to wind up now?

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Your time has gone.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: I would strongly recommend that we revisit that type of development. There is nothing wrong in putting in the road and there is nothing wrong in putting in the utilities for the 12 houses, but make sure that we utilize every inch of that road in terms of further development and development of communities. I feel that when Government puts in that infrastructure then they should acquire the strips of land beside them and do not let the people in Town Planning Department confuse you that they do not want ribbon development in Barbados. The point is this. They may not want ribbon development but you are putting in hundreds of dollars of infrastructure and...

*Aside.*

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: Sir, I do not know what the Honourable Member is talking about. He is speaking for himself and that is a different matter. I am talking for the people. But I hope you get the point that Government already has infrastructure in these areas and I believe in St. Thomas in particular because St. Thomas is an area with a lot of small tenancies with a lot of long roads leading to them. An opportunity is there for thousands of house spots where Government has already put in the infrastructure. What are we waiting for, Mr. Chairman? Press on and do the job. All you have to do is to come to me for the ideas and you will be a very successful Minister.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Mr. Chairman, I kept very quiet in here and I do not like to reflect too much on my tenure elsewhere. I could not resist the temptation to congratulate the Honourable Minister of Public Works and Housing on what he has done in his 18 months. I am very heartened that the resurgence that there has been in housing and the thrust that is evident to create housing infrastructure for the people of Barbados and in that regard I join the Minister in congratulating the public officers in the Ministry of Housing particularly the Permanent Secretary and the Senior Housing Planner and the other senior officers. Because I have to certify so many documents from the Ministry of Housing that I am aware of the output of that Division and it is phenomenal. I think that it is appropriate to write some of these things into the record of Parliament because people will die and go along and have a function when they retire, a couple of drinks and pleasantries, and there is no permanent record of the contribution that people have made to the development of Barbados. I am not slow to give congratulations where they are desired nor am I slow to criticize where I think criticism is merited. In the interest of fairness and balance, let me also congratulate publicly, since I have done it privately, the Ministry of Public Works for the excellent

job that has been done in repairing the Immigration Department's roof...

*Aside.*

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Leave out the Courts. Do not force me into the Courts. The roof over the Library is leaking. They have done a wonderful job on the roof of the Immigration Department under Mr. Owen Archer and the interior of the Immigration Department, as indicated last week, is a joy to behold. It is very commodious and it offers the maximum comfort in a rather confined space both to the consumers of the Immigration services and to the providers of those services.

Mr. Chairman, I recall when I was the Chairman of the National Housing Corporation between 1976 and 1980 that there was a very significant effort made in public housing in Barbados. I sent for the Barbados Economic Report for 1977, 1978, 1979 and 1980 to substantiate the figures that I am going to put into the record because that was a period of very, very significant housing development. 4.05 p.m.

I am only speaking about the National Housing Corporation. In 1978 the National Housing Corporation built 287 units, 80 of which were for rent. The total housing (public and private) for 1978 was 600. In 1979 they built 214, of which 126 were for sale and 88 were for rent, and an additional 45 out of timber, giving a total of 259. The total housing contribution that year was 680. In 1980, Sir, where there was a total contribution to the housing stock of 1100, the National Housing Corporation's contribution was 280, consisting of 227 wall and 53 wood. The total for those three years - 1978, 1979 and 1980 - 781. There has never been a repeat of that. We had very dynamic ministerial direction at the time, too, Sir. Mr. Lionel Craig was the Minister for much of that period.

Sir, the emphasis has changed in the intervening years and Government's thrust now, as I understand it, is more towards the provision of sites and services, affording prospective home owners the opportunity to own their own homes rather than Government building terraced units for rent. Of course, included in that number were houses for sale; for example, the Oxnards extension at the time. I think that the majority of persons who are looking for shelter now welcome the opportunity to build their own homes *rather* than have rental situations, but although there will always be a body of persons who will never be able to own their own homes, and to the extent that Government is in the construction business, I think Government must take account of that need and make some provision, however they do it, for that limited number of persons who will not be able, or some who have just no interest in home ownership.

In that regard-then, I am pleased that after many, many years of neglect, Sir, certainly eight, the Government has decided that there are lands in St. Thomas which are worthy of development and that a significant effort is being made in the constituency, first at Cane Garden where there is a project involving **143** lots. In addition to that, about three Wednesdays ago we went to the site of the former District "D" Police Station at Rock Hall, which is in great dilapidation. The decision has been taken to push down that, clear the site and let National Housing Corporation go about the business of laying out lots which I hope will become available for those who want to rent lots with a view to putting homes on them and those who want to sell.

I think if you have **30** you can have a mix of **15** for rent and **15** for sale.

I know too that the Government intends acquiring land at Arch **Hall/Bennetts** in pursuance of its policy that where there are existing villages we should extend the existing villages by the provision of new housing stock in and around the existing villages. I look forward to even more people coming to St. Thomas and more development coming in due course. I am sure that the Minister today would have outlined a programme for sites and services development that will mean...

#### *Aside.*

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: St. Thomas is only one of the parishes which would get this kind of development, because I know that St. James and other parts of the island have been identified for sites and services development.

Mr. Chairman, let me turn briefly to MTW, with specific reference to drainage. I support a lot of what the Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central said about drainage. He has been in here long enough and we have had the same kind of debate on drainage intermittently over the last **15** to 20 years, but the fact is that the flood of August **3**, last year brought it home forcibly to us that an attack had to be made urgently on the drainage situation in Barbados and the need for reparation.

I have a gut feeling - it may be unscientific - but I feel deep down that one of the problems with water shortages over the years has been the fact that we have been losing a lot of the rain water to the sea because the wells have not been so clean to take the rain water and carry it down to the aquifers, and to that extent the Honourable Member I think is on good ground and I support him in saying that the strategy, having regard to the fact that we are now in March and the rainy season should start in June, we should start early in the hills, in the centre of the island, come into St. Thomas again and clean some wells. The water starts up there and runs down into Holetown, down into Constitution through all the gullies in

St. Thomas. I am not making light of this. I think we should aim therefore to go there with a view to catching as much water as we can early and preventing it from coming down into the low lying areas, because the low lying areas suffer because of the backup of water in the hills. I am sure that the Ministry is giving this active consideration and attention. The unit is in place. I expect that within the next two weeks or so the relevant legislation will be in here. I have certified the Bill already for the amendment to the Prevention of Floods Act, which will allow ~~the~~ the Ministry to have the right to go on private lands for the purpose of preventing floods, doing well cleaning and so on. There needed to be that amendment, and it has been done. The Highways Act has been amended concomitantly with the amendment to the Prevention of Floods Act. So as far as we are aware, the necessary required legislation to permit the Drainage Unit to operate on private property will shortly be in place.

**4.15 p.m.**

I don't think it requires any constitutional amendment because, in the scheme of things, I expect that before MTW goes on somebody's land they will approach them with a view to getting their consent and I cannot see any patriotic Barbadian refusing to let MTW come on the land and clean the wells at no cost to them.

#### *Asides.*

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: I would be glad if I had a well on my property. There is one next door to me between me and Charley Jones. They could come **and** clean that. I would give **permission** now because that floods sometimes.

I think that we are putting the necessary planning and structures in place with a view to the reduction of the worst effects of flooding. You cannot be perfect. There will still be flooding in Barbados from time to time. There are floods throughout the world. A couple years ago I turned on the television one morning and saw the whole of Sydney in trouble.

The Honourable Member for St. Lucy yesterday asked a question to which I feel I should give the answer. He wanted to know about compensation as a result of the flood last year. Honourable Members will be aware that a supplementary was approved for about **\$4.8** million last year and that supplementary has been expended this way:

Public works. For road construction and maintenance - **\$1.1** million

For drainage - **\$425 000**

National Housing Corporation - **\$2 270 000**

Land acquisition - **\$217 800**

Tenancies relocation - **\$100 000**

Chief Welfare Officer's Department, relief and rehab programme - **\$65 366**

National Assistance – provision of meals, beds and transport – **\$4 978**

Health and environment – remedial work at **Holetown** and **Weston** (the beaches) – **\$35 000**

Rehabilitation work at **Oistins** Fish Market – **\$45 000**

Six Men's Landing Bay – **\$30 000**

Reconstruction of facilities at Reeves Bay, **Weston** – **\$60 000**.

A number of private individuals in **Holetown** and including **Holetown** Methodist Church and **Woodbourne**. Seven persons were paid 60% of their losses.

For damage or loss of fishing boats there were **12** persons who were compensated and then we helped out Antigua, St. Kitts and Nevis in their troubles to the tune of **\$78 660**. We even paid Carib Express for a flight to Antigua and St. Kitts for various government officials and there are commitments of **\$64 777** to do the pumping centre at **Holetown** in St. James Fire Station and to CERO **\$75 755** making a total of **\$4 821 880**.

I overshot the mark, Sir. I am obliged to you.

Hon. G. W. PAYNE: Mr. Chairman, just to make a few brief responses to certain queries which were made by Honourable Members. I think that the question of the drainage has already been answered with specific response to the question by the Honourable Member for St. Michael West relating to the problems which are being experienced by the residents in Goodland. I would like to inform him **that** in addition to the fact that the remedial works fall under the Drainage Unit at the moment we are undertaking a storm water drainage study which would include these low lying areas like the one in **Goodland** and when that report is concluded we will be in a better position to know exactly what to do with the **Goodland** area.

With respect to the street lighting programme, I **think** the **Honourable** Member for St. James North, the Honourable Minister of Agriculture, had already indicated that a number of street lights were included in the rural development programme and quite obviously there will be others that will fall under the Ministry of Public Works and his will be one of those which will fall under the Ministry of Public Works and he can rest assured that notwithstanding the fact that he did not like many other people have much success with the Honourable Member for St. Michael East as long as the appropriate information is received by the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry for Public Works we will be able to deal with this problem.

I am somewhat puzzled at some of the comments which have been made by the Honourable Member for St. Michael North West when he says that we shouldn't be talking about what we have done in the past, that we

should be concentrating on what we are planning to do in the future. Yet we are here talking about what we are planning to do. I need not recite the various sites and services projects which we had planned for the next financial year except to say that with respect to his query that we should try to assist people with the loans the Honourable Member for St. George North did mention one of our interventions which was not included when I made my presentation with respect to the housing general workers loans regulations. The ceiling has been doubled from **\$20 000** to **\$40 000** and the salary has been increased as well.

I did not mention the ambitious project that we are planning in the Ministry which is close to the preliminary stage. The project which we have been referring to as the in-town project has not yet been presented to Cabinet and very shortly after the project has been finalised we will be doing so. You will recall that a number of years ago a previous Barbados Labour **Party** Administration had **resited** persons from an area referred to as "in-town" in St. James simply because those persons had requested that they be moved from that site there being no public facilities and there were no street lights, no telephones, no water and they had to walk long distances for water and in these modern days they were unable even to get the electricity facilities moved for them.

We moved those persons from that area and what has happened is that the land is to a certain extent land locked and it is perched in an area with a very good view and we feel that we should not leave the matter there. We feel that it is about time that we actually go back in and put in the relevant facilities, and in keeping with the nature of the area, that we should reserve this land for low income persons. It will be necessary for us to acquire land surrounding this particular location. We have already estimated that the total acreage would be about **126** acres. The middle-class, upper middle-class, or lower middle-class or whatever you call them, persons who live in the surrounding areas need not fear that the type of houses will in any way devalue their properties.

**4.25 p.m.**

In this ambitious project we are planning the same village type atmosphere you have in the immediate areas of Sion Hill, in the constituency of the Honourable Member for St. James North, **Weston**, Orange Hill and those surrounding areas. We **are** hoping we will be able to put up about 1 000 houses in that area to satisfy some of the needs that the Honourable Member for St. Michael North West was speaking about. It is anticipated that we will also be able to put in day care facilities, community facilities and a playing field. It will be an entire community. As I said, the houses will be designed compatible with the surrounding areas.

We were hoping we would be able to approach the IDB for assistance in this particular project but the project, even though we have not yet been able to put it in a form that would be acceptable to any lending institution, is at the moment attracting interest by some local investors who **are** willing to finance the project. If we are able to get funding from our local investors, it means that the IDB financing, seeing they are interested in doing something for housing, will go in another direction.

One of the members referred to the problems being faced in areas like the Belle. We reckon that there are about 900 houses in that area in need of certain toilet facilities. It may be necessary for us, notwithstanding the fact that they have been squatting in the area for some time, to regularize that situation. We need to put certain facilities in that area. We estimate that with 900 houses at a cost of about \$3 000 per house that project would probably cost us about \$2.7 million. We probably might be able to tact this onto some other programme and hope we would be able to seek international funding for that particular project.

I think with those few remarks, Mr. Chairman, I will allow someone else to speak.

Mr. D. CARTER: Mr. Chairman, I would first like to support the Minister of Transport in this Estimates debate. It is a breath of fresh air when I see in the Capital Works Programme that the Highway 6 road will be repaired, that road starting from Six Roads going to Rising Sun. About 9 to 12 months ago the Member for Christ Church East and myself had written the Minister asking for this road to be done, and, as I said, it is a breath of fresh air. One road that runs adjacent from Highway 6 from St. Patrick's passing by the St. Patrick's Primary School was just completed and I would like to thank the Minister for that, although that is in Christ Church East and, certainly, the road in Lead Vale is now under construction. So, as you can see the Minister is **working** feverishly to get things done in the Christ Church area.

I would like to draw attention to a road that runs from Highway 6 which goes through Edey Village, Cox Road and St. David's. This road is used extensively for traffic coming from Bridgetown and trying to beat the traffic on the Highway in order to get to the airport. People who use that road realize that it is very bumpy and uneven. As you know in these days where cars are costly, to use these roads continuously it is a burden on cars and I hope the Minister in his programme will remember that road.

I know the Minister recently has acquired a lot of land in the Christ Church area but I believe in the Lodge Road area going to Foundation School and certainly from Water Street to the Deighton Griffith School where there

is a lot of pedestrian traffic, I **think** the time has come now where the Minister should find it possible to have sidewalks for the children of this country. There **are** 2 000 children that use this road on evenings and mornings and I believe it would be a good thing to make sure that we preserve the little ones of this country because they will be the men and women of tomorrow.

Mr. Chairman, I know that the main topic is housing and, of course, we get our ears battered as **MPs** for houses and house spots. I had the embarrassment at 5 o'clock this morning getting such a call to get a house. I notice in the little hand-out that some 791 house spots would be made available to the respective areas in this country but Christ Church has only got an allocation of 27. Now, there **are** five constituencies in Christ Church where there **are** about 40 000 people and I would like to think that something should be done whereby Christ Church should be developed some more.

When one talks to a Christ Church person, **Hoyte's** Village, Shorey Village or Apes Hill mean nothing to **him** or her. I **am** not saying that you should not have house spots in that area but all I am saying is that as a Christ Church person I believe with 40 000 people on the list, I think it is only reasonable to assume that the people in Christ Church should have some more house spots because, as I said, it is a big problem with us up there. As you know, quite recently we have had to put up a fight to encourage the Minister to help because it is a **known** fact that the gentleman on the other side is coming for the Christ Church posse who presently sit in Parliament.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Mr. Chairman, on a point of order. I **am** unfamiliar with the Christ Church posse, whatever that is, but if perchance the Honourable Member is believing that he is getting no support from this side, we support him **100** per cent in his call against the Minister for discriminating against Christ Church.

Mr. D. CARTER: I **am** not in that at all. I am just asking for the people of Christ Church. As you know, I am fortunate enough to represent Christ Church East Central and I have two housing areas in my area. I refer to **Wotton** and Gall Hill. Quite recently, as I said, a lot of constituents were coming to me about letters they were receiving from the National Housing Corporation. I may say **upfront** that I believe the rents should be paid because I cannot get in here and try and fool people that they should not pay their dues, but we have a lot of people who are not **working**.

Certainly there are two cases that stand out in my mind. There is a lady who brought some documentation to me which showed that in 1991 she had owed the Corporation \$5 000 and she gradually paid off the **arrears**. Right now she owes \$2 000 but quite recently she still got a letter asking her to quit within the period of 14 days

or something like that. I believe that in a case like that if a lady tries so hard to bring down the debt I think that should be a special case and the process of time would show that somewhere down the road she would get her debt cleared.

But, on another occasion there is a special case where a lady died recently owing the Corporation some \$5 000 and the daughter which lived at the same house had to pay the brunt of that funeral undertaking which cost some \$7 000 and she **got** a similar letter. I believe the Corporation in circumstances like these would be good enough to make this a special case. As I said **upfront**, I believe the money should be paid and I would not encourage any constituent not to pay the money but I think there are times when you have to use commonsense and do the right things in this area.

Hon. G. W. PAYNE: Mr. Chairman, when I was out I did hear the Honourable Member for St. Michael West refer to the fact that we had neglected Christ Church, or words to that effect.  
4.35 p.m.

#### *Asides.*

Hon. G. W. PAYNE: The Honourable Member has given way. The record must not show that Christ Church was left out. Coverley Plantation, over 100 acres, I have to correct the record, Breedy's, Parish Land. We are presently **looking** at some lands at Briar Hall, another 30 lots. The total land area that we are **looking** at in Christ Church, and I know that the Chairman is also interested in this as well, well over 100 lots. So the Honourable Member for St. Michael West must not use the occasion of the absence of the Minister to mislead the House.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Mr. Chairman, on a point of order, Sir. I think that misuse of the House's time is something which a Minister, with the experience of the Honourable Member, would not normally do, Sir. After you were in here a week, you would know that the time in here is very serious time.

The Honourable Member, as your Honour will remember, the Honourable Member was making his speech and he quite, I thought, correctly said that Apes Hill, Sion Hill and those places do not mean anything to a person from Christ Church. He then went on to say that he knew that somebody was coming for the Christ Church posse. I got up to clarify that whereas I did not know who was the Christ Church posse, that just in case the Honourable Member thought we were not supporting him, that we support him fully against the discrimination which is being shown to the Christ Church area in relation to Apes Hill, Sion Hill and those places. That was all I did.

Hon. G. W. PAYNE: On a point of order. It is the use of the term "discrimination" that warranted my intervention, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Mr. Chairman, I am not going to **interrupt** the Honourable Member much longer. Discrimination, Sir, is a perfectly straightforward word. If you choose and if you use the *eiusdem generis* rule, once you said Apes Hill, Sion Hill you could have gone on and said the rest of the North. If a Government, appears, to be choosing the North as oppose to the South, you could say without, in anyway offending the Government, that looks like discrimination. If I were a representative from Christ Church, I would feel so, Sir.

Mr. D. CARTER: Mr. Chairman, I have faith in the Minister of Housing and Lands and I believe that although he has gone to the North first he would quickly come to the South, I **am** quite sure about that.

I would also like to draw to the attention of the Minister a problem we have in the area of Wotton and Kingsland, in relation to transport, where for the last three months a minibus which had use of that route was off the road. I **am** not trying to ask somebody to break the law, but I would like to know what steps could be taken whereby another minibus could use the route so that the people of Kingsland and Wotton can get to work and get home on evenings.

Lastly, in the Edey Village, Cox Road area, I will like an improvement in the bus service there, because I was told that route is an uneconomical route and I believe that people have got to get to work, **whether** it is a route that pays, or otherwise, and I will ask the Minister to please help in making sure that we have a bit of consistency in the transport in that area.

It is a fact that the Government has a social responsibility for all people in this country and I, as the representative for Christ Church East Central, would like to know that the people feel that way.

Mr. Chairman, I know that the land at Gall Hill, which housed Club **Randall**, was acquired by Government recently, and it has been idled for a while and I would urge the Minister that such a strategic position in Christ Church - it is actually the **center** of the five Christ Church constituencies, and I would hope that in the very near future something will be done about that spot where the people will have Club **Randall** once again.

I thank you.

Mr. L. R. TULL: Mr. Chairman, Sir, I am going to invite this House, Sir, to go with me and the Minister of Public Works, Transport and Housing to **Ellerton** in

St. George and let us hold a public meeting at Ellerton. I mean today, Sir. I mean right now. I am going to give the background against which I will speak for the next 15 minutes.

The Manifesto of the Barbados Labour Party in the last General Election reads in part as follows:

"Should the BLP be elected to form the new Government of Barbados, we will table this Manifesto in Parliament, as a working policy document."

That is early, Sir. That is the preamble. Then later in the Manifesto, Sir, it says:

"The rural communities of Barbados have been the bedrock of our stability and progress as a nation. But many districts in rural Barbados have not kept pace with modern development."

The Manifesto goes on to say that it will, among other things:

- develop sites and services programmes for existing rural communities,
- link rural villages by adequate street lighting and improve cross-country transportation,
- construct new tenantry roads and maintain existing ones,
- establish a Ministry of Rural Development to implement the rural modernisation programme."

It said, **significantly**, that:

"Our policies will ensure that there is always one Barbados."

Mr. Chairman, Sir, I speak today as a representative of a constituency and I am not getting into any larger discussion as to the general policy of the Ministry of Public Works, Transport and Housing at the national level.

Last year, sometime, a study was commissioned by the Government and done in rural Barbados to determine the condition of the roads in rural Barbados. The report was submitted to Government and it showed, inter alia, that the roads, in the constituency of St. George South, the one which I have been representing for a number of years, had the greatest number of unpaved and bad roads in any constituency in Barbados.

Now I read at the beginning that this will be a policy document and, therefore, I understand that my **Party**, would

treat it as such, a working policy document. I am therefore confident, unless my faith is misplaced, that since the Government now has, in its hands, a report that shows that the St. George South constituency has the worst roads in Barbados, and the largest number of them that the Government will put the resources to address that particular problem.

Now, I have seen a brief that has been given out. I was not here when the Minister, the Parliamentary Secretary spoke and all of that, but I do not see anything about St. George South in it and I know that is an oversight. It has to be an oversight. I do not see anything about St. George South in it and I know that cannot be deliberate because I have a bounding faith in the Honourable Member for St. **Andrew**. I have a lot of faith in him. I am not going to make any meretricious statements in here today, Sir.

I have been around a long time and I believe that the people of St. George South deserve some of what is going. I have written to the Chief Technical Director of MTW and I have given them a list of 22, almost impassable, roads in my constituency, this is about six or seven months ago, and asked that some start be done with those roads. I am going to read all those roads into the record, Sir.  
4.45 p.m.

I have had letters from a number of constituents, some that are written directly to me, others were written to the Prime Minister, some that were written to the Minister of Public Works, some that were written to the Chief Technical Officer in the Ministry of Public Works, all setting out in all different **kinds** of language the problems in that constituency. Perhaps I will first deal with the letter that I wrote to the Chief Technical Director and I told him that there were a number of roads that were in a disgusting state of repair and they **are** as follows: **Hannays** Valley, **Campion** Castle, Windsor Tenantry, Boarded Hall Tenantry, Frere Pilgrim Tenantry, Watts Village, South District, Dash Valley, **Monroe** Road, **Buttals**, Windsor Tenantry, Bye Mill, Drax Hall Jump, Drax Hall Low Tenantry, Drax Hall Hope, Todds Tenantry, Middleton, **Workmans** and Jordans Tenantry. I may have missed one or two. I have in my hand, Sir, letters from almost all of those districts which have been addressed to me. I have one for the Upper Workmans, Jericho, Jordans Tenantry. I have three letters, one in 1994, one in 1995 and one in 1996. I am not going to call the name of the person who writes on behalf of the district. If they want to know whom it is the reference is 3202018 Vol.1. Not only have these letters gone from the people of that area saying how bad things **are** and begging and appealing for assistance but they have not had any reply. I am asking the Minister to take note and make sure, since I am sure he does not know about it, because he is not that kind of man, that he would get a reply to

the people in the area and also tell them what he is going to do about it.

I have another letter here, Sir, that has 57 signatures from Drax Hall upper Tenantry of August 14, 1995 addressed to the Prime Minister and copied to me. The only thing they did not do in this letter is kneel down. They talk about the existing mud roads. It is not only the main roads, but the ones that lead to the houses. They say they do not have any water. They say they cannot wash the children, they cannot wash their clothes, they cannot brush their teeth and unless they do it **from** a cup. They cannot **do** anything. According to them we can't, we can't, we can't. We just can't. This has not been replied to. The conditions in that area are bad.

Windsor Tenantry, in my submission, Mr. Chairman, is the worst tenantry in relation to the state of roads in Barbados. I represent a constituency and it is scandalous that I have to park my car and walk off the main road right into the tenantry. I cannot drive in. I suffer the indignity of having a phone call early one morning about two months ago from some one from Windsor Tenantry who said to me that I should be ashamed of myself, I Louis Tull should be ashamed of myself that somebody was ill during the night **in** Windsor Tenantry and they had to take them out to the main road in a box cart. Now I have brought this to the attention of the Chief Technical Director, Ministry of Transport and Works until I am blue in the face and I am not blaming the Director, Sir, because he is not the Minister. The Ministry is familiar with the problem and they have agreed with me that it is one of the worst eyesores in Barbados for anyone to live in.

We have a situation, Sir, in Byde Mill where people **in** a certain part cannot drive home they have to leave their cars on the main road and walk some distance in because the road is just not passable for vehicles and we have this situation all through the constituency of St. George South.

Now, Sir, I represent that area for a long time. I have heard persons who are in the House, far more recently than I am, with good reason and with great passion carry on in the way they should about a road in their constituency. I have for a long time been answerable for these roads, Sir. I have heard it said to one Honourable Member on the other side that he has not done anything for his constituency in **25** years. That is a censure that was thrown at an Honourable Member in here today that he has not done anything for his constituency in **25** years. Well if that is Taitt, that is Taitt whoever he is. The point, Mr. Chairman, is that I am finding myself in a situation where that censure can be thrown at me with some justification and I am asking the Minister, who is a good man, and I am pleading with him to consider certain strategic alliances and do something about the state of the roads in the constituency of St. George South.

Sir, I am reading documents that were passed around today and I see that St. George North is living off the fat of the land. Everything is happening in St. George North. Whether you look at Constant, Lower Estate or Parish Land or Cottage, all of them, I see in this that things have begun to happen and will continue to happen in St. George North. I **am** concerned about St. George South.

Mr. Chairman, Sir, St. George South gave the Barbados Labour Party, this Government, the largest majority in the last General Elections. The South wants something in return. They want a little show of gratitude. These are early days yet. It is only a year and a half so I am not piling any coals of fire on the head of the Minister who is my friend. I **am** warning for the future, Sir, because all of us have to go back and **talk** to those people in the fullness of time, Sir. I want, Mr. Chairman, to make it absolutely clear that I shall be leaving no stone unturned to make sure that the time has come for the people of my constituency. All of these letters here, Sir, are filling up a lot of room in my filing cabinet. I have letters where I have signed a whole list of numbers for street lighting, pole numbers. I **am** walking around with a little book like a higgler, looking up phone numbers and writing them down. When it gets dark I go in my car and get my spotlight so I can see them and then I send in these numbers. Just before last Christmas I told the people in many areas of my constituency, do not worry, I **am** going to make up in here look pretty for Christmas.

4.55 p.m.

It is not the lights that are needed in the areas of my constituency submitted that I **am** submitting, but it has to do about making people feel good about a light, Sir. Every time they break out of Glendairy they head for St. George. I used to go jogging on mornings, Sir, in St. George and when the fellows were out and I spotted them one morning I had to duck. I am not being facetious, Sir. We need the street lights for security in the area, not to say that we have to dress up like St. Michael or Bridgetown but for security.

*Aside.*

Mr. L. R. TULL: I listened to the Honourable Member. He is telling me that Lower Estate is in St. Michael. I am making out a case for St. George. I am being interrupted to hear about Lower Estate which is in St. George. Anyhow, the point I am making is that there are areas in rural Barbados that are dark at night and long stretches and they present security problems. Old people cannot go to church at night because the place is too dark. One time they never used to **worry** about it because it was safe to walk in Barbados. It is not safe **anymore** and therefore I am making this plea in good faith for the people of the constituency. Sir, I will wind up now but I want to make one final pitch about water. I have areas in

my constituency that the people at the Barbados Water Authority would know from time to time that we cannot get water. They have been trying their best to dig a well I believe at Buttals, but we have areas where we cannot get water on a regular basis. They keep complaining to me and I pass on the information and I believe that the people at the Barbados Water Authority are doing their best to try to handle the problem. But I am asking again, Sir, that a concerted effort be made by the Ministry to lick that particular problem, particularly now in the crop season because a number of the canes are in pretty close proximity to villages where people live. This could cause a tragedy of some proportion if a cane fire breaks out in some areas of my constituency and there is no water at the time of the cane fires. I have seen that problem already and I know the kind of panic that it can cause. So I am going to close at this time by urging on the Minister not only to take my strictures in relation to the appalling state of the roads in the constituency of St. George South, but also to use his good offices to make sure that the resources are given to the Barbados Water Authority to see if they can do something about bringing an end to these chronic water difficulties that confront many areas of the constituency that I have the honour to represent.

Hon. G. W. PAYNE: Just before the break, Mr. Chairman, if I may respond very briefly to the comments which have been made by the Honourable Member for St. George South. I am somewhat surprised that he did choose to mention the particular areas of concern especially see that he was given the assurance by myself and the Honourable Minister for Agriculture that his concerns **would** be addressed during this financial year. With respect to the list of roads which he mentioned, three of the roads are included in the Rural Development Programme. He has in fact submitted a list of roads like most of the other parliamentarians including Members on the other side and it is the first time that any Minister has actually asked every single Member of Parliament to submit a list of the roads in their constituency that needed repair. But more importantly...

Mr. B. M. TAITT: On a point of order, Sir. The Honourable Member must not put in the record something that is not valid. There were Ministers before him such as Don Blackman. Mr. Chairman, he must not say that this is the first time. I know that there are a lot of people who believe that the sun came out for the first time the morning after the last election. That is a good feeling to have after the first couple of months. But you must not when you are speaking as the Minister say for the first time. Do you think that the officials who work for you never worked before? You think that they were all deaf, dumb and blind before you became Minister. They are the same officials. Even if we shuffle them around, they are the same officials. They have ideas and they put them to Ministers.

Sometimes they do not even bother with the Minister. So do not get up and say for the first time.

Hon. G. W. PAYNE: It is the **first** time that the records of the Ministry of Public Works will reflect that any Minister has invited the parliamentarians on both sides to include a list of roads that need repairing. As I was saying more importantly, what we are doing in the next financial year would be to include a list of all of these roads in a project in conjunction with the Ministry of Finance where we are seeking a loan from a friendly source. I cannot give any details at this particular time and it is hoped that if we get the loan we will be able to address the problems to which the Honourable Member for St. George South...

Mr. B. M. TAITT: If the Honourable Member will give way for just a minute, Sir. Is the Honourable Member saying that after I have sat down and have written this beautiful letter and detailed all of these roads that new roads are not included for St. Michael West in these Estimates? I just want to be certain that you are not saying that.

Hon. G. W. PAYNE: The programme cannot be included in these Estimates. That will form a separate project by itself. I mean the one that is coming up next month.

#### *Aside.*

Hon. G. W. PAYNE: Sorry, the Honourable Member for St. Michael West has difficulty understanding simple language. We are hoping to deal with those concerns in the project to which I refer.

I had only dealt with the Division of Housing and there are still a number of concerns that Members would wish to make after the resumption in respect to housing. I would not want really to go into the question of the Division of Public Works although I understand from my good friend from the other side that there is not much really to comment on Public Works and we can probably close this afternoon except to say that with respect to the query on water. It is a problem that we are trying to address. The last administration did attempt during the brief period that the Honourable Member for St. Michael East was the Minister. If he can recall his stewardship at the time, there were plans for a Transfer Station well at **Buttals**. That was hampered somewhat by the floods in August. They had some very, very serious problems. Together with that, they had problems with the contractor. 5.05 p.m.

All of these problems have been ironed out and it is hoped that we could move full steam ahead.

We **are** also getting some problems with the other well we were hoping to do at Alleyndale. This is the time of the year when everyone complains about these problems. According to the information which has been supplied to me by the engineers at the Barbados Water Authority, they had high hopes for Alleyndale but there is a fairly high degree of salinity in the water there. They **are** considering transferring 50% of the salt water from Alleyndale 2 to Alleyndale 1 in the hope that this will resolve the problem. If that does not resolve the problem, they **are** also hoping that they would be able to reach some accommodation with Alleyndale Plantation, which has a well as well.

These **are** problems we did not expect, but I must say it is a misconception on the part of most Barbadians to think that there is plenty of water all over the place and that there are some special reasons, like the advent of the golf courses and the point which was made by the Honourable Member for St. **Thomas**, that water running into the sea is responsible for the problem at this time. I can only rely on the technical information which has been supplied to me by the engineers. Maybe if I was not in the Ministry I would be of that same layman's view, but I am convinced that because of the development which has taken place during the past 10 to 15 years, the advent of the golf courses might be part of it, and the fact that a lot of the wells were made to accommodate in some cases about 5 million gallons a day, and now they are accommodating over 11 **million** gallons a day, these are some of the reasons why we have the type of problems we are facing. And the problem is going to get worse before it gets better.

I would like to mention at this stage, even though I said I would only speak for two minutes, that we are presently attempting to address the problem. We have called in a consultant who has recommended the installation of a desalination plant. It is something we really do not want to do, but every time we hesitate on it the situation gets a little worse and it seems as though we will have to go the desalination route. I do not know if the rules make provision for it, but I would certainly welcome a public presentation by the Barbados Water Authority to parliamentarians, whether it is in this Chamber or not, so that they would be able to let us know the seriousness of the situation. Members of the Barbados Water Authority made a presentation to the Planning and Priorities Committee on this same problem and I must say that until I listened to that presentation by the General Manager and the engineers, who brought all their charts and slides, and it was only after that presentation, taking into consideration a lot of things which have taken place during the past few weeks, that I have been convinced that they are correct. I believe we must treat the situation more seriously and think in terms of water conservation. That is a matter we can come to at some later stage.

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: Mr. Chairman, I just want the record corrected. The Honourable Minister said that there was the use of 5 million gallons a day by the golf course. I don't think he meant to say that.

Hon. G. W. PAYNE: No, no, no. On a point of order, Sir, I did not say that. I said that certain wells were originally dug to accommodate 5 million gallons a day and they are now accommodating over 11 million gallons per day. I can think of the Belle. Do you remember we had a serious situation some time last year when the Queen Elizabeth Hospital was without water? That is the situation I am referring to.

*On the motion of Hon. D. A. C. SZMMONS, seconded by Hon. G. W. PAYNE, Mr. CHAIRMAN reported progress and asked for leave to sit again, and Mr. SPEAKER resumed the Chair and reported accordingly.*

#### SUSPENSION OF SITTING

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that this sitting be suspended until 5.30 **p.m.**

Hon. G. W. PAYNE: I beg to second that.

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

#### RESUMPTION

Mr. SPEAKER: This sitting is resumed. When the House was suspended it was in Committee of Supply. To that, it should now revert.

#### COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY

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

Mr. J. M. EDGHILL: Mr. Chairman, I think one of the biggest problems facing Barbados is that of housing. Over the past years, there have been applications sent in to the National Housing Corporation and as far as I understand they are over 6 000 at this time. I think a lot of this has been compounded by the fact that the last Administration did not build a single rental unit in the 9 years during which time they were in office.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Mr. Chairman, on a point of order. The Honourable Member is misleading this House. As you are aware, Church Village was built within the 9-year period.

Mr. J. M. EDGHILL: ...apart from Church Village. Over the last year I have had approximately 300 people applying for houses and something like 250 applying for house spots.

I was very pleased when I heard about the implementation of the services and sites programmes of the Government. The fact that I have had so many applications for houses and house spots. However, I was a bit disappointed when I looked at this piece of paper from the National Housing Corporation on which some 791 spots allocated for the whole of Barbados for the next financial year and only 27 of these spots are going to Christ Church. There are going to be 15...

Mr. B. M. TAITT: The Honourable Member is saying he is reading a piece of paper from the National Housing Corporation? I wish a copy of that piece of paper from the National Housing Corporation because I wish to see the allocation. Minister, you owe it to the rest of us to give us that piece of paper. He said **that** this piece of paper is from the National Housing Corporation. I wish to have a copy of it, otherwise we are going to have a serious discussion. I am sure my friend St. Michael South Central wants to hear it.

Mr. J. M. EDGHILL: This is a note that was passed on to me by the Honourable Member for Christ Church East Central. I have noticed that there **are** 15 spots allocated to Parish Land, 8 spots allocated for Bournes Land and 4 spots allocated for Pilgrim Place B which gives Christ Church 27 out of 981 spots. This is rather unfortunate in that Christ Church is represented by 5 Members of Parliament and also Christ Church represents about 115th of the population of Barbados. **Anytime** there is an allocation of approximately 800 spots one would expect Christ Church to have at least 160 - 180 spots.

In recent times, I have written to the National Housing Corporation asking the Minister to have an 8-acre plot of land vested under the National Housing Corporation. This land is presently owned by the Ministry of Agriculture and it is in Graeme Hall immediately above the Maxwell playing field. If services are provided in this 8-acre lot, I would expect to have something like 75 spots made available to Christ Church constituencies. I am asking the Minister to try to work on this matter expeditiously so that we in Christ Church could be given a few house spots.

There are 1 or 2 problems I have, especially in the Silver Hill area, which I represent. First of all these units were built over 20 years ago and they were fitted with asbestos roofing. I think most of you are aware of the fact that after 20 years the fibres start to emanate from these asbestos which could cause people to suffer from asbestosis. Asbestosis as you know is a respiratory disease

which is caused by the inhalation of fibre from **the** asbestos. This fibre goes into the lungs and can remain in the lungs for many years causing fibrosis which is a stiffening of the lungs. One would know that where there is stiffening of the lungs it means that the heart has to work much harder and as a result of that people can get **secondary** heart attacks. This in itself is something that will have to be addressed as soon as possible.

I also know for a fact that the asbestos has caused problems besides respiratory problems among the asthmatics. I also know for a fact that there **are** many people in these houses who suffer from sinusitis as a result of the asbestos fibre emanating from **the** asbestos. This is not only in the Silver Hill housing area but it is also quite prevalent in Gall Hill and Wotton Housing areas.

I would also like the National Housing Corporation to keep its units in a more sanitary condition. By that, I mean that from **time** to time you see a lot of bush to-the back and **front** of many of these units and overgrown vegetation tends to conceal objects and receptacles which can hold water becoming breeding grounds for mosquitoes, rats and vermin. Also this overgrown vegetation leads to an unwanted amount of refuse some of which could be combustible as well as non-combustible, some may be inorganic as well as organic and some of it could be biodegradable and non-biodegradable and you can even get some of it being toxic as well as non-toxic.

5.40 p.m.

All of this could lead to people in these districts becoming affected with many ailments. I have all reason to believe that people in these areas were affected **more so** than other areas with the dengue fever in the latter part of last year. You know for a fact, Mr. **Chairman**, that the Aedes Aegypti mosquito lives near and around houses. The Aedes Aegypti mosquito is the vector of viruses that cause urban yellow fever, dengue fever and associated complications in man. It is very important when we have housing districts for the Ministry to make sure that these units are kept in sanitary conditions.

Something that I am also hoping that the Minister of Housing will address in my constituency is that of roads. There are several roads in the constituency of Christ Church West Central which **are** in a total state of disrepair. Could you imagine people in 1996 having to put plastic bags over their shoes to get to the bus stops when rain falls? This is so in Sargeant's Village, especially in Harper's Land, and this is also a fact in the older part of **Silver Hill**. These two districts, in particular, had been promised roads a little before the 1991 as well as a little before the 1994 General Elections.

*Aside.*

Mr. J. M. EDGHILL: The Democratic Labour Party Government.

I am hoping that the Minister, who is a very good friend of mine, and who is always supportive of the back bench, will do something as quickly as possible to alleviate the problems of these poor people of Christ Church West Central.

I also have a problem with flooding, especially in the Cane Vale area, where after heavy downpours of rain the roads become impassable because there is a lack of drainage. I am **looking** forward to the Minister doing something constructive about the drainage problems in the Cane Vale area. This part of Cane Vale is very close to at least **three** of the Christ Church constituencies, Christ Church South, Christ Church East Central and, as you know, it is in Christ Church West Central.

I am looking forward to the Minister doing something as soon as possible to help Christ Church West Central and Christ Church in general because we have problems just **like** the other parts of Barbados and we represent **20** per cent of the people of Barbados.

Thank you.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Mr. Chairman, during the Structural Adjustment Programme you would not believe that the same problems the Honourable Member for Christ Church West Central was just describing of debushing, asking the Minister to debush places like Gall Hill and Silver Hill, that in **1991/92** the Democratic Labour Party under the **kind** guidance of the **NHC** that we were debushing places like Gall Hill and Silver Hill and now the Honourable Member is asking the Government to debush these same places again and we are not in a structural adjustment programme.

It is not that point I want to make, Sir. I am asking the Minister of Housing that the next time he is having development anywhere in Barbados that he should continue the concept developed by the Democratic Labour Party where whenever they have a development they make sure they put in a **minimart** and a church. They have stated in this House that the Democratic Labour Party has done nothing in eight years, yet the Democratic Labour Party was able to do developments and made sure that each development had a **minimart** and a church. An example of this is in Six Men's, St. Peter, Hope Road in St. Lucy, and many other **places**.

Mr. Chairman, today a letter was made a document of this House and the impression was that the Democratic Labour Party during **1992** evicted **556** people from the housing estates, even though when that was challenged the

remarks were not removed from Hansard or the documents of this House, even though there was evidence that someone was misleading the House, but I am not worried about that, Sir. If you look at the period...

Mr. CHAIRMAN. The Honourable Member is reflecting on the Chair.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: No, No. I am not reflecting on you. I am now asking you to remove those remarks from the documents of this House.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member for St. Michael North East said that there were orders for evictions that were made.

*Aside.*

Mr. CHAIRMAN: This is what she said in her second statement and my ruling was that her first statement should reflect that as well so I would believe that in Hansard it would reflect this is what she would have said in her **first** statement. In effect, it would have been an error if it was not the same thing. If you can bring evidence that she did not say that we can have it expunged from the record.

*Aside.*

Mr. CHAIRMAN: If you have, indeed, the record which said exactly what she said. I was vouching for the honour of the Honourable Member for St. Michael North **East** in which she indicated what she had **said** the second time around was what **she** intended saying **the** first time and, based on the fact that both instances should say the same thing which is that she was saying that there were **556** eviction notices instead of **556** people being evicted, if indeed the record shows **that** she did say there were **556** being evicted, if you could provide me with that evidence, I will have that expunged from the record.

Mr. B. M. **TAITT**: Mr. Chairman, if I may. The matter arose, as you will recall, when I was speaking. Unless Your Honour would send for the record, I do not think we can speculate. What one heard was a comparative analysis of the number of evictions. She said **there** were **556** evictions. She did not mention the word "notice" until after I was speaking and I challenged her and then she said that is what she meant.  
**5.50 p.m.**

*Asides.*

Mr. B. M. **TAITT**: Yes, because I required it to be a document of the House.

The point is, I am drawing to His Honour's attention, that what she said in the first instance cannot be

corrected at this point. It has nothing to do with defense. My defence is **first** of the House and that the record be pristine. That is my defence. I will come to the support of the Chair and the House so that the record...

**Asides.**

Mr. B. M. TAITT: That is why we have to make sure that the record is clean.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: **Mr.** Chairman, I **am** withdrawing that request, Sir. I have withdrawn that request, Sir.

Mr. Chairman, from the period 1991 to 1994, one thousand, three hundred and seventy-one eviction notices were sent out. I want you to listen to this one, Mr. Chairman, 1 371 eviction notices were sent out in 1991 to 1994. Mr. Chairman, January to March 1996, two hundred and eighty eviction notices were sent, so far, and we have not finished the month of March as yet. If you were to calculate this for a whole year, Sir, in one whole year you will get 1 344 eviction notices coming from this Ministry.

Hon. G. W. PAYNE: On a point of order. The Honourable Member is misleading the House. These notices are normally sent out every year in the **first** quarter of the year. So it might very well be that the two hundred and eighty that we see here, from January to March, will represent the figure for the whole of 1996.

**Asides.**

Hon. G. W. PAYNE: I am not saying that.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: **Mr.** Chairman, he has not changed anything that I have said, Sir. On a monthly basis, Sir, if you are to use the rate that they **are** going at now, Sir, for a whole year, it will be 1 344 eviction notices that will be sent to tenants from the National Housing Corporation, and I stand by that, Sir, because if you doubt me, this is already a document of the House and you can **prorate** the figures.

So you see, Mr. Chairman, sometimes one has to be very careful how one submits figures in this Assembly because there are some of us who can use the figures and come to the correct conclusion. **Mr.** Chairman, I **am** saying that I support the Honourable Member for Christ Church West when he supported what I said earlier that Barbadians believe in home ownership. They like to believe that what they have belongs to them, and I will stand by that also. I said it earlier this morning and I will support him on that because it is better to encourage someone to own his own house than to encourage people to rent all the time.

I believe, Sir, that National Housing Corporation, whenever they have workmen who **are** not working for National Housing Corporation, when they do not have enough work to do for the National Housing Corporation, they should go and work for poor people in this country to help reduce their housing cost.

Thank you very much.

Hon. R. N. **GREENIDGE**: **Mr.** Chairman, Sir, I want to address this problem of the notices to quit which was just touched on by the Honourable Member for St. Lucy because I believe, the time has come when someone on the Floor of this House has to play the part of not being a coward.

We have said a lot about the tenants who have refused to pay rent. The Honourable Member for St. Michael West has made mention of evicting poor people in the Pine. The Honourable Member for Christ Church East Central has spoken about tenants in his constituency who have been given notice and now the Honourable Member for St. Lucy is saying that there **are** 280 eviction notices to quit and if we continue at that rate, we will be well over the 1 000 mark by the end of the year.

I believe, **Mr.** Chairman, that the argument that all of these tenants are experiencing severe hardship is a false argument. I personally feel so, that the argument by all of them that they are experiencing hardship, is a false argument.

I believe that the majority of them **are** not cases of genuine hardship, and I am saying it in here. Whenever you get to the notices to quit or to evictions, you **are** not speaking about tenants who **are** two or three months in arrears, you **are** speaking, **Mr.** Chairman, about chronic defaulters, people who, clearly, do not intend to pay. Many of them **are** working, many of them have sources of income but they do not intend to pay and they **are** in the prime of their life. They are neither paying arrears, **Mr.** Chairman, nor the current rent.

If there **are** genuine cases of hardship and they approach the National Housing Corporation, I have it from the Minister, that those cases are dealt with and that special arrangements will be made for those persons. That is the policy and it has always been.

Only two weekends ago, Mr. Chairman, at Sherbourne, at a supper by one of the churches, I saw there depicted, by one of the leading actresses in this country, a skit on a tenant or tenants in the National Housing Corporation. You had things like, "I know that I owe the rent but I have to go shopping in Margarita so I can't pay." I am saying that is the type of skit we **are** having because that is the way people believe that some of ~~the~~ tenants **are** thinking. That is the only point I am making.

In many instances, Mr. Chairman, the Corporation has investigated the tenant and has come to the realisation that the tenant can pay. Whenever you get these notices to quit, that has happened and that they **are** flouting their obligations. That is the truth because this Government is no less humane than the other administration.

**Asides.**

Hon. R. N. GREENIDGE: In many instances, Mr. **Chairman**, the Government and the National Housing Corporation have tried to meet the tenants halfway. Many of the tenants have actually disregarded the letters and other notices sent to them. They have not explained anything. Many of them have gone in and arranged different schedules and different rates and ways to pay. They themselves have requested the new schedules and a lot of them have not kept the faith. They have not paid according to the very schedules that they have arranged. They have defaulted.  
6.00 p.m.

I am not in favour, Mr. Chairman, of evicting people who are generally up against it. Least of all, Sir, I am not in favour with what was done a few years ago when the people were evicted we had it publicised on the television and in the papers and so on. I am not for that either. Regardless of how bad the person is I am not in favour of that.

On many occasions, Mr. Chairman, the Opposition over there has called upon this Government to be more prudent in its fiscal management. They have been saying all types of things and I believe that the whole area of rent is one of the areas in which we have to be making prudent decisions. Government is not supposed to support bad tenants when we have a long list of prospective tenants from your constituency of St. Lucy, from your constituency in St. Michael South, from your constituency in St. Philip South.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member is asked to note that you should address the Chair. I would like some of these houses...

Hon. R. N. GREENIDGE: But there is a long, long list, Mr. Chairman, of genuine tenants standing in line.

Mr. Chairman, rents are an obvious source of revenue. The money you obtain from rents, is supposed to help you to do other things. We have had organisations in this country calling for housing for the disabled. We have organisations in this country calling for housing for fire victims. We have organisations, Mr. Chairman, calling for housing for battered women who are the victims of domestic violence. We have organisations in this country calling for housing for the homeless on Baxters Road and

above all we have people who **are** always calling for repairs to be done to the very housing that these tenants live in. All I am saying, Mr. Chairman, is that if rent is not generated from these houses we cannot do those things. So Government is not to be seen just as a landlord but as a provider too and a facilitator.

I must repeat the point, Mr. Chairman, that whenever we have genuine cases of hardship and those persons approach the National Housing Corporation, they approach the Ministry of Housing, they are given the most favourable hearing. This is a factual statement I cannot disagree with it.

Mr. Chairman, I want to make a point which I have made on a few other occasions previously and it is a call for the National Housing Corporation to consider that in any other future project on housing in this country which they are going to bring on stream, that housing, whether it be at the two corners or elsewhere, that some provision be made for the disabled. I have made that call and I am going to make it yet again because the parents of the disabled and the organisations for the disabled, they are all now agitating for consideration to be given.

I know, for instance, Mr. Chairman, that the National Assistance Board in particular has written to the National Housing Corporation on this matter and indeed the response so far has been quite favourable. Mr. Chairman, I believe that certain adaptations would have to be made to those houses to accommodate the disabled. You would have things like indoor ramps for the wheelchairs because we have to be sensitive as a Government and let people know that this Government has a caring conscience, like perhaps the bedroom doors would be wider than usual so the wheelchairs and so on can pass through the bedroom door or the kitchen door or wherever. That in the toilets you have handrails for those persons and so forth. Kitchen sinks and so on would be a bit lower because when you are in a wheelchair the kitchen sinks and so on need to be at that level, and the cupboards and so on a bit lower than usual. Those are the kinds of adaptations, Mr. Chairman, that I am speaking about because I believe that as a caring Government, we have an obligation to care for all sections of our society not just the housing for the able-bodied we have to be caring for the disabled as well.

So far there has been some disregard, all of us have to say it, for that particular section of our society. We must now try to make it compulsory that whenever, Mr. Chairman, the National Housing Corporation build their units from now on that some provision be made for the disabled. We have to realise the disabled too want to live an independent life and I am hoping and praying that this will come very soon, the very next units built in Barbados will have provision for these very unfortunate people.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Mr. Chairman, on this round I wish to raise a matter and I will start with a matter of grave importance to some of the people in my constituency. Some considerable time ago persons from the Ministry responsible for Housing came into St. Leonard's School and we had a meeting with the persons who were currently living in the Thomas Gap area.

6.10 p.m.

We had more than one meeting. We had site visits. We had a number of very good community meetings. We had what I considered at the time to be great co-operation from the public officers and then we left the people in Thomas Gap with the very clear understanding that the house spots within that project would in fact be allocated. Some persons made arrangements for financing. Some people had their savings and it is now, Sir, more than 2 years since this project was promised to the good people of Thomas Gap. They ask me more or less every other 2 weeks what is happening and I have said to them that the Government is new and they have to get their hand in. I have made the kind of excuses that can be made in certain circumstances, but I have run out of excuses for the Government. I wish the Minister now to give me some definitive word. Let me say that the Parliamentary Secretary in the Ministry has been very co-operative in terms of communication. We have discussed it. He has promised but I am now saying that we have reached the point here at the Estimates where I have to ask for a definitive word and that concern is heightened by a concern which some of the people have that the allocations which had been made before are now going to be reviewed and revised and that they are in danger of not being beneficiaries of the plots on which they lay. So I wish the Minister to give me something definitive that can be shared by some other people like the Honourable Members in this House so that when I tell them that the Minister said in the House a, b, or c that they will continue to impose the trust in me which they exhibited at the initial stages when we in co-operation with the Ministry looked at how we can make this project work. This is a project for which the funding had been secured as I understand it and in essence all we require now is for the conveyances to be dealt with. The roads have already been put in. There are certain blocks that are to be put down and there are certain other amenities that were to follow. I wish to get something definitive on this because there is one lady in particular who asked me if I was thinking of crossing the **Floor** because I had been making so many excuses for the Government. She wished me to speak about the Attorney General much **more** definitively than I had **been** speaking. I should have told her that it is probably the Attorney General that has delayed the conveyances because he would have to be involved somehow. But anyhow I will wait to hear from the Minister.

Sir, I take this opportunity also...

*Aside.*

Mr. B. M. TAITT: There were two projects – Thomas Gap and I think one in Christ Church. I also wish to take this opportunity to make a recommendation to **the Minister**. I believe that I made it to one of the Ministers of Housing during my time. Under the law, the Minister of Health every year continuously publishes in the newspaper notices and thereafter in pursuit of the law causes the demolition of derelict buildings. Quite often a year or so earlier, these buildings are not quite derelict even though you can see that in a year or two they are going to be derelict buildings. I wish to recommend – I have said it before when we were in the Government because I remember that I wrote to Harold **Blackman** when he was the Minister of Housing – that instead of the Government using the power under the Derelict Buildings Legislation to knock down those houses for which we do not receive the cost of the work of demolition even though the legislation makes provision for recovery through sale of the property, that we acquire those properties. Change the legislation if necessary but let these houses become part of the housing stock of Barbados. In some cases the owners are overseas and, if you are a person like the Honourable Member for St. Michael South or myself who walk through the various neighbourhoods, you can see a house over a three-year period moving through its various stages of dilapidation until it reaches the point where the Public Health Inspector then identifies it as a house for demolition. Within a short **time**, it is on the list and then it is demolished. The Government does not recover because the Government has not yet sought through the Courts to recover the costs from any demolition.

Sir, I want to suggest that the Ministry examines the possibility of utilizing these houses which tend to be within neighbourhoods...

*Aside.*

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Well, help me. I am a little slow. Just show me where it is when you next speak.

Hon. G. W. PAYNE: Mr. Chairman, I said that the Urban Renewal Programme was doing a survey of all of the abandoned buildings in the St. Michael area. At the moment there are 1800 such buildings and abandoned lots. It will be part of our policy when we finally get the report back and we put it in a project to acquire most of these buildings and then utilize them for housing purposes.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: I did not hear that statement. I assumed that he was speaking about those lots or buildings that have been actually abandoned. If he is saying what I said falls within the framework of his thinking, then that is sufficient for me.

*Aside,*

Mr. B. M. **TAITT**: I do not mind who gets the credit for it. What I want is somewhere for my people to live. You see the pressure of helping people to find somewhere to live no matter who is the Government is much more important to be dealt with than the credit. I have had enough credit in my life that I can do without, but I cannot do without finding somewhere for my people to live.

Aside.

Mr. B. M. **TAITT**: Mr. Chairman, Sir, it is clear to me that the Minister feels in a frivolous mood this evening and I am going to accommodate him.

I wish to address also because the Member for the City has had a town meeting in which she trotted out some drawing by somebody and discussed the development of Bridgetown with breathtaking excitement. There were editorials written about it and the people who live in the hovels among the 1800 lots which the Honourable Member found in the City were left to believe there is going to be a massive development in the City. Of course, when last the Barbados Labour Party was in office, the people in Church Village were left to believe that as well. So they are getting accustomed to the rhetoric from the Member for the City about the development of Bridgetown. But I would like to offer to the Honourable Member if he is interested in developments that will be of use to the country well into the 21st century that he might even take the credit.

In the compound that used to be the Barbados General Hospital where now resides two Ministries and an assorted group of offices, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Education, UNDP offices, et cetera, the Minister should look at the probability of building three twin-tower buildings in that compound which would rise to a height perhaps given the Town and Country Planning regulations of 6 to 8 storeys which would provide office space for Government's use because of the need for it. It would be located in a place that provides easy access to the bus stand and other areas and at the same time would provide good rental income for those areas that were not immediately needed by the Government – I can give you the scheme for it in more detail – to the extent that the Honourable Member wishes further details of the idea, all of the new offshore companies that are going to be coming into Barbados, some of the international agencies, like the same UNDP, and the concept of joining all of them together, all of these can form part of a twin or tri-tower conception equidistant within that compound replacing the existing old buildings, some of which will have to be condemned some time during the not too **distant future**. It would provide ministerial space, it would provide new buildings and it would provide urban redevelopment of that entire area which would not impinge on the sea-side of the area but

would utilise the land in **Jemmotts Lane** much more effectively than it is currently utilised.

**6.20 p.m.**

I give that to the Honourable Member for what it is worth. It is one of my dreams, if one can discuss dreams that one has, for that kind of development. I spent a long enough time in the vicinity to have developed concepts and dreams about how it may be developed.

I also wanted to ask the Honourable Member in this time around if he can indicate whether Barbados is going to be participating in the HABITAT 2, the international conference that is one of the four major conferences that have been identified toward the end of this century. We have had three of them so far and HABITAT is to be the next major conference. I am wondering if the Minister can indicate whether Barbados is taking an active role in the HABITAT preparations. Barbados went to the World Social Summit, Barbados went to the Beijing Conference and I am just wondering if Barbados is going to be participating in HABITAT. I expected the Minister to give us his **thinking** on how Barbados can be a beneficiary arising out of the HABITAT conference. If I remember **correctly**, Barbados was, albeit at a relatively low-keyed level because of the inability to fund, participating in the usual programme planning which precedes these international conferences, but based on the information which I have been receiving, it seems as though a large contingent will be attending HABITAT from the Caribbean and certainly from the developing countries. I believe our experts are planners. You know, Sir, sometimes there is a feeling that we should not attend these conferences, but some of the persons whose responsibility it will be to plan for life in Barbados over the next 25 years ought to get some exposure with the other international technical people and it would not do the Minister any harm to exchange ideas and to feed on other ideas coming from persons who may not have reached the same level of social development which we in Barbados have reached but who, nonetheless, can have ideas that can help us to be in the forefront of development for our peoples. As we talk about such things as urban development and urban renewal, it cannot but help us to be able to exchange views with people of that kind.

I look forward to hearing from the Minister.

Mr. G. A. **CLARKE**: Mr. Chairman, it is important to note that the demand for housing has been going over the last couple of years and it keeps rising. Whenever the demand for housing increases, it is a reflection of the employment situation within the country, because employment does help to generate activity in the housing area. I also want to say that the overall housing plan must be seen against the macro-economic policy of Government, which needs not only to sustain

employment generation, but it leads to growth within the economy, and therefore housing has taken first stage within the Government's programme and I am glad to see so many Honourable Members have been speaking on housing today.

I would like to assure Honourable Members who have spoken today, especially the Honourable Member for Christ Church West Central, who has spoken in connection with his constituency and who wants to find out what Government is trying to do within the Christ Church area that, as the Honourable Minister has already explained, there **are** a number of areas within Christ Church which are owned by Government and on which the Ministry intends to create house spots. For example, there is Breedy Land and Parish Land Phases 1, 2 and 3. I understand that a further eight lots will be created in the constituency of the Honourable Member. Lots will also be created at **Bourne's Village**.

Honourable Members must bear in mind that large areas were owned in Christ Church by Government, whereas in areas of St. George North, St. **Andrew** and St. Peter the Government did not own land but had to find land to resettle those persons who were disadvantaged because of the Act. As Honourable Members looked at the brief they saw that land was being acquired in the northern and central **areas**, but we have adequate land within the Christ Church area which we can use and which we will be using, so Members should not fear.

In the **Padmore/Church Village area**, St. **Philip**, there are about 50 lots which will soon be vested in the National Housing Corporation. This will be used to help the people in the St. **Philip** area who have lost their right to purchase and there will also be additional lots which will be for sale, so the Honourable Member for St. **Philip** North need not fear in this regard.

The Honourable Member for St. George South spoke about what is happening in his area. The Ministry has already looked at **Todds** and certain parts of **Ellerton** to assist the people of the St. George South **area**.

I also want to mention the fact that in St. Michael we have agreed to acquire land in the Speaker's constituency, at Bush Hall, for the erection of terraced units. We **are** also looking at areas within Cave Hill for acquisition.

I would think that Honourable Members should not fear, there will be adequate land which will help those persons who are in need of house spots. I think that within the next two years or so there may be more than 800 lots available to service the needs of Barbadians.  
6.30 p.m.

The Government has also entered into joint ventures with private contractors which we are using to provide housing for a number of Barbadians as well. So the joint venture approach will also be used. We are also facilitating private investors. So far there are a number of investors not only local but many people abroad who are contemplating investing large sums of money into housing in this country. The Honourable Minister spoke **today** about international agencies which will be facilitating housing development within Barbados. Within the next 2 or 3 years we should be well served in the area of housing.

The Honourable Member for St. Michael West spoke about Thomas Gap. Thomas Gap is a tenantry. It was bought by Government in the early 90s. It has been **surveyed**. The Town Planner has been consulted and given approval and within the next couple of months we should be able to give some positive words on Thomas Gap. We have all the plans now and I know he has been asking a lot of questions on Thomas Gap. I have communicated with him. They have spoken to the Ministry and we can assure him that within the financial year we should be able to sell the lots to the people who actually live on Thomas Gap.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: If you could just give way. Could you include an assurance that persons who lived there and who were originally allocated the lot numbers. It is true no money has passed but they are fearful that new people are being brought in to be given the lots. If you can give me an assurance I would appreciate that.

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: I cannot give full assurance that the persons who were allocated lots will be entitled to the lots that they were originally given. I think there are a few changes but I don't think persons will be disadvantaged at all. I think that we will try to correct all problems within the **area**.

Many people do not understand or know this but Honourable Members must be **assured** that whenever there are housing problems the Ministry's Planning Unit stands ready to help correct some of the problems. For example, members gave us a list of some of their problems like Snagg Land where tenants were getting some problems from their landlords. This was corrected and the Planning Unit of the Ministry to my mind is doing a wonderful job in helping to bring some of these cases, to recognise these cases and to correct them.

I also want and I know that the Honourable Member for Christ Church South has been asking about the tenantry freehold purchase. So far, between **1979** and to date, almost 6 000 lots have been **surveyed** and approximately 3 224 of these have been sold. The remainder which is a mere 2 700 we hope within a couple months to get into people's hands.

The surveying portion has been started. We have started this year in the Glebe, St. George and we have done a lot of work in St. John and I would think that by next year, certainly the following year, at the end of this Parliament, we should have surveyed most of the tenancies in Barbados. I think we are doing a pretty good job on that.

The Honourable Member asked about the Habitat process which the Minister in his winding up will address. I just want to say that the Ministry is participating within the Habitat process. I must say that the Honourable Member for Christ Church West today spoke very admirably about the Tenancies Freehold Purchase. People in the world are now recognising that that programme was indeed one of the best programmes we have within the western world. So the Tenancies Freehold Purchase is recognised as not only our best practice within Barbados but it is looked upon and I think we might be very well showing off that programme at the Habitat process when it comes off later this year. The Minister will tell us more about that. It is a beautiful programme and we have a lot to shout about.

I think Honourable Members even though we may have a divide in **terms** of the party system, must be proud that that programme is being looked upon in the world as a programme that can be copied by other countries. I am proud of that. It is a model.

I think a number of questions have been raised about the urban renewal. I know the Minister of Education has spoken about that and I believe Honourable Members are now more aware and enlightened about what is happening within the urban renewal and therefore they would not – surely the Honourable Member for St. Michael West – be criticising the **rural** commission because we have a similar function within the urban committee. I can assure him that within...

Mr. B. M. **TAITT**: If the Honourable Member would give way. The Honourable Member is saying that the National Housing Corporation is the counter agency for the urban area?

*Asides.*

Mr. B. M. **TAITT**: I am asking the Honourable Member. Since when do these Honourable Members speak for the Honourable Member? He is a man who is articulate and can speak and knows his mind. I am asking if that is what I heard and if it is **correct**.

Mr. G. A. **CLARKE**: I am saying that urban renewal units will be planning activities within urban Barbados to help alleviate poverty and housing problems within the greater Bridgetown and Bridgetown area, because we

believe that the problem lies in the urban area, crime and so on. We need to alleviate some of these problems.

Mr. B. M. **TAITT**: If the Honourable Member will give way just one moment. Is the Honourable Member now saying that the promised urban commission is no longer something we should no longer look forward to. We in the urban areas, including the Member for the City had said no. We were told when the Rural Commission was established that we only have to wait our time that it is coming.

Mr. G. A. **CLARKE**: A pilot project will be coming. We will be doing a pilot project within Alleyne's Land and so on but members within urban Barbados can be assured that something will be done within their constituencies.

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

Mr. G. A. **CLARKE**: I also want to say that I believe that in a couple months Barbadians will be able to repair their homes and cover insurance and do more in their homes because this Government intends to set a stage where Barbadians will feel free once again to call home their home.

Thank you very much.  
6.40 p.m.

Rt. Hon. L. E. **SANDIFORD**: Mr. Chairman, I wish to say a few words on this particular Head. As is known, I represent a constituency that contains units owned by the National Housing Corporation and it is one also of the older housing communities in Barbados. I believe it is one of the settled communities which down through the years has grown and developed and I believe there is scope for further development.

Sir, I believe that the Honourable Member for St. George North who has just **spoken** – he did not mention St. Michael South at all even though, I believe, in that area we are among the better paying tenants of the National Housing Corporation. They **try**. I believe too, Sir, it is an area that indicates the National Housing Corporation is struggling and using its best endeavours to get its records and accounts up-to-date but there, again, there is still some work to be done.

I remember, Sir, on one occasion noting that a notice for arrears of rent was sent to a person who had long passed away, and to an address which is owned by the Government itself where the Government **Printery** now stands so I think this is an indication of the kind of work that has to be done in order to continue the upgrading of the records and accounts of the National Housing Corporation. I do not think we give that Corporation enough understanding and co-operation because it

labours under considerable difficulties, and particularly when public monies may be scarce it has still to do all of the activities and carry out all the functions that *are* required. Then you may understand the difficulties that such a statutory body may be faced with.

What I want to say, Sir, is not in any way controversial and it is not in any way critical of past Governments or current Governments but I think we all recognise that the objective of feeding, clothing and housing our people remains a challenge for whatever Government is in office, and it is one we have to shoulder amidst competing claims for the resources of Government.

I believe, Sir, that it is quite feasible and in keeping with our development that we can create a better environment within the areas which we describe as housing areas. I believe it is quite possible and quite feasible but it will call for building on past experiences. It will call for the development of an integrated approach, a kind of an integrated rural development plan because housing and human settlements are not just a question of concrete blocks, wood or galvanized sheets. It is a combination of a number of physical and human factors. We must all seek to ensure that these different factors and facets *are* brought together so that congenial living spaces can be provided for people that would lend dignity to their living. It does little for the self-respect and dignity of people if on the gutters and slipper drains you have grass growing at the side of the roads, there is an outgrowth of weed and bush, that on the occasions the roads or the gutters *are* swept that the sweepings accumulate and are removed only spasmodically and the repairs which *are* to be done to the houses *are* done very sparsely. Sir, I believe a lot can be done to raise the dignity of people without spending lots of money through an integrated approach to these problems. I do not believe, unless we give the National Housing Corporation the kind of total staff resources that could do all of these things, that that would be done. Perhaps a better approach would be...

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: I just want some information if the Honourable Member would give way. If the Honourable Member while he is in flow would tell us in the eight years how his Government was able to achieve this integrated concept and how many houses they were able to deliver in those eight years?

Rt. Hon. L. E. SANDIFORD: Sir, I will not be deterred by the frivolous comments of the Member for St. Thomas. He is very good at that. Wherever there is a problem, I can see a fine Italian at work. That is what it is. Mr. Chairman, when we seek to make constructive points during these debates we get the interruptions, very negative interruptions coming from all people, the Minister responsible for Housing. I expect that from the Member for St. Thomas but that Minister there...

*Aside.*

Rt. Hon. L. E. SANDIFORD I *am* putting forward a serious call here, Sir.  
6.50 p.m.

I believe, out of our experiences, my Government's experiences, both in good times and when times were difficult, we drew the lessons, Sir, and therefore we *are* in a position, a unique position to propose solutions that *are* desirable and that *are* sustainable, Sir.

*Asides.*

Rt. Hon. L. E. SANDIFORD: Mr. Chairman, they are not going to deflect me from speaking on this issue, and particularly in relation to the housing *areas* of Barbados and in particular that in St. Michael South.

I *am* saying that if we can bring the resources together, not in an arms' length kind of situation, but in an intimate approach, Sir, where the different agencies or specific representatives from different agencies can work together in order to bring solutions to the problems of various communities, *Sayers* Court, *Redmans* Village, Bagatelle...

*Asides.*

Rt. Hon. L. E. SANDIFORD: You see, Sir, if we could do these things, I believe we would make some progress and on the way do not forget Bayville because that is the example I am using, Sir.

I believe that they should use our *debushing* programme, particularly to clear the areas where there is need for that. I have a Parliamentary Question which is still on the Order Paper, Sir, and may refuse – you heard the Minister in here boasting that a question asked will not be answered.

*Asides.*

Rt. Hon. L. E. SANDIFORD: I have made a note of that. This entire committee has heard it. He speaks for the Government and he commits the Deputy Leader of the House, all of the front bench including the Attorney General...

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The Chair is not recognising any comments by any person other than the Member for St. Michael South, so therefore reference to any comments made by any other Members *are* not allowed. Please continue.

Rt. Hon. **L. E. SANDIFORD**: I know the two of us have auditory organs, Sir, so what we hear and what we do not hear maybe a matter for others.

So, Sir, I do not wish to be long on this matter. I have put forward a particular approach, I have called for an integrated urban approach to the problems and I have said that particular attention, a special attention, must be paid to ~~the~~ areas owned by the National Housing Corporation and that congenial surroundings, aims should be to develop these congenial surroundings for the benefit of the people, and it will be surprising how a renewed pride in their environment, in their surroundings, could be created. I know efforts have been made, and are being made, but I think we should redouble those efforts and seek in this area as well where economic and social circumstances combined, that this will help to make a better Barbados. It may help to improve the social situation, because if people have pride in themselves, their homes and their surroundings they may very well not be as prone to delinquent or other activities that bring them in conflict with the law and overall it will lead to social and economic improvement.

*On the motion of Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER seconded by Hon. D. A. C. SZMMONS, the CHAIRMAN reported progress to His Honour the SPEAKER and asked for leave to sit again. Mr. SPEAKER resumed the Chair and reported accordingly.*

#### SUSPENSION

Hon. Miss B. A. **MILLER**: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I beg to move that this House be now suspended until **2.00** o'clock in the afternoon, **tomorrow** Thursday. Lunch is going to be available here from **12.30 p.m.** for Honourable Members. We are proposing to resume at **2.00** o'clock and work until **10.30** tomorrow night. On Friday we will go back to **10.00** o'clock in the morning until **7.00 p.m.**. The guillotine is expected to fall at **6.00** o'clock but tomorrow **2.00 p.m.** to **10.30 p.m.**

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

*The question was put and resolved in the affirmative without division and Mr. SPEAKER suspended the House accordingly.*  
**6.58 p.m.**

#### RESUMPTION

Mr. **SPEAKER**: This sitting is resumed; When the suspension was taken the House was in Committee of Supply and to that it will now revert.

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

#### COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY

Mr. **CHAIRMAN**: The Committee of Supply is now in session.

Mr. H. F. **LASHLEY**: Mr. Chairman, I take this opportunity to join this debate at this particular time because I feel that I represent two of the largest and most thickly populated housing areas in Barbados, namely Pinelands and Wildey. I would **first** like to begin by complimenting the people of these two housing areas for the work that they have done over the period of time in keeping a very closely knit community together. It is at this particular point that I would also like to thank the Pinelands Development Council for the work that it has done in building a harmonious and almost cohesive community.

If we look back at the history, particularly of Pinelands we would realise that many people from throughout Barbados, particularly Halls Road, **Martindales** Road, parts of St. Lucy and St. Thomas were thrust into the area of Pinelands after the 1948 flood. I am just giving a brief historical background before I get into what I actually want to say. After the 1948 flood these people were thrust into the area therefore creating a cosmopolitan atmosphere and in those early days there were no recreational facilities **as** such. That is why I began by saying I wanted to compliment the people of the area because, from an area that was termed a bastardized community and at one point it was popularly referred to by three "**Ps**". P for a particular Magistrate, P for Prison and P for Pinelands, I am very happy to see that the process of community development, community interaction and community integration has turned around this stigma and there are a number of persons who have contributed to this.

In addition I want in this Honourable Chamber here this afternoon to also compliment Mr. Anthony **Wiggins** who has worked hard over a period of time in trying to formulate a Tenants Association in Barbados which obviously is an attempt to have the community more closely knitted. I feel that the National Housing Corporation should look at the possibility of honouring a few heroes from within the Housing Areas. I can think about Mr. **Wiggins** as one. I can think of Mr. Rose from the **Bayland** as one. Mr. Rose has done a lot of work in keeping these communities stabilised.

The Minister of Housing and Lands, in a recent Report, said that he wanted to look at the possibility of building one thousand homes for Barbadians, particularly from the lower socio-economic bracket and I think this is a good thing because there is a problem. I would even go further to say that there is a crisis in housing in Barbados. I believe that if the Minister could get this project of

one thousand homes built in Barbados to work, this would ease the tremendous backlog of applications at the National Housing Corporation. But my warning to the Minister is not to build on valuable agricultural land but to let us go up two and three storeys and get some trained sociologists into these communities so they would not become concrete jungles.

Sir, we have a problem of great significance within Pinelands and Wildey and it is one that I would call a management problem. We have the **Parkinson** Secondary School that most people in **the** area would have thought would be adequate enough as a hurricane shelter. Last hurricane season when there was an imminent threat to Barbados, we only realised that the various schools that are in close geographical proximity of the area are inadequate. If there is an emergency of that **kind** the people within the immediate environs of these schools, particularly **Parkinson** and the **Wilkie** Cumberbatch School, have no where to go. They will have to travel to the Luther Thorne School and that is way out on the other side of Wildey. I **am** asking that this be looked into by CERO to see if we can have these schools upgraded as proper hurricane shelters within the area.

In addition I believe that despite the fact that the National Housing Corporation is hard pressed at this time in terms of collecting rents and so on, I believe that if we spruce up the government housing units within the housing area it would add a lot more to the housing areas. It would give the tenants a lot more esteem and pride and it would give them the opportunity to really work within their communities and develop them. This could be done in two ways, Sir, one with Government approaching it on a crash programme basis and employ people to start painting the units, or we can do a joint community venture where the National Housing Corporation provides the paint to the tenants and let the tenants and the community and the groups, working within the housing area paint these units. It is a **two-pronged** attack on this problem and I leave the choices with the Minister as to which programme he would implement. The ball is in his court.

In addition to that, Sir, we have another problem within the housing area and it is one that is not unique to Pinelands and Wildey but there are some wells in the area that are left uncovered and in some cases the well covers need to be properly maintained. My fear is that a number of these wells are very near to the schools and are in the heart of the housing area and when children are playing one of them could accidentally fall into these wells with tragic consequences. We have to look at repairing those wells and well covers within the housing areas.

Now, Sir, I want to put a proposal to this Honourable Chamber this afternoon and it is one that I know might be controversial but at least it has to be said if we are looking

to do revolutionary things as we approach the twenty-first century. Sir, I was raised up virtually in a housing area and I know the embarrassment and I know also of the hurt and the **kind** of feeling when National Housing Corporation comes and sticks a notice of eviction on your door or gives your parents a notice of eviction. Mark you, Sir, I **am** not advocating that people living in Government housing **units** should not pay their rent. I **am** saying that if you take a more humanitarian approach towards serving notices on tenants it is going to alleviate a lot of that traumatic effect that residents have been experiencing particularly in Pinelands and Wildey when over one weekend about 150 notices were served where rents would have to be paid within a 7-day period. What disturbed me, Sir, is the fact that I went down to National Housing Corporation and I saw pensioners lining up and trying to get to see that particular officer.

2.10 p.m

#### *Aside.*

Mr. H. F. LASHLEY: Pensioners were standing up and waiting in line to go and try to get this whole problem of rent sorted out. I know there is a policy at the National Housing Corporation that says once you are a pensioner living alone that you do not have to pay rent. But there are not many senior citizens living in these housing units that know that. I **am** saying that the National Housing Corporation could embark on a public relations exercise in letting the tenants within the units know of this policy that is in place. If that was in place, these senior citizens from Pinelands would not have to travel down to the National Housing Corporation and I am hoping and praying to **God** that this will never ever occur again.

Sir, I also want to say this. With the high-handed way in which they were treated, the residents now feel a bit down spirited. I remember during the last instance some tenants were not working because what has happened over the last 3 or 4 years a number of tenants would have developed arrears because of the economic recession at the time. What I **am** asking Government to do is to look into the possibility of waiving the rents of those persons living in those units for over 20 years. Because when we equate it in dollars and cents, you will see that they would have actually paid for those units probably twice over.

In addition, Sir, those persons were affected by the hard economic recession within the last 3 or 4 years and they would have accumulated arrears over the years. I am asking Government to give them amnesty. Forgiveness is the gift of God. Forgive them by waiving arrears and let them start all over. **A.I** right. Because it is a hurting thing to see how poor black people go scrambling and begging for money to pay the rent. The rent arrears would have accumulated over a period of 3 or 4 years. When I come

to this Honourable Chamber, Sir, I do not come here to do any political grandstanding. I come here to say it as I see it out there and I hope that this Honourable Chamber is paying attention to what I am saying because these are the sentiments that are being echoed by the people themselves that are in the Tenants Association. I am saying that I hope that the Honourable Minister will not take what I am saying as a political statement. It is a humanitarian statement.

In addition, Sir, I know also that Government is trying hard in changing the asbestos roof of the housing units within the respective housing areas and I am very thankful for the work that is being done so far in Wildey and Pinelands. However, let me say that the way that it is being done it seems as though certain people are selected to have their roof changed while others are not. What I am saying is that we should take a more practical approach to this problem. If you are going to change the roof in Block A, change all. You tell the tenants in Block B that we will get back to you a little later. But we should not change one particular person's roof in a block and do not change the others because it would be a dangerous precedent. I am saying that it looks very bad.

Sir, this thing about paying rents. As I said, I am not advocating that people do not pay rents. I am saying that the units are Government Units and Government has the right to maintain the tenant's unit. Sir, there are some houses that have taps that have been running 6 or 7 weeks. Simply because those persons are in arrears the National Housing Corporation does not want to fix the units. This policy that once you owe rent you have to maintain the unit yourself. But we have got to be the caretakers for the people in this country. We have to adopt a far more humanitarian approach with these people living in the housing units.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member has one more minute.

Mr. H. F. LASHLEY: Sir, in addition on the Pine East-West Boulevard at the junction, there is a high number of accidents on that road. Sir, I have written a letter to MTW asking them to look at the possibility of placing stop lights down at the bottom of the Pine East-West Boulevard because I see too many accidents down there. We are not doing this only for the people in the Pinelands, Wildey and Haggatt Hall. We are doing it for the entire Barbados because there are a number of persons who use that road.

Sir, just let me wind up at this point. We have a lot of sayings in Barbados and I think that we have come to the point when it is better to light one little candle than to curse the entire dark. Let us all put our heads together and let us work together systematically to solve the problem

that the poor people in this country are encountering. I thank you, Sir.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Mr. Chairman, Sir, I listened with interest to Honourable Members from the other side. Being leaderless is one severe problem that they face in these Estimates debate, but another severe problem is that it has nothing to do with party politics that the Leader of the Opposition sees fit to take flight on his private business and leave his side leaderless in the Estimates debate. That has nothing to do with party politics. But the other side labours under the problem in these Estimates debate that they cannot defend any Head that comes before the House. They have no decent record to defend in Agriculture. We are on Housing now and nothing to defend. According to the historical fact, Mr. Chairman, in the 1950s at the time when the Barbados Labour Party in Government was building the new **Grantley Adams Airport**...

#### *Aside.*

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Could there be someone in Barbados who does not know where the airport is, Mr. Chairman? ...building a new Deep Water Seaport, Queen Elizabeth Hospital, a General Hospital which is today a Teaching Hospital of the University of the West **Indies** built to service our needs well into the year **2020** and beyond and still servicing those needs, when it was building Combermere, the St. **Leonard's** School, Princess Margaret School, the Pine Housing Estate, Belleplaine Housing Estate, Gall Hill Housing Estate, **Grazette** Housing Estate, also when the private sector was investing in Sandy Lane which was the beginning of certain quality of tourism in this country, the new Fire Station in Bridgetown on Probyn Street still servicing the needs of its catchment area well into the year **2000** – all of that, Mr. Chairman, was happening at one and the same time. There were doubting Thomases and detractors of the Barbados Labour Party who said that it could not be done. We are hearing 'the same kind of talk now. This Barbados Labour Party Administration has embarked on an expansion project for the **Grantley Adams International Airport**, an **expansiou** and reform project for the Bridgetown Port. The **Pondside** Housing is going to begin in this financial year. All of this is in this Head that is before us at this time.

**2.20 p.m.**

The Bridgetown Rehabilitation Plan. Mr. Chairman, if I open this and start now my 15 minutes will disappear in two minutes, but I will come back and deal with this alone. There are "doubting **Thomases**" and the detractors of the Barbados Labour Party who will tell you that it cannot be done. It can be done. It has been done before when we had less resources at our command and we will do it again.

#### *Aside.*

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Yes, we have more human and other resources now. Mr. Chairman, in 1976 the Barbados Labour Party came back into Government and brought an entirely new concept to urban renewal, particularly in the City of Bridgetown. Kensington Lodge, the Pondside, **Fernihurst**, Rosemont, **Bonnetts**, Six Roads, Bagatelle and others I cannot remember. Those were the housing estates established between 1976 and 1986. Between 1986 and 1994, and particularly as we were running up to what the Honourable Leader of the Opposition is now calling a period of minimalist government, .....

*Aside.*

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Mr. Chairman, it is hard for Barbadians to accept that in 1994, as we are running up to the 21st century, the Democratic Labour Party would be opening for public use a night shelter, which was really only a warmed up Hindsbury Primary School, now known as the Sir Clyde **Gollop** Night Shelter. I give Sir Clyde Gollop a lot of credit for allowing his name to be attached even to the concept of it, but that this was the concept of answering to housing needs in this country in 1994, is more than we should be expected to accept.

Between 1986 and 1994 we lived in a Barbados where a former Prime Minister, the Right Honourable Member for St. Michael South, who is not now in his seat, created conditions which saw a situation where it became impossible for Barbadians to get a mortgage and buy a home. It actually became cheaper between 1986 and 1994 to rent than to buy. He stole from Barbadians. . . .

*Mr. B. M. TAITT rose.*

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: I have not said it yet, so what are you jumping up for?

*Asides.*

Mr. B. M. TAITT: She cannot put that in the record, Sir.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: The hat is fitting, that is why he is jumping up from his seat, but he is left here by your Leader to run interference. That is your whole task for five days.

Mr. Chairman, the Honourable Leader of the Opposition, **formerly** Minister of Finance, stole from Barbadians the right to tax relief in respect of mortgage interest and other such things. It made people right away find themselves in a situation where they could hardly afford to buy a home. **Tax** relief in respect of home repairs, that too was taken from us systematically between 1986

and 1994. For a whole generation of **first** time home owners, who would have benefited in that way and who found that having had their salaries cut by 8%, laid off, on short time, it was impossible for them to service a mortgage or a loan of any kind. Even people who were converting wood to wall in this country, which as we know is a gradual process where you muster up your materials and bit by bit you start from the back and come forward converting your wood to wall, even people like that where they would have been able to completely rebuild their houses in a period of about two or three years found that five to seven years passed and it was impossible to do. People had lumber under the cellar, but they could not afford to pay the labour and then the wood ants and the wet rot were getting at it. All of that went on between 1986 and 1994, so I had a lot of difficulty yesterday in here, Sir, listening to the Right Honourable Member for St. Michael South talking about any record, recent or otherwise, that the Democratic Labour Party could have in respect of housing. What happened in that period is that the housing stock in Barbados ran down, because it was not being replaced or refurbished...

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: The Honourable Member keeps talking about 1986. I just want to make it clear to her that in 1986 mortgage interest deductibility was substantially increased, on repairs deductibility was substantially increased and for the first time 50% of home insurance was made tax deductible.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Mr. Chairman, before I could even get to the Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central he gets up and he puts his foot into it. What he needs to explain to Barbadians is the consequence of that and how long it lasted. We are still paying the bills for that to this day and it is going to come up in this debate before it is finished. The Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central thinks that people forget that he was the architect of not one budget, but two. There was a budget in July of 1986 that we are never going to forget, but then there was a budget less than a year later, in April of 1987, to crucify the people of this country. **That** was the budget when you were taxing cabbage, lettuce and green peas. We were in the Other Place at the **time**. I was sitting there as an observer and I heard when the late Mr. **Errol** Barrow said: "**Richie** got to change this". I heard that with these two ears.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Mr. Chairman, on a point of order. The Honourable Member really ought not to mislead the House. Can she produce the record to show that anybody ever taxed green peas, lettuce and that sort of thing?

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: That is what I am saying. I was there on the Floor when the late **Errol** Barrow said, and I heard it with these two ears: "**Richie** got to change this". Do you want to deny it?

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: On a point of order. The Honourable Member is misleading this Honourable House. In 1986 a consumption tax schedule was laid in Parliament as part of a budget which contained the same kind of errors which were in the last budget, and as in the case of the environmental taxes introduced in this House in the last budget. They were corrected by the Minister of Finance on the spot and there was never any intention on the part of **any** Minister of Finance in this country to levy a tax that was uncollectible. That is the kind of **propagandistic** stupidity that an ignorant person repeats in this House of Assembly again and again. Stupidness!

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member is asked to withdraw the word "ignorant".

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Mr. Chairman, that is his story and he is sticking to it, as he is entitled to do.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: On a point of order. I just heard the Honourable Member say that she was – I think she said in here – and she heard it with her own ears. She heard it with her own ears in **1986**? You heard Errol Barrow in the Senate.  
2.30 p.m.

Sir, the Honourable Member lost her seat in 1986. I don't know how she could have heard Errol Barrow. She is in no position to say what is in the records. The Rules in this House do not permit her to hear Errol Barrow saying anything. I do not believe her, Sir.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Mr. Chairman, Sir, this Chamber was under refurbishment. The House was then meeting in the Other Place. I was a member of the Other Place. I was careful to say that I was in there as an observer. I said it right here. You were not listening.

I was sitting almost directly behind the late Mr. **Errol** Barrow in the chairs reserved for those who were there to observe and I heard with these two ears the Honourable Prime Minister...

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: On a point of order. The Honourable Member is again misleading this House. She could not possibly have been sitting behind the late Prime Minister because the gallery was over on the other side of the Senate. She could not have been sitting behind him. I was inside there. The Honourable Prime Minister sat at that end of the Table and the gallery was at this end of the Chamber.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Mr. Chairman, Sir, all of this is to distract me from **talking** about housing, because they cannot defend their housing record. The gallery ran in those days right around the Senate and I am telling you what I was there to hear.

Mr. Chairman, Sir, what I know of my own knowledge is that I had constituents to deal with. In those years, people when they had their salaries cut by 8%, people when they were laid off, people when they were put on short time, could not service their mortgages. The banks were holding more real estate around this country than dollars. There were some banks in Bridgetown holding more real estate than real estate companies on their books. I know whereof I speak. All of that was created during those years **1986-94**. We lived with that. That was the contribution of the Democratic Labour Party in those years.

There were some banks that were holding nearly as much real estate as real estate companies, foreclosing on people's properties, because they could not afford their mortgage payments. That is what Barbados was reduced to in the year 1994. That was the environment from which people sought relief in September, 1994.

Mr. Chairman, Sir, I am proud and I congratulate the Honourable Minister for Housing and the Parliamentary Secretary that again a new initiative in urban renewal has come back to Barbados and that the City of Bridgetown will be the beneficiary of that among others.

In 1986, when we left Government there was a housing estate under construction at what is known as the Pond Side. There were people on that side, Mr. **Chairman** ...

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member is asked to wind up. You can come back later.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Very well, Sir. I will rise again. I will speak about the Pond Side because they have a despicable record in respect to the Pond Side.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: Mr. Chairman, the Honourable Member for the City would like people to believe that the Barbados Labour Party has this great record in housing going back to the 1950s and beyond. The truth of the matter is that there has never been in the history of this country enough public housing to meet the demands of the poor people of this country. There has never been enough financing available to meet the needs of the lower, middle income groups in this country.

I recall back in the 1970s when the Barbados Labour Party was in office in this country and the pressure for housing units by the National Housing Corporation was hardly less than it was today. There are people who have applied for houses since the 1950s and up to today they have not got a house from the National Housing Corporation. There are a few who have applied and then their circumstances change in life over the years and

have been able to find some means of finding shelter over their heads. So don't come in here and try to fool the public of Barbados that there was this great major contribution to public housing in Barbados by the Barbados Labour Party solving the problems of housing. It just is not true. It is just nothing other than propaganda emanating from the Floor of the House of Assembly. What we should be dealing with today is how we can deal with the problems facing all categories of persons requiring housing in Barbados and in my first contribution to this debate I will try to set out the broad criteria that should be used for that purpose.

Nothing ever stops the Honourable Member for the City from getting in here and trying to mislead the people of Barbados. If anybody in Barbados ever paid taxes on cabbages, carrots or anything like that then they should come forward and speak. I will say it is a lie to say that anybody in Barbados ever paid taxes on those matters. Like all Ministers of Finance who lay complicated documents in this House, I laid a similar document in **1987** and there were errors in that document which were brought to the attention of the House during the debate, before the debate was **finished** and those errors were corrected by an appropriate statement by the Minister of Finance on the Floor of the House.

It is not only disingenuous but I am saying it is deliberately wicked to be spreading abroad a whole lot of nonsense.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Order! The Chair understands that you are making reference to the speech of the Honourable Member for the City and the imputation is that the Honourable Member for the City is being wicked. I am therefore asking you to withdraw that comment.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: I will withdraw the word "wicked" and I will say it is disingenuous and misleading to this Honourable House. Today, Mr. Chairman, we are debating the first part of the Budget for **1996-97**. To date, we cannot get legislation on income tax proposals of the last Budget and I am quite sure when they come in here they will be substantially changed because of the problems being created by the statements made in the House during the Budget. It is not unusual for budgetary statements to be refined and properly refined in legislation subsequent to a budgetary statement.

Last year we had taxation announced in a Budget on environmental **axe** which would put businesses in **bankruptcy**. I believe one business alone it will cost another \$3 million to operate if it was put in the present form. These are things that happen. It is a question as to whether they are corrected then and corrected on the spot. As a matter of fact, Sir, when I corrected that Schedule, there

were something like **147** existing mistakes from previous Ministers of Finance over the 10 years that had to be corrected at the same time. The entire Schedule had to be redone by me as Minister of Finance and a new Schedule brought before this Honourable House. But that **kind** of foolishness is something that is designed to obfuscate what is going on in this country.

2.40 p.m.

The fact is that out there people have become already totally disenchanted with the present Government. They are thoroughly annoyed by the gap between the promises and the propaganda being put out **day** after **day** and the **performance**. It is a fact that more and more people come to me every day **seeking** help for housing and jobs. They have all **kinds** of problems, and they can get neither one.

What we want to hear and what these Estimates should be about, is a housing policy which offers some hope to solving the problem of housing, not a discussion about the failures of the Democratic Labour Party over the years. And when you attack any political party, it is important to remember that the Barbados Labour Party was in office over 50 per cent of the time since **1937** and any residual major social problem in Barbados they must bear part of the responsibility. So, Mr. Chairman, I not being a member of the Barbados Labour Party or the Democratic Labour Party cannot get myself too involved in that **kind** of situation.

The point I want to make, Sir, is that some day somebody has to deal with the Honourable Member for the City who is going to so disrupt the operations of this Honourable House before this session is finished because not only is she ignorant of the rules – and ignorant is used in the correct manner. She does not know the rules – but is so ..., always pompasetting on the floor of the House.

*A certain word used by Dr. R. C. HAYNES was ordered expunged from the records by Mr. CHAIRMAN.*

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: Not only is she pushy in here, but she is so pushy that she is even undermining the order of precedence in this country. Could you imagine that she has got herself insinuated into the order of precedence as a Deputy Prime Minister? You have ever heard of that yet? In the order of precedence there are constitutional posts of Prime Minister, a Governor-General, a Speaker of the House representing us, Leader of the Opposition and all of a sudden you are getting Deputies in the order of precedence.

Hon. G. W. PAYNE: Mr. Chairman, on a point of order. The Honourable Member is making certain accusations against the Deputy Prime Minister. She is not in her seat. It has absolutely no relevance whatsoever to the Head which we are discussing. He can only make those accusations with the Honourable Member in her seat.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: I did not send her out. The Chairman did not send her out and if she is prepared to come in here and make all kinds of statements and then run outside when she is being answered let it happen that way but these **are** things we need to bring to the attention of the public because I think in the long run only the House will suffer, only the Committee will suffer, and only very important considerations would suffer.

Mr. Chairman, I sincerely hope that in the new Budget we would see an expansion and an increase in the amount of money made available to homeowners and perspective homeowners in respect of interest on mortgages that can be deducted. I **think** it is important to disaggregate the three because the three have different economic significance. At the moment you can claim up to \$3 000 for mortgages for insurance and for repairs.

Let me say this, Sir, when you give a tax relief for mortgage interest, does the Treasury lose money? I do not think so. More and more people qualify because, obviously, they can qualify with a lower salary if the interest is deductible. More homes are built. More money is put in the Treasury by way of direct taxes. When someone builds a house, by the time they are finished constructing a house the amount they will pay in indirect taxes would be equivalent probably to ten years of what they would pay in Income Tax for the average person because the cost of the house, almost 30 per cent to 40 per cent, is going to be going back to the Treasury in one form or another.

The second thing to remember is that the mortgage institutions pay taxes on the profits they make out of mortgages they extend to people so that Government gets money out of the construction process. Government gets more money again out of the profits of the construction companies, but the main beneficiary would be the person building the house, especially the person who needs the tax break in order to qualify for the mortgage and in order to build the house. That person benefits and large numbers of jobs **are** created in that particular way. There is no greater method of generating jobs in Barbados than through housing. Housing is a very important generator of jobs, the carpenter, the mason, the labourer, and the whole lot.

The next point I want to make is the area of repairs. That is also a major generator of jobs. When you look and see what happens in the community, what happens to the mason, the carpenter, the labourer and so on how he spends his money, a major area of activity and what that does, Sir? I will tell you what it does. That brings the home as a major part of the economic process of job generation so while you are meeting a social need, you are also contributing very substantially to job creation **in** Barbados and the economic activity in Barbados through creating an environment where more and more people would be able to qualify for mortgage.

At the level of public housing there are only two things you can do basically, the provision of more house spots and trying to get those house spots **as** cheap **as** possible. I said yesterday once you do this you make sure that when you spend money on infrastructure that as many house spots as possible can benefit from that and make the house spots available to potential home owners as cheap as you possibly can ...

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

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: ... and at the same time through public effort you can try to find a **financing** package to help them. The other way is for Government to build or facilitate the building of units. But it is a massive **task**. It is a demand that is going to be very difficult to meet but you need to probably be generating houses at about ten times the rate that is being proposed here in these Estimates over time, and that is the problem.

I thank you very much, Mr. **Chairman**.

Hon. Miss M. A. **MOTTLEY**: Mr. Chairman, it is amazing that facts have a way of being cited without relevance to what, in fact, **took** place. Anyone who has followed closely the events in Barbados since 1986 will have no doubt in their mind that the decision then by the then Minister of Finance to allow the claims on mortgage interest 100 per cent without capping it, opened the flood gates that led to a drain in the revenue that would otherwise have accrued to Government and I want to be very careful in what I am saying. Nobody is disputing at all that persons who build houses in Barbados generally, and particularly persons earning below a certain level of income and building a house of a certain size should have the right to claim their mortgage interest as **an** allowance off their Income Tax returns. What the then **Minister** of Finance, the now Member for St. Michael South Central did was to open up the flood gates and regardless of the amount of the interest being paid by the person claiming, any and everyone could claim. And what the Barbados Labour Party has always been, up to the point when we left **Goverment** in 1986 and indeed on **resumption** of office in 1994 has been to allow a certain...  
2.50 p.m.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: On a point of order, Sir. Just for the education and information of the Honourable Member. 100% mortgage interest deduction was always part of the Barbados law from the time I was a boy, from colonial days. It was 100% until...

**Asides.**

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: Mr. Chairman, as everywhere else in the world that I know, in western democracies,

there was **100%** mortgage deductability of interest until the Tom Adams Government put a cap on it some time in the 1980s or thereabouts for a few years.

Hon. Miss M. A. **MOTTLEY**: The Honourable Member really wishes to bamboozle those who do not know better. The reality is that there was not the same level of construction, there was not the same level of mortgages being executed in the economy and the reality was that the Barbados...

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: On a point of order, Mr. Chairman, there has never been more construction in Barbados than in the period 1961 to 1974, never, ever, in the history of Barbados, before or afterwards. That is a fact.

Hon. Miss M. A. **MOTTLEY**: Sir, that is a fact in the Honourable Member's mind and nowhere else. The reality is, Sir, that the Barbados Labour Party Government, between 1976 and 1986 **took** a policy position that the majority of **persons** earning below a certain income **threshold** and therefore being able to build houses up to a certain level should have the opportunity to claim the mortgage interest off their income **tax** returns. We capped it, Sir, because of the effect that would have on the revenue of the Treasury. We believed, Sir, that those who constituted the mass of people in this country would still be able to benefit. The cap, I believe was \$12 000 and the Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central took a decision to make that mortgage interest unlimited and as a result that along, with all of the other fanciful promises that he made, including the \$15 000 tax free which the party to which he then belonged reduced to \$13 000 before they left office. All of the other fanciful promises led to expenditure **cuts** in this country within less than a year of over \$34 million and led to a situation which the former Member for St. James South, a Member of the Democratic Labour Party openly admitted in this country, led Government Departments to operate on the basis of wages, utilities and nothing else and this country, Sir, in fairness, even to the former Prime Minister, the Right Honourable Member for St. Michael South had to deal with the financial fall out that was left by the Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central.

Sir, look at it, we are under the Head of Housing, over \$2 million was cut off the National Housing Corporation vote. Sir, earlier in the week we heard over \$9.8 million **take**," from agriculture. Sir, we want to understand the full benefits of the Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central, taking a decision to allow unlimited mortgage interest as an income tax return. The true results can be found in these 1997 Estimates, Sir. Do not let us bamboozle people in here, Sir, with information as if they did not know better. We have given the people

of this country a policy commitment that we believe they should be able to take off their income **tax** returns, moneys expended in interest for mortgage allowance and home repairs because we too believe that there is a benefit, not only to the individual, but for the creation of jobs. The first example of that was the Right Honourable Prime Minister's putting in the budget last year the right to claim from January 1, 1996 the sum of \$3 500 in respect of that and we have also gone on record that we believe that there should be incremental increases thereto but, Sir, it must be in relation to what the Treasury can bear. We do not, Sir, believe that you can be reckless and indeed, Sir, that was a position taken by the former Prime Minister. So, Sir, if you want to deal with these things let us deal with them in relation to what actually took place and not fanciful notions of what you would like.

I want, Sir, to deal with the question of urban tenancies because, Sir, a lot has been said in here but the truth is all of those who have represented St. Michael for all these years, 10 and 15 years, have not made in my view, Sir, a full and proper case for the right of people in tenancies in St. Michael to be placed on an even footing with those in rural Barbados. St. Michael, perhaps more than rural Barbados has suffered from the patchwork delineation of houses, the boundary disputes that fall from those patch work delineation, the social fall out that has fallen from it, the criminal activity that has fallen from it, and I want to suggest to this Honourable Chamber, Sir, that we as legislators have a responsibility to the people of St. Michael. I am happy to hear that the Honourable Minister of Housing is pursuing 'investigations' to see how legislatively we can seek to redress the grievances suffered by the people in St. Michael as a result of an inability to deal with their problems relating to tenantry lands in this country.

Plantation tenancies quite laudably were dealt with, for the most part, and we have seen the benefit of that piece of legislation to rural Barbados where people who could not otherwise afford to build a house because they had to look to buy land at a considerable **level** of expenditure, were able to put down and buy the land at 10 cents a square foot and thereafter, Sir, Mr. Chairman, were able to proceed with the refurbishment and expansion of their houses because of that filip given by the piece of legislation.

I want to suggest, Sir, that there are a number of possibilities for achieving the same. We need to examine whether the Schedule to the Tenancies Freehold Purchase Act can be amended to include urban Barbados. We need, Sir, to determine if that is not the most appropriate mechanism, whether we need to acquire the land and ensure that these residents can purchase these tenantry lands at prices that are affordable instead, Sir, of having

to purchase them, very often at prices of **\$5.00** a square foot **as** is the case of residents of tenancies throughout St. Michael. I know of the example of **Alleyne's** Land, Bush Hall where they were charged **\$5.00** a square foot for land that has no commercial value, for land, Sir, that the services have been put in financed by the Government of Barbados – the lights, the roads and in some instances natural gas – and for which the owner of the land has had to bear no developmental expenses. Now I know, Sir, the existence of the Tenancies Development Act which prevents landlords from being able to benefit from services provided by Government or other third parties in the setting of the price for those tenancy lands. But I do not believe, Sir, that the present legislation **as** it currently is can effectively address the concerns of these residents in St. Michael without more being done to it. I therefore urge the Minister of Housing and the Housing Unit which has been doing an excellent job to continue in that direction because I would not like us to go into the year 2000 without **seeking** to redress grievances suffered by the people living in tenancies in St. Michael for decades and in some instances centuries having done it, Sir, for rural Barbados.

I want to suggest, Sir, that anybody who spends any time at all in the Criminal Courts in this country will realize that a large number of disputes and offences that are committed arise out of boundary disputes where in some instances there are no more than **5** feet between the houses, and where you are **asking** people to live on top of one another. Even a seminar is agreeable too. But the point is that their interest must be placed foremost on the agenda of this Barbados Labour Party Government. If you want, Sir, to talk about generating jobs and generating income in the society, the mere ability of those people to be put in a position where they can have housing needs dealt with effectively through dealing with the tenancy problems and giving them an opportunity to purchase land at a reasonable price. So that the money they may have had saved in their back pocket can go towards the refurbishment of their home. That will create a lot of jobs for the same repairs that the Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central was just pompersetting about while ensuring a real and direct benefit to these people.

**3.00 p.m.**

But I want to say one word of caution, Mr. Chairman. Some of these persons in St. Michael will have to understand too that, in order to solve the tenancy problems, there may also be a need for relocation of some tenants because there are many instances across St. Michael where tenants are prevented from having access to services because of the patchwork nature of how the houses have been put up. Therefore, to bring in roads or foot paths or services, it may require the relocation of one or two houses in some instances. We would ask, Sir, that people in understanding what we are trying to achieve would be able to respond not only in terms of what we would want to do with the overall position of the tenancies, but even in the

Urban Renewal Pilot Project that we are executing now where, if you are going to improve the lot and bring a level of planning to the development of housing and services in this country, Sir, then we will have to ensure that in some instances it is done with the greater good at hand. That may well necessitate relocation in one or two instances as happens all the time, Sir, with the widening of roads where you may have to acquire pieces of person's land in order to carry the road through a particular area or district.

Sir, I just wanted to make those points because I believe that there must be an aggressive assault on behalf of the residents of St. Michael North East in relation to redressing these grievances. I believe, Sir, that the establishment of the Urban Renewal Pilot Project is the **first** major step in that direction and I believe, Sir, that the establishment of the Urban Renewal Unit where there are point persons within the Ministry of Housing to address these tenancy problems, to address the problems of liaising with other services that may be in other Ministries is the only way we can go forward in ensuring that there is an aggressive attack against the poverty in St. Michael and the need for relief among urban residents. I look **forward** to it wholeheartedly and I believe, Sir, that the Minister has said that the \$1.2 million is only to ensure that there is a pilot to see how we can do it administratively and how successful it can be, but at the end of the day there will be a substantial pool of funds available for this type of work in St. Michael.

Sir, I will come back at a later stage. But I really just wanted to compliment the Minister of Housing, Parliamentary Secretary and indeed the public servants in the Ministry of **Housing** for doing an excellent job in resuscitating housing in this country.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: **The Honourable Member for St. Philip South.**

Mr. F. J. STUART: **Mr. Chairman**, I should like to be permitted a very brief intervention in this debate. I am unequal to the evangelical fervor just worked up by the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East whose habit it is in these debates to generate a lot more heat than light. As I understand the housing problem in Barbados and certainly as it manifests in the constituency of St. **Philip South**, there are three major problems in the housing sector in St. **Philip** certainly among low income people. The first manifests amongst those who have no houses at all – those who want houses and can get none. They have neither house nor land. As I understand the Government's case in this debate, the reason for that was that the Democratic Labour Party had \$20 million at its disposal and sat on that \$20 million between 1991 and 1994 and therefore this Government now has to come to the rescue of those

who have no house spots nor houses so that we can confidently expect at least \$20 million to be spent in the housing sector over the next year or two.

I just want to know who to send the constituents of St. Philip South to because if this money is going to be spent, the problem manifests itself acutely in St. Philip South and I do not know of any supporter of the Democratic Labour Party in St. Philip South who would be minded to refuse a house or house spot because it is coming from a Barbados Labour Party Government. So if there is \$20 million at the disposal of the Government to solve the housing problem in St. Philip South, I am very glad to hear that in this debate and I shall be seeking to find out who I can send my constituents to when they come badgering me about houses and house spots.

The second manifestation of the housing problem, Mr. Chairman, is amongst those who even if they could afford a house cannot get a house spot. Now one of the much vaunted pieces of legislation passed by the Barbados Labour Party is the Tenancies Freehold Purchase Act, 1981. I believe the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East who just sat down mentioned it and yesterday the Honourable Member for Christ Church West mentioned it. That piece of legislation had two dimensions. It had a plantation dimension and a non-plantation dimension. With the plantation dimension, I could have no quarrel. After all, those who benefitted from plantation tenancies worked on them for a long number of years and it was only fair that they should be able to benefit if only from the marginal lands which they occupied in plantation tenancies. But I have a hunch and I believe that this hunch has been confirmed by my experiences as a practising lawyer that a lot of the house spot problems in Barbados over the last decade and a half can be traced to the non-plantation aspect of the Tenancies Freehold Purchase Act, for a large number of private landlords who never intended to dispose of their lands were forced to do so by the provisions of the Tenancies Freehold Purchase Act.

3.10 p.m.

I have had to deal with many situations where private landlords have tried to find out how best they could circumvent the provisions of that piece of legislation, because they have had entirely different plans for their lands and found themselves in a situation where the Act was saying that their tenants could buy and that they were forced to sell and their plans to devise or to bequeath their lands to their children were therefore cheated of fruition.

That piece of legislation, so far as it related to the non-plantation landlords, has bred deep suspicion amongst private land owners in Barbados, and certainly in the parish of St. Philip, where people even after the Act was amended by the Democratic Labour Party in 1989 had not felt the

confidence again to want to rent their lands out to tenants for fear that, as has happened before, they might find themselves almost overnight having to dispose of their lands. This, I suspect, has resulted in an enormous amount of pressure being placed on the National Housing Corporation, since access to private lands on the basis of private landlord/tenant arrangements has been reduced because of this suspicion that private landlords now have. The pressure has shifted to the National Housing Corporation and the situation that we heard described in the House over the last 24 hours has been the result.

#### Aside.

Mr. F. J. STUART: I hear the Honourable Member for St. Thomas saying *sotto voce* that there has always been pressure. I agree there has always been pressure, but I am saying the pressure has increased, because fewer private people are now willing to rent their lands out for fear that they might lose them by legislative action.

As I understand it, the Government has a solution for this problem as well. I heard the Minister say – and I hope that if I am wrong he will correct me – that wherever any Member of Parliament sees in his constituency lands which he feels could be used for housing development, for the allocation of house spots, that Member of Parliament is free to draw it to the attention of the Minister and the Ministry, after proper investigation, will do what is necessary to get the land and make it available to tenants.

Hon. G. W. PAYNE: On a point of order, Sir. The record will show, and it might be interpreted that this Government is walking around the island on the advice of certain parliamentarians and arbitrarily acquiring people's lands. The two conditions I did mention with respect to this particular policy are:

- (1) after consultation with the land owner, and in many cases we will try to get the approval of the land owner; and
- (2) we are talking about marginal lands on the periphery of existing villages so that the village concept can be maintained at all times.

The Honourable Member is correct, subject to those two conditions.

Mr. F. J. STUART: It has not been too preposterous. I am very glad to hear that and I now know what rule of thumb to observe in dealing with this matter.

The third dimension of the housing problem to which I want to refer is that which relates to those persons in the society, and I believe this is a problem that transcends

the perimeters of the parish of St. Philip, persons who actually own land, either by having purchased it or by having inherited it, on which they have built houses but now cannot enjoy the houses they have built because of inadequate access to them, especially during the rainy season. Their case is that they have saved the State the expense or the trouble of providing them with house spots; they have also saved the State the expense or the trouble of providing them with houses; and that it is only fair that if all they need now are proper roads to lead to their houses, the State should readily and willingly chip in to assist them with that problem.

I believe I heard the Honourable Member for Christ Church West Central talk about people leaving their homes and having to put plastic bags on their feet in order to get from their homes to the public highway. That is a problem that also exists in the constituency of St. Philip South and it results from the fact, as I said, that people have built impressive structures on lands either inherited or purchased, having saved the Government the trouble of having to supply them with either house spots or houses, and they are calling on the Government now to assist them with roads to help them enjoy the properties for which they have worked so hard and which they very magnanimously built. I am aware, of course, that the Ministry over which the Honourable Member for St. Andrew presides has a subsidiary road programme in place and this, might, I suspect, minister to some of those requirements, as indeed I believe the Rural Development Commission and the vote of \$4 million might help in this regard, but these are three major areas of housing problems in the constituency of St. Philip South, but I believe that these reproduce themselves in other constituencies across the country.

I should like to thank the Government for informing us on this side that there is a bottomless pit of money from the Housing Credit Fund to deal with these housing problems in the short term, so money is not a problem. I am glad to know too that as long as we satisfy two clearly stated criteria we can get the house spot problem resolved in all of our constituencies. I just want to urge the Minister now to have regard to the issue I just raised, that those people who have built houses on land is they either bought or inherited, and who only call on the Government to provide them with easy and congenial access to their houses.

Mr. Chairman, with those brief remarks on housing, I am obliged to you, Sir.

HIS HONOUR R. D. MARSHALL: Mr. Chairman, with the advent of highways in Barbados, one will notice the amount of vending that has been going on on these highways, and rightly so, these people must find ways and means of sustaining themselves and their families, and with

the newest highway coming on stream very soon, I am quite sure that a lot more vending is going to take place on these highways. What I am looking at, Sir, with the amount of money being asked for under this Head, under Subprogram 01, the Ministry should look at building some kiosks on these highways to enable these people to offer their produce to the motoring public. I take the Highway every day and especially on evenings and early at night there are people selling corn and food and on Sundays coconuts and there are a lot of people going to these persons to buy their products. I find at times that although there are shoulders on the road the shoulders are not always that wide and I find that a lot of the cars are parked on these highways. Sir, I believe that this could cause some kind of problem to people resulting in loss of limb or life if accidents occur.

3.20 pm.

At the roundabout at Warrens there is a situation where we have a bread vendor. He does his vending about 3 nights a week and Sunday night is his biggest night. Not too far away I believe that we will have some serious accident there. While people are trying to get into the entrance to the gas station and cars are coming, people park their cars next to the road and stop to buy the bread and then you cannot enter the gas station and you cannot get out also.

I am asking, Sir, that the people responsible in the Ministry take a look at the situation. There are other lands there that I am sure we can make some kind of accommodation for this bread vendor to sell his bread. It was brought to my attention that 2 letters were sent to the Ministry concerning this problem from the gas station and I went there sometime ago and I was given a copy of one of these letters. So I am asking that the Minister and those responsible in the Ministry take a look at this situation not only on the highways but also at this situation at the Warrens Roundabout. Thank you.

Dr. R. C. Haynes: I rise primarily to respond to the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East and in the process treat her very gently but largely from the perspective of educating her not to get into things that she doesn't know too much about.

Sir, if anyone ever wished to suggest that the Barbados Labour Party is washed in the blood of the lamb in relation to the negative impact on housing, much of which still needs to be corrected now, during its last period in office I wish today to identify them so that we can see areas where some relief may be brought in order to give a catalyst to housing.

Mr. Chairman, the first thing the Barbados Labour Party did after 1976 was to abolish the tax deductibility

of land taxes in Barbados. Prior to that, land taxes were deductible against a nominal thing called the GRV, the Gross Rental **Value**, and land taxes were deducted. That is the **first** thing they did. The second thing they did having abolished the deductibility of land taxes they increased the land taxes in Barbados substantially and sequentially over a number of years. That is the first blow to housing and to homeowners in Barbados.

The second blow they brought about was to introduce *ad valorem* stamp duties and consumption taxes on a wide range of building materials used in poor people's homes. In other words, cement, quarrying materials, siding, sinks, piping material. All this stuff. A whole range of taxes were imposed on building in Barbados and that is why I say today when you have built a house about 40% of your total outlay or more might well be in taxes at the moment. That is something that needs to be addressed. It was the Barbados Labour Party that did that.

The third thing they did, apart from those 2 taxes on housing and the housing of poor people, was to put a ceiling on mortgage interests. Now, Sir, we hear how unlimited mortgage interest in Barbados destroyed the Barbados economy according to the Member for St. Michael North East.

Hon. Miss M. A. **MOTTLEY**: On a point of order. The Honourable Member is capable of hyperbole in every regard. I said that unlimited mortgage interest led to among other things, along with the other – I called the **\$15 000** tax deductibility – that he gave in that give-away bonus of **1986**, July Budget, that all of that led to the destruction of the Barbados economy in **1991**. That is what I said, not the mortgage interest alone, Sir.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: Mr. Chairman, the Honourable Member is not an economist. I would not respond to that. That is like anybody coming in the year **2005** or **2201** and saying that something that the Government does today destroyed the Barbados economy **5** years from now. That is another matter.

The point I am making, and somebody has to protect the public of Barbados against this barrage by the Barbados Labour Party by exposing what they did to poor people's housing when they were in office. I just want to say that when the IMF came to this country I was one of those people who was surprised to discover that only **3 000** people had mortgages in Barbados. **90%** of those with mortgages were paying less than \$600 a month and were on **fixed salaries**. **Therefore**, they had no means of escape as far as PAYE and other deductions were concerned.

So the only people in Barbados who could have abused that situation of unlimited mortgage interest deductions would be the **10%** of rich people in Barbados.

Whether you put a ceiling on them or not they still will **find** ways and means of getting their mortgage interests, their repairs, their insurance, the whole lot off. In Barbados today all you have to do is to move into another house and rent out one. Do you realise that? If you want to get your mortgage interest off the house, if you want to get your insurance off, if you want to get all those things off, the repairs and maintenance, all you have to do is move out of your house, rent a house and rent out your house for the same rent that you are renting. Because it is an income generating property you can get **\$100 000** off in mortgage interests. You can get **\$1** million off in repairs, whatever you want to get off.

The point I am making is that there are only a small group of people in Barbados and there is nothing you can do to stop them from manipulating a tax situation because they have the resources to do it. They have access to the accountants. But for the vast majority of people who are locked into mortgages at **\$800** a month, probably living in **\$100 000** houses, people working in the public service, people who **are** employees who pay PAYE, their taxes are deducted at source and they have no flexibility at all and that **accounts** for **90%** of mortgages in Barbados. A whole lot of rich people don't even need mortgages. Why would a rich man want to get a mortgage unless it is a tax situation? Why is he going to pay 2 or 3 times for a house way of a mortgage when he can buy cash unless he is going to manipulate the situation so that the Government would pay for most of the house? These **are** things that people **must** understand so that when you hear propaganda that it could be properly assessed and you recognize exactly what the **Barbados** Labour Party did in those days you cannot come in here now trying to make all these claims.

**3.30 p.m.**

How can I try to reverse that impact on housing? Let me tell you what I did. I restored the tax deductibility on mortgages. I gave people for the **first** time the opportunity to deduct – and it was **50** per cent of their insurance premiums on **their** homes in order to try to protect their homes.

*Aside.*

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: I agree with you. I just want to get these things **absolutely** straight to one and all exactly what is happening. You know what our side did? I reduced the taxes on basic building materials going into poor people's homes and things **like** sinks, faucets and all those kinds of things. **That** was a worthwhile contribution to housing – make no mistake about it, a very significant one for lower income **groups**.

All I am going to tell you is that you cannot help poor people, you cannot help rich people with

housing policy, neither one you can do, nor car policy or whatever you want to do. You cannot in any way affect them because they have the flexibility to manipulate their finances within the Income Tax laws of Barbados and I hope you have got the point I have made. When you come in here **talking** about we have limited mortgage **deductibility** of \$1 200, let me tell you. There are a lot of people who do not live in the houses on which they are taking the mortgages off. Let me tell you that. They do not.

The other thing too is this. Even the house you are living in, if you own other properties ... I say nothing more. There are ways and means of dealing with those things so let us be realistic and look at the net impact on these things. But I am not here to defend 1986 nor am I going to be trapped into that. I have merely mentioned those things, Sir, to give some idea where we can go in order to move for the **future** by looking at these impositions on housing, if anyone is so minded to give further relief to housing in Barbados.

*Aside.*

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: If VAT handles that, I think you will agree with me that something has to be done because there is no question about it.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member has one more minute.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: A lot of people do not realize that **tax** component of building a house is so high that probably one would pay more taxes in your lifetime when you have built a house than what you pay in PAYE every month for a normal working life of 30 to 40 years for a man who is earning \$1 000 to \$2 000 a month, and that is a fact. That is a harsh fact and that is the situation in Barbados today.

Sir, I do not have to keep boasting in here that the Barbados economy expanded by 5 per cent in **1986, 2.8** per cent in 1987, that it was the halcyon years, the golden years of economic expansion in the past 15 years, and that **were** it not for those two years economic expansion might have been zero. Nor do I wish to keep pointing out that the expansion was balanced, nor do I have to keep pointing out that the Barbados Labour Party will attack me until the day I die and beyond because I gave tax relief to people earning \$15 000 and under. They were the people whom they put taxes on from \$5 and upwards. For \$5 a week and upwards they put the barefoot **tax** on people. They put the health levy on people at \$5 a week and upwards.

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

*Asides.*

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Order, please. The Chair would just like to apprise this Committee of Standing Order **66(7)**. It says: -

"On the motion "that the sum of \$... for Head... stand part," the debate shall be confined to the policy of the service for which the money is to **be provided** and not deal with the details of expenditure, but may refer to the details of revenue or funds for which that service is responsible."

As far as the Chair is aware, we are dealing with the Estimates for 1996-97 and we are dealing with the Ministry of Public Works, Transport and Housing, Head 42. The Chair has been giving much leverage to the House and I am therefore asking that speakers from now on be guided by the Standing Orders of the House. The Chair will not be as lenient as it has been before. Tomorrow is the last day of these debates and in the national interest I would like to direct Members to follow the Standing Orders of this House.

Hon. G. W. PAYNE: Mr. Chairman, on a point of order. According to your ruling, Sir, I think that the entire speech of the Honourable Member should be struck from the record.

Mr. B. M. **TAITT**: Mr. Chairman, bearing in mind your remarks and directing the Minister to page 214 of the Estimates which deals with, according to what it says here, a small sum of money which will be given to the National Housing Corporation to assist in offsetting the difference between projected revenue of the National Housing Corporation and the means by which the expenditure is projected, the amount which is here, Sir, in the words of a former ambassador to the United Nations, boggles the mind in relation to the grandiose programmes and plans which have been trumpeted both in the national Press and sometimes in here.

I have great difficulty understanding how the sum of \$1 million which is listed as the amount which will be given to the National Housing Corporation, and bearing in mind what the National Housing Corporation itself has said about its own **ability** to get money because I read where the Chairman said that the reason why he had to evict people from the various places is that they were expecting to raise \$5 million but they only raised \$2 million and this was nowhere near what was projected of his needs.

I wish the Minister when all the large talk is finished to explain how the people who come to the representatives in St. Michael, of which the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East spoke with such disdain, I wish to know what to tell those people when they come.

*Aside.*

Mr. B. M. **TAITT**: She said that all those people who had been representing St. Michael for all those years. You remember, Sir?

Mr. CHAIRMAN: All right.

Mr. B. M. **TAITT**: She spoke with some disdain but I always understand when she is speaking that is a case where she is not necessarily thinking. I do not get too concerned about what she says. Her speaking and thinking often do not coincide when she is in this House.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: I think that should be withdrawn.

Mr. B. M. **TAITT**: I withdraw it. If Your Honour believes it is offensive I will withdraw that but the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East when speaking about the representatives of St. Michael, since I **am** one of the people who would fall into that category of persons who have represented people in St. Michael for a long time, can give her facts with regard to that particular issue. Ten of those years were under the Barbados Labour Party and there was a deliberate policy spoken of and repeated in here ...

*Asides.*

Mr. B. M. **TAITT**: Mr. Chairman, if I **am** to make my points I would wish to make them in silence.

*Asides.*

Mr. B. M. **TAITT**: I **am** dealing with the policy of the \$1 million. I **am** showing that \$1 million is without any shadow of a doubt insufficient, totally insufficient to deal with the matters in the terms outlined either by the Minister, or any of the spokesmen of the Government, on how many houses they are going to construct, where they are going to construct them and how much land they **are** going to acquire for housing. All of those things sound extremely good and make great copy for the journalistic pugilists.  
3.40 p.m.

Mr. G. A. **CLARKE**: On a point of order, Sir, the Honourable Member is making a very silly point.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member is asked to withdraw the word "silly".

Mr. G. A. **CLARKE**: I am on a point of elucidation. Mr. Chairman, in 1994 ...

Mr. CHAIRMAN: You are withdrawing the word "silly"?

Mr. G. A. **CLARKE**: Yes. In 1994 the then Government did not give the Corporation any money at all. There was a time when the Corporation got \$5 million and more but in 1994 they got no money at all. In 1995 we returned \$1 million to the Corporation and in this year's Estimates we are again giving them a million dollars.

Mr. B. M. **TAITT**: Mr. Chairman, he got up and said I **am** silly to say the Corporation is .....

Well he made a statement which caused Your Honour to have him withdraw it, Sir, about \$1 million and then concluded by saying that they have given them \$1 million. I would like the Honourable Member to show me where in these Estimates the allocation to do all of the grandiose things you have talked about. Mr. Chairman, this is where the expenditure is made and I was going on to show that the Chairman of the National Housing Corporation is on record as saying that he expected to get \$5 million in revenue from the outstanding arrears and he only collected \$2 million and therefore if he does not have enough revenue ....

Hon. G. W. **PAYNE**: On a point of order, I do not want to interrupt the Honourable Member because he would forget when he starts to talk again but the Chairman of the National Housing Corporation could not have made that point. The outstanding arrears **are** just over \$4 million so the Chairman of the National Housing Corporation could not have said that he expected to get \$5 million from the arrears.

Mr. B. M. **TAITT**: Sir, the Honourable Member is in a unique position to know exactly what the Chairman of the National Housing Corporation would or would not say. So if he says I **am** mistaken in the numbers, I **am** going to accept his version. What I **am** going to say is that the Chairman of the National Housing Corporation has indicated, as has his minions, that he does not have sufficient money to do any of the things which have been outlined for the National Housing Corporation.

Now, I stood in here today and I heard about this \$20 million which the Government of yore was sitting upon and which the distinguished gentlemen on the other side, whose responsibility it is now, will not be sitting upon. I wish to know how that is being translated in these Estimates. I would like the Minister, when he gets up, to point out to me, slow as I **am**, how that \$20 million is being put at the disposal of the people of Barbados, the manner in which it is going to be done, the details. I want to know how the people are going to qualify, if the qualification is going to be different from what it was.

*Aside,*

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Mr. Chairman, it is clear to me that we are going to have an impasse on this issue so if the Honourable Member says he has said it already, it is my fault for not understanding.

Hon. G. W. PAYNE: If the Honourable Member would just give way for one minute. The fact that \$1 million has been included in the Estimates for this year's capital works programme for the National Housing Corporation does not necessarily mean that that is all of the money that would be spent by the National Housing Corporation.

I did say in my presentation that the National Housing Corporation would be supplemented by loans from the Housing Credit Fund. In addition to that I did mention the situation whereby the Government would be selling properties from time to time and the funds from the disposal of those properties would be placed at the disposal of the National Housing Corporation.

In addition to that, the National Housing Corporation would receive income from the receipt of rents and from the sale of properties. All of these things I placed at the disposal of the House yesterday so I find it very strange that the Honourable Member did not actually listen. I believe he was not in his seat. I could go through it but, as you know, this took me about 45 minutes yesterday. I could go through it just to remind him of the record of the Barbados Labour Party since we came into Government, since the 6th September and to remind him that we will continue our housing programme which they neglected during the period of 1986 and 1994. If he wants me to do that I will do it.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: That is what we are here for, Sir, so he can do whatever he has to do. I am asking him to give me the details of it. A lot of flowery language does not move me. Even when he gets up on a point of order, Sir, he gave you speculation as to how they are going to raise revenue. They expect to raise revenue, they are going to get a loan. Could you tell us the amount of the loan they are going to get.

Mr. Chairman, I do not think you understand the confusion which is being weaved.

Hon. G. W. PAYNE: For instance the capital works programme does not necessarily include even the housing programme because I did say that included in the capital works programme was provision for new headquarters. Under the provision for new headquarters, project finance from the sale of 5 commercial properties at the Pine, St. Michael, the Corporation will make arrangements for bridging finance from the Barbados National Bank. The National Housing Corporation owns property all over the

Island, including land above the building which is owned by the Barbados Water Authority and there are 5 prospective purchasers, including the Barbados Water Authority, the Caribbean Broadcasting Corporation, Pine Hill Dairy. As a matter of fact the application has already been submitted to the Town Planning Office and these persons are interested in purchasing the property. The funds from the disposal of those assets will assist in the capital works programme.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Mr. Chairman, Sir, in law there is a thing called a chose in action. What the Honourable Member wants me to believe is that all the funds which the National Housing Corporation will get....

Sir, the Estimates process requires the Minister and/or his departments to give this House details of how they are going to raise the money and how much. The Minister cannot come in here and say that they have a lot of properties and they intend to sell them. Earlier we heard the Member for the City saying how hard it is to get a property sold in this country. We can go around the newspapers and find every day for the last year some properties have been advertised for sale and what do we have, a Government talking about how well they are doing in housing and a Minister who offers \$1 million to this committee and then says he expects to raise revenue from the sale of some properties which they have.

Hon. G. W. PAYNE: On a point of order, Sir, the Honourable Member is misleading the House. This \$1 million just represents what we will need from the Consolidated Fund after these properties are sold. That is why it is reflected here. If the National Housing Corporation could have managed without the need of seeking funds from the Consolidated Fund you would not even have seen it in here.

3.50 p.m.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: That is why talk about how much money we gave to the National Housing Corporation in 1994 is nothing but pure rubbish. The Honourable Member is now making the point that the National Housing Corporation has been put on its own and that for any Government to talk about who gave and how much they gave is nothing but rubbish, You see sometimes you have to put out a lot of sprats and you will catch a lot of whales. This debate led by the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East was taken in a completely different direction when she came here and tried to give the impression that a Daniel had come to judgment in the arena of housing in Barbados, as if the Democratic Labour Party would ever have any reason to hold its head down on an issue of housing. The Honourable Member had the temerity to talk about St. Michael. The houses in St. Michael, Mr. Chairman, are not houses that are hoped for. You

only have to go into any one of several of the developments in the **St. Michael** area. In **St. Michael North** alone, there are more housing developments than the Barbados Labour Party had done in the 300 years before. I do not understand how the Honourable Member can come in here and discuss housing in **St. Michael**.

*Aside.*

Mr. B. M. **TAITT**: The Barbados Labour Party behaves as though it is in existence from 1900 years ago. The Barbados Labour Party behaves as if at the time when God said 'let there be light', the first thing that emerged was the Barbados Labour Party but I am not going to go into that. Sir, the point that I am making is that the Honourable Member for **St. Michael North East** indicted the representatives from the various **St. Michael** constituencies saying that they did not do anything for the people for housing in this country. I do not know...

Hon. Miss M. A. **MOTLEY**: The Honourable Member has an amazing way of distorting facts. I said then and I repeat now that he distorted what I said and he is misleading the House.

Mr. **CHAIRMAN**: The Honourable Member is asked to withdraw. Hold a second. Your reference is pretty general. So I would prefer you to withdraw your comment. It is a bit offensive. Your saying that the Honourable Member has a way of distorting facts, it seems very general to me. I would not expect him to do that.

Hon. Miss M. A. **MOTLEY**: The Honourable Member has a way of distorting the facts of what I just said. The reality is, Mr. Chairman, that I indicated those comments in relation to the tenancies in **St. Michael** and the redressing of the imbalances for the persons renting on those tenancy lots. I never made those comments in relation to the Democratic Labour Party's record on housing because I would not have indicted the representatives of **St. Michael**. I would have indicted the whole Democratic Labour Party for their appalling housing record of building no houses between 1991 and 1994.

Mr. B. M. **TAITT** Mr. Chairman, once I understand that points of order will be developed in that way, I will understand my capacity to respond to them when I get back up. When it comes to indictment for housing and the degradation of the population in this country, the Honourable Member would be perhaps in a much better position than almost anybody else in here because the Honourable Member talked about tenancies. The Honourable Member might not be familiar with the **Alkins Tenantry** and, when she talked about the development of the **Alkins Tenantry**, the Honourable Member should do a little self-searching and discover that the **mish-mash** in the

whole of the **Hanschell Tenantry** and the **Alkins Tenantry** was carried out almost – no, I cannot say systematically – but there was a wholesale disruption of an entire plantation called **Hanschell Land**. But the Honourable Member does not wish this House to discuss that in any great detail. There are persons who are still suffering as a result of the attempts to deal with **Hanschell Land**. The Honourable Member for the City is in a position to tell the Honourable Member for **St. Michael North East** about **Cats Castle** and the places in the City where people used to live and eat what could not be described as reasonable food. The Honourable Member talked about how the representatives in **St. Michael** have been treating the people of Barbados. The Honourable Member is fully seized of a legacy of the degradation of people in this country.

Hon. Miss M. A. **MOTLEY**: On a point of order, Sir. Once again the Honourable Member is misleading the Chamber and distorting what I said. I never accused the representatives of **St. Michael** of ill-treating anybody. I said that they did not address themselves to the question of redressing the grievances experienced by urban tenants in their capacity to purchase the land at subsidized rate and I stick by that.

Mr. B. M. **TAITT**: Mr. Chairman, I happen to be a representative of people in an urban area and I invite the Honourable Member to come and see the improvements which have been made in that area as compared with the time prior to that when the Barbados Labour Party had the responsibility for that urban area. I put it to you, Mr. Chairman, that it can only be from the mouth of a person who is totally innocent of the history of housing in the urban areas of Barbados to come here after the Democratic Labour Party made a paradigm shift in the quality of life and the standard of living for the people in the **St. Michael** area in this country and the Honourable Member came in here and raised the issue.

*Aside.*

Mr. B. M. **TAITT**: If there is a pit toilet left in the **Belle**, the Honourable Member will be able to find it in the annals of the Barbados Labour Party how it got there. I need to remind the House that the second housing development made by the Barbados Labour Party was in the **Pine** where **there** were bedrooms without doors and where they had the privies outside in the back.

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

Mr. B. M. **TAITT**: She cannot walk in and say on a point of order. She has to at least sit down first. She should have respect. She cannot come in here and say on a point of order. I do not recognize her. She has to come in here and pay obeisance to you and sit down. She cannot

come in here and say on a point of order. Where does she think she is? In a fish market? She has to bow, sit down and then get up.

His Honour R. D. MARSHALL: Mr. Chairman, two Members are on their feet.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: On a point of order, Sir. The Honourable Member must not mislead this Honourable House. No matter how loudly he shouts it will not make wrong into right. In 1976 when the Barbados Labour Party came to Government, the Barbados Labour Party discovered that the Democratic Labour Party was digging toilets at Clapham for the people to move from Emmerton to Clapham. It was the Barbados Labour Party in the person of myself, Sir, who went there and said to the workmen, "Get off the job now. You will not find pit toilets dug in a Barbados Labour Party Government. Go away and come back with water borne facilities." People in Clapham therefore had that after 1976 down to the present time. That is what was happening then.

Mr. CHAIRMAN. Your time is almost up.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: My time is bound to be almost up when she comes in and talks for five minutes on a point of order. Anyhow, whatever you say. I am at your disposal. Mr. Chairman, I am entirely at your disposal. I will make points of order. I promise you lots. Anyhow, Sir, you can put in the record for those who do not know the rubbish which you just spoke...

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Honourable Member, please address the Chair. I am not talking rubbish. You should address the Chair. You have accused me of speaking rubbish.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: The only person that I could be addressing in this Chamber, Sir...

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Well, you have to come through me to talk to the other Members.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Sir, I did not wish the rubbish to pass through you. That is the only reason because you are Honourable, Sir.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: On a point of order, Sir. It is a fact that pit toilets were being dug at Clapham and the Honourable Member must withdraw the word "rubbish". It is a fact which I can testify.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Mr. Chairman, Sir, I am saying and I wish to repeat that the people of Barbados know...

Hon. G. W. PAYNE: Mr. Chairman, on a point of order. I did not hear your ruling on the word "rubbish".

Mr. CHAIRMAN. I made my ruling ever since that the Chair will not be challenged. Please take your seat. Continue.

4.00 p.m.

Hon. G. W. PAYNE: On a point of privilege, Mr. Chairman. I am entitled to hear the ruling.

Mr. CHAIRMAN The Honourable Member was told he was not addressing the Chair.

#### *Asides.*

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: Mr. Chairman, on a point of privilege.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Listen, this Honourable Chamber has to know that the Chairman of this Committee is in charge and will take directions from no one on either side of this House. The second thing is, the Honourable Member was told that he was not addressing the Chair and his remarks were not taken cognisance of. They were not in the record. He then began his speech. Continue, please.

Hon. G. W. PAYNE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: I rise, Sir, because it struck me that the privilege of another Honourable Member is in danger of being affected adversely.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Honourable Member, we are not taking note of your comment.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: I am on a point of privilege, Sir.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The Chair has ruled already, so don't refer to it again. I have already ruled on the matter and I am protecting the rights of the Honourable Member.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: As I was saying, Sir, the history of the development of the people in the urban area of St. Michael is not dependent on any information brought by those who care not to remember or to research, like the Honourable Member for the City for example, who cannot recall when people were scrounging around Murphy Pasture, Cats Castle and Suttle Street, and the Honourable Member must know that the legacy of representation which she has continued over the period and before did not add to the development of the people of Barbados. It is when the Democratic Labour Party started an entirely new concept of what ordinary people should have as their way of life...

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Mr. Chairman, on a point of order. None of this is true. When I went to the City in 1976 Murphy Pasture was a jungle. It is now a playing field with a pavilion. Cats Castle, for the first time in

its history, got roads, light and water after 1976. They don't know where Cats Castle is. He would not know where to find Bulls Alley, if you begged him. Where is Spooners Alley? You speak for Rotten Town and Hanschell Land, but don't speak for the City of Bridgetown. You have never done anything in 25 years for your constituents.

Mr. B. M. **TAITT**: Do you remember when the Honourable Member came in and folded her **arms** and started to speak slowly and tried to suggest that she was a lady, Sir? I accepted it then, Sir, I still accept that she is a lady, no matter how she tries to disprove it.

Mr. Chairman, the Minister has gone out and he will still have to answer in the end, despite all the interruptions. I still would like to know where the money is coming from. I still wish the Minister, when he gets up, to give us something a little more concrete, something a little more specific.

The Minister is responsible for the National Housing Corporation. The National Housing Corporation must have submitted to the Minister some kind of programme of revenue and expenditure. Even though it does not form a part of the records of this House, the Honourable Member has said he is giving them \$1 million to assist. The Honourable Member needs therefore to give this House information as to how he is going to do these grandiose things which they have come in here to talk about.

Mr. Chairman, I will wait patiently for the Minister, I will not resile from the questions which I have asked. I wish the Minister to tell us exactly how he is going to do these things which he has been talking about in his Second Reading speech.

Dr. R. C. **HAYNES**: Mr. Chairman, I wish to stick to the Estimates very precisely on this occasion. On page 214, Subprogram 01: National Housing Corporation:

"Subprogram

Statement: National Housing Corporation was established under the Housing Act (Cap. 226) whose functions include housing development for public purposes; maintenance and repairs to existing housing estates; construction of houses for sale under a commercial programme also for continuing capital projects, sites and services programmes, relocations and development of lots for sale and rental."

Mr. Chairman, we have heard a lot of propaganda relating to this major thrust for housing for poor people. I wish the public of Barbados to know that in these Estimates the total sum of \$1 million has been provided to

provide for construction of houses for sale, sites and services programmes, relocations, development of lots for sale and rental because poor people will not be able or be in a position to buy commercial housing from the National Housing Corporation. Therefore, all that we have heard about this major thrust in housing for poor people by the National Housing Corporation is to be financed by \$1 million.

Hon. Miss M. A. **MOTTLEY**: On a point of order, Sir. The Honourable Member is deliberately misleading the Chamber.

Mr. **CHAIRMAN**: Honourable Member, please. We have said already we are not supposed to say Honourable Members are deliberately misleading the House.

Hon. Miss M. A. **MOTTLEY**: The Honourable Member is misleading the Chamber and in my mind he is deliberate. The Honourable Minister of Housing less than 20 minutes ago got up in this Honourable Chamber and stated clearly for the record that what is being required from Central Government is not what is required to conduct the housing programme that he outlined in **this** Chamber yesterday, and that **furthermore**, funds from the Housing Credit Fund and funds from the sale of properties would be used to execute that housing budget. So it is misleading the Chamber for the Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central to say that Government is not supporting that housing programme.

Dr. R. C. **HAYNES**: Sir, the Honourable Member has accused me of misleading the House. If I am misleading the House, then this document, which is a document of this House, is misleading the House. I will not accuse the Right Honourable Prime Minister and Minister of Finance of coming down here with bogus Estimates and misleading this Honourable House. I will not do it and I will not be misled into doing it.

Hon. Miss M. A. **MOTTLEY**: Mr. Chairman, on a point of order. I was never a Minister of Finance, but if I was one and had the knowledge of the Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central and would not know of sources available off budget, then I would not consider myself an appropriate Minister of Finance.

Dr. R. C. **HAYNES**: Mr. Chairman, it is because I was a Minister of Finance and it is because I understand the constitutional responsibility imposed on a Minister of Finance that I will not be so indiscreet as to fault the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East in suggesting, either obliquely or otherwise, that these Estimates are misleading the House, because it would be one of the most serious charges ever laid in this House against a Minister of Finance.

4.10 p.m.

Mr. Chairman, would you find it very significant that the same person who accuses me of reducing a vote by **\$2.6** million and thereby compromising housing is now supporting estimates providing **\$1** million **10** years later with the cost of housing being almost twice as much. I am ashamed and really disturbed by this kind of logic.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: On a point of order. This is the **kind** of deliberate choice of information that we have grown accustomed to from the Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central and he is misleading the Chamber. We have not cut any vote in here. The vote last year was nil having inherited it from the Democratic Labour Party which did not put any money in '94. It was nil in **1994**. Last year it was **\$1** million and this year it is **\$1** million again. We have not cut any vote like him. He cut it by 35%.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: Mr. Chairman, did you hear me say that any vote was cut? All I have said is that **\$1** million is provided. If the argument is going to be that I cut a vote by **\$2.6** million it would have to be more than **\$2.6** million. That is **all** I am saying. They cut it by **\$2.6** million. That is elementary, Mr. Chairman. You know, it is a funny thing, the Honourable Member has also made the point that the credit fund was available in **1986**. I always sit back here and smile because I see how younger members on the other side are misled by people who know better. They know perfectly well that another housing programme was put in place in **1986** which resulted in a transformation of northern St. Michael and that depended upon the same **kind** of financing outside of the Consolidated Fund and run by the National Housing Corporation.

*Certain remarks by the Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central were ordered to be expunged from the record by Mr. CHAIRMAN.*

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: The point I am making is that a whole lot of housing activity took place outside of the Consolidated Fund in **1986** and beyond so that this kind of argument when you come in here and talk about people cutting a vote by **\$2.6** million and at the same time providing over **\$1** million I believe that all Barbadians now realise what this debate has been all about. Sheer propaganda by a Government that has no ideas, a Government that has no plans and a Government that will do absolutely nothing to help the broad masses of people in this country and in that manner I am very glad that the Member for St. Michael West Central nods his approval. I thank you very much.

Rt. Hon. L. E. SANDIFORD: Mr. Chairman, it is with a certain degree of regret that I am constrained to say that your very timely ruling and your pointing out to this

Committee the Standing Orders and the Rules which guide debate are not being followed and are not being observed. It appears to me, Sir, that when pressed by the Opposition pursuing its legitimate role the Government seems to be faltering.

That is not the main point I wish to make. I have sat here very silently from **sometime** after two o'clock and I must say that if this Committee were to be measured in terms of either production or productivity it would score very low. It might in fact appear to be ineducable.

Let me say first of all that very little that I have heard will create any improvement in the constituency of St. Michael South or anywhere else in Barbados and so I think in the public interest we are wasting time. I would hope that the Parliamentary Secretary has got up and that from the Government side he will seek to make some constructive points and reply constructively to the questions and points that have been made from this side. I hope, Sir, in the interest of this House that we will get back to doing something constructive and stop wasting public funds and public money.

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: Mr. Chairman, there are a number of things that we can put in a proper perspective within this Committee. It is a fact that Head **42** spoke to **\$1** million being in the Estimates for the National Housing Corporation, which is a fact, and I am sure that Honourable Members have seen that. Although the Honourable Member for St. Michael West seemed to be tagged by the Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central. He did not see it. He did not even know it existed there, so he is tagging.

I want to say that that does not represent the **true** budget of the National Housing Corporation. The National Housing Corporation is almost a self-sufficient entity. It has a commercial account. It has other accounts from which it draws its funds and if one were to examine the budget of the Housing Corporation one would see that the Corporation intends to spend more than **\$20** million in the next financial year on housing in this country. For the benefit of members, it is a fact that at December **31**, 1995 the commercial account of the Corporation was more than **\$7** million. The current account was over **\$177 703**. The General Workers' Fund was **\$6.8** million. These are the accounts of the Corporation.

**4.20 p.m.**

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: On a point of elucidation. Could the Honourable Member let me know what these accounts are **whether** it is revenue expenditure? What is it? Secondly, how much of this money would be available for new housing efforts? I just do not understand what it means.

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: I made the point earlier, Mr. Chairman, that more than \$20 million will be earmarked for housing projects, building construction and sites and services for the period 1996-97 in this financial year. This includes the building of the new headquarters at Country Road. As the Honourable Minister has pointed out as well, the sale of assets of the Corporation will also be used to finance some of their projects and he spoke clearly on the fact that north of the CBC there exists land which the Corporation is now engaged in selling, so we have money to be used.

I also want to explain a few points to the Honourable Member for St. Michael South East. When he started off this debate, he was enquiring into the amount of money spent on maintenance. In the last financial year, between the months of October and November, the Corporation has spent in October alone \$259 000 on maintenance of buildings, estates and houses and a large portion of that was spent in the Pine area, his constituency. In fact, a lot of refurbishing has been done within that area. I have gone through the constituency and I have seen a number of persons in **there** working, debushing, putting in windows, doors and water toilets so that October, November and December the Corporation alone spent over \$800 000 in repairs. October, to be exact, \$259 157, November - \$248 267 and December \$368 646 so a lot of money was spent by the Corporation in maintaining the housing estates across the country.

Furthermore, it was the **first** time that the Corporation engaged in an **outreach** programme for all the housing areas in Barbados. The **aim** of this **outreach** programme was to encourage and foster community participation.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: On a point of order, Sir. As a former member of the National Housing Corporation, I cannot allow the Honourable Member to make a point like that when he knows full well that there was an **outreach** programme before he was **working** with the NHC.

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: If there was an **outreach** programme, which I am not aware of, and the files do not reflect it, it was not organised and it was not in any proper order.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Mr. Chairman, on a point of order. I cannot allow the Honourable Member to accuse the staff of the NHC of not implementing an **outreach** programme that was given to them.

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: Mr. Chairman, this plan which I am reading was first printed in 1994. The objectives were drawn up in 1994. I can make this a document of the House. The committees met in 1994 and it was launched by the Honourable Minister in December 1994, so we do not want to split hairs because that is a small point.

The point is that the Corporation has continued to do a lot of work across Barbados. The Corporation has about 4 000 units across Barbados and it is the largest single landlord renting terrace unit and land in Barbados. It is impossible for the Corporation to do everything the tenants may request it to do. I am satisfied that the Corporation is trying to do its best.

I am sure the Honourable Member for St. Michael South could verify this that in his constituency the Corporation has done yeoman service in servicing the lots to tenants who deserve it.

I also want, Mr. Chairman, to clarify two points because I think Members are a bit confused about the purpose of the General Workers' Loan Fund and the Housing Credit Fund. They are two separate funds. The Housing Credit Fund was established in 1982 and it is a revolving fund which is used to help lower income earners to repair their homes, start homes, buy lots and so on. In fact, the Housing Credit Fund has objects such as: to help alleviate the overall shortage of housing units in Barbados, to broaden the ownership base of housing in Barbados, to provide financing for new houses and home improvement for low income families.

It consists of three separate programmes, home improvement where you can get loans, mortgages and loans under the **Tenancies** programme. To date, the Housing Credit Fund has **onlent** more than \$46 million between 1982 when it was set up and today. Approximately 6 411 persons benefitted from this Fund. It works where the Fund channels money into a financial institution - a client requiring funds from their bank, be it the credit union, insurance company or the mortgage banks can borrow funds.

Let us say a client wants to borrow \$10 000 to put on a roof or to repair a flooring. He goes to his bank for \$10 000. The bank then arranges to lend the client the \$10 000 but then it is refunded by the Housing Credit Fund. The banks would then pay it back over time in a scheduled framework to the Housing Credit Fund, as they receive the funds from the client. So the Housing Credit Fund is there and, as I said before, which is a very important point, a fund that was set up ...

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Mr. Chairman, I am really grateful that the Honourable Member has taken the trouble to explain what the Housing Credit Fund is because it makes a mockery of some of the utterances which we heard earlier suggesting that the Government was sitting down on \$20 million and did nothing about it. Unless somebody seeks to borrow money to **kick-start** the Fund, it does not operate.

Mr. G. A. **CLARKE**: The point I wanted to make before the Honourable Member intervened was that the Fund has so far **onlent** \$46 million, a fund that was set up by the Barbados Labour Party in **1982** with U.S. **\$10** million. Today it has **onlent** more than \$46 million and it has in its reserves more than **\$25** million. So there is money available within the Housing Credit Fund. There is also, more than, **\$6** million in the General Workers' Fund, which is handled, exclusively, by the National Housing Corporation to lend to poor people, again, to fix their roof. Chattel mortgages can be acquired from the National Housing Corporation.

**4.30 p.m.**

I must say that the General Workers' Fund was set up, a number of years ago. I know many Honourable Members have been enquiring about the Fund. There are many times when homeowners went to the National Housing Corporation to obtain a loan and they found it very difficult. That is the problem that we need to address. We need to address that.

I am confident, since the new Chairman has taken over at the Corporation. More loans **are** being acquired at this time and we would want to see the National Housing Corporation put a system in place where more Barbadians can obtain their loans. I am not too happy, at the present time but I believe that there is a lot of room for improvement. I am satisfied that since the Chairman has started a number of loans have been disbursed, and every month a number of loans have **been** approved.

Now I also want to make a few other observations, Mr. Chairman. It is a fact that whenever people are withdrawing they want to borrow money. If a man is not working, he cannot borrow money. At the present time the demand for housing is great. There is an elastic demand for housing in Barbados. People from all walks of life, the lower income earner, persons who do not earn income, the middle income earner and, of course, the person in the top brackets. There is a demand for housing because people **are working**. Whenever people **are** working, there will be a demand for housing.

So, at this time more people **are** working in Barbados and we have found ourselves, as a Government, that more people **are working** and more people **are** demanding housing loans. More people are demanding to rent rooms. So the pressure is on this Government to provide housing and that is why it is important for us to use the Housing Credit Fund.

The Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central, was saying, in fact that Housing Credit Fund was around in **1984** or whatever, and **1986** and so on. But when people are not **working** they cannot borrow from the Fund

but people are working now. They will want to borrow. So we must put in place a system where people would want to borrow, and that is the point, that we must put in place a system where people who are **working**, Mr. Chairman, can borrow from the Fund.

I believe that the criteria set out can be looked at and be examined. I think the Chairman is **looking** at that. We should examine a situation where more people can obtain funds **from the** Corporation and I would like to see that put in place.

I am satisfied that the National Housing Corporation will do its best. I am satisfied that we have in place, today, a system where more people will be able to repair their homes, where more people will be able to buy house spots and, as I said only yesterday, that throughout Barbados the National Housing Corporation has land and we are also acquiring land, because we recognise the problem that people are faced with today, that they cannot get a spot. Many Barbadians are now looking to the National Housing Corporation to obtain a spot, to obtain a house and we understand this and that is why the Minister, so far, between **1994** and today has acquired a number of lots throughout Barbados to **resite** and give people the opportunity to buy their lots or to rent the lots.

I also want to say, Mr. Chairman, that the time has come where both sides should recognise that housing is an acute problem which we must address, and not just necessary in political terms but understand that we cannot do all at the same time.

I thank you.

Mr. D. St. E. **KELLMAN**: Mr. Chairman, when one listens to the Government side, one gets the impression that all the solutions in housing were solved since **1994**. I was listening to the two Honourable Ministers of Housing and up to now I have not heard them mentioned anything about the beautification programme that was on the agenda of the National Housing Corporation.

Mr. **CHAIRMAN**: Order, please. There is only one Minister of Housing and there is also a Parliamentary Secretary.

Mr. D. St. E. **KELLMAN**: Sorry, the Minister of Housing and the junior Minister of Housing.

Mr. **CHAIRMAN**: There is no junior Minister, a Parliamentary Secretary. The record must be correct.

Mr. D. St. E. **KELLMAN**: All right, the Parliamentary Secretary. I did not hear anything, Sir, about the beautification programme that was left in place,

neither did I hear mention about the deposits that were left at the National Housing Corporation. One would have gotten the impression that National Housing Corporation had no money on deposit, and all of a sudden the Barbados Labour Party has given them a lot of money to spend.

I want to say to this House that up to 1993, Sir, that on term deposits, the National Housing Corporation had \$11 300 000 on deposits, and, also, Sir, that the policy of selling property belonging to National Housing Corporation is not a new policy but it was a policy started by the Democratic Labour Party in the 1990s when they decided that they were not giving them **anymore** subventions.

One would believe, Sir, that after criticising the Democratic Labour Party, that the Barbados Labour Party would have given National Housing Corporation more than \$1 million in grants. We heard today that we did not give them any subvention in 1994, Sir, and when one looks at the Estimates, only \$1 million. If you are saying that the National Housing Corporation has to be run by subventions, then \$1 million is not enough and I am going to tell you why.

If you are going to argue that you are going to be building more structures, and that you have just moved from a three-day week to a five-day week, and I will also make the assumption that you are also going to bring back the workers that were laid off. Are you going to do that? Because if you are also going to bring back the workers that you have laid off then \$1 million is not enough.

Being a member of the former National Housing Corporation Board, I would know that you cannot only look to Government for subventions. National Housing Corporation has property. They have property at Husbunds, and I remember asking a question yesterday in this assembly, which has not been answered as yet, and I am taking this opportunity to ask that question again. I would like to know the price of the lots at Husbunds and I would like to know the expected revenue from those lots at Husbunds. Mr. Chairman, I would like that question answered. Many questions have been answered but that one has not been answered.

I would also like to know, Sir, what has happened to the policy left by the Democratic Labour Party where the tenants who were renting houses and apartments from the NHC had a right to purchase those houses. I would like to know if that policy will still be implemented or if they have changed the policy. I would also like to know from the National Housing Corporation what they are doing, and I would like to know where they got the policy from that they are not repairing water taps because someone owes rent. I think that something is wrong with that.

We cannot have in this country ...

Hon. G. W. PAYNE: On a point of order. Nowhere in any of the presentations from this side did we state that there is policy at the National Housing Corporation not to repair people's property simply because they owe rent, and I think that the Member is misleading the House by insinuating that there is a policy by the National Housing Corporation not to repair taps for people who owe rent.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Mr. Chairman, I did not say that there was a policy. I asked when it was implemented, if there is a policy. I never said that there is a policy because I would like to be able to research to find out how all of a sudden if you have a tap, and it is not being repaired, and we have a shortage of water in this country – we have a shortage of water in this country and people, just because some people might not pay their rents, there are certain services in this country that are not being provided to those people and you are punishing a whole country for it, and I am saying that must stop.

Mr. Chairman, I would also like to know ...

*Asides.*

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: That has to do with housing. Pardon me? Wait, you are trying to tell me that NHC has nothing to do with housing?

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Order, order, please. Address the Chair.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Mr. Chairman, Sir, I would also like to know what has happened to the lots at Mount Poyers and I would also like to know what has changed the policy on the Hope Road lots. It seems, now, that anybody can come and put a house wherever they feel like without any proper planning. I would like to know what has happened.

I know that the Minister might not be aware of these things, so I am drawing this to the Minister's attention to make sure that houses are not placed all over the place at Hope Road, and that he gets the best value for those lots at Hope Road.

Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

Hon. G. W. PAYNE: Mr. Chairman, I beg to move that Head 42 now stand part.

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

*The question is that Head 42 stand part was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.*

HEAD 28 – MINISTRY OF HOME  
AFFAIRS – \$5 232 183

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Mr. Chairman, the fiscal year 1996/97 will be a year of planning for the future development of departments within the Ministry of Home Affairs. As an example of that, Sir, it is recognised that CERO needs to be reorganised. It is recognised that the time has come for the Post Office, which is one of the departments for which I have responsibility, not specifically under Head 28, to be reorganised and its focus shifted towards a more commercial operation, Sir.

Similarly, the Fire Service needs to be expanded to provide better **coverage** island wide, Sir. We are hoping that we can do the requisite planning this year with a view to fairly substantial capital thrust, next year, Sir.

Dealing first, Sir, with Subprogramme 01 at page 81, sir, ...

*Asides.*

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: I am dealing with Home Affairs, Sir. I was saying, Sir, for example you will see under Object Number 626, Sir, Professional Services, the Ministry intends to engage professional services to assist in the planning and design of additional fire stations, Sir, to the North and the South-East of Barbados.

After consultation with the management of the Fire Service and the Fire Officers' Association, it was agreed, Sir, that new small fire depots should be established at Six Roads, St. Thomas and in the North, St. Peter/St. Lucy axis.

*Asides.*

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: V Members want to know the rationale for St. Thomas I will be quite happy to give it, Sir.

*Aside.*

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: I said Six Roads. So that the funds from Object No. 626 will enable the Ministry to start planning for the phased establishment of these stations, Sir, by engaging professionals to assist with the planning. That \$40 000 is meant to carry us down to September, if we need more then on the mid-term review we will come back, Sir.

Under Subprogramme 2 – National Emergency, CDERA, Sir, Subscriptions and Contributions, there is provision for \$130 000, approximately, and \$545 to CDERA, which is a regional body supported by Caribbean Governments, and Barbados contributes to its operation.

They assist all states in planning for disasters and managing rehabilitation programmes after a disaster.

On page 82, Sir, National Emergency Preparedness, CERO, as I had explained earlier, Sir, the events of August 3 last year and subsequent thereto, the activities of Hurricanes **Marilyn** and **Lois** and there was another system that passed through, **Iris**, the ditching of the Mustique aircraft, all of these had the effect of **being** lessons for CERO and have provided the historical experience from which now we hope to be able to look more closely at putting CERO on a different basis. CERO really, in terms of the executive Secretariat, consists of the Supervisor, the Deputy, **and** I think there are two clerical staff, Sir. It is true that in times of national preparedness a number of other agencies combined to lend assistance and operate under the umbrella of Central Emergency Relief Organisations.

4.50 p.m.

I have a fundamental concern about the implications of the word Central Emergency Relief Organisation. It may not appear that there is much in a word but I think, perhaps, we need to **refocus** CERO as a disaster preparedness and management organisation rather than one that comes in only after the disaster. It needs to be an organisation that has ongoing responsibility to prepare the country for an emergency and to manage the emergency. We are thinking along the lines of the Jamaican legislation which created their equivalent body into a central emergency management agency. I think they are called CEMA.

The brief that I gave CERO was to look and see if we did not need to create them into a separate statutory organisation with greater autonomy and greater flexibility of action. It came home to me very forcibly at the time of the **Weston** disaster because they needed money to pay supermarkets for supplies for the people who had been dispossessed at **Weston** and that was a problem. If they were an independent statutory body with a Government grant every year it would seem to me that it would have been a lot easier for them to have drawn their own cheques on their own bank account and so on. So we are looking at a complete reorganisation of CERO. In fact we have asked for additional personnel. I think there is an old law somewhere. The Prime Minister agrees with me, We cannot remember where it is but I think the Governor-General has authority in times of emergency to authorise the spending of \$50. Apparently it exists in some part of the law so we are looking at a module that would provide greater flexibility and autonomy and at the same time trying to beef up the staff. It is really hard because the supervisor has to go to several regional conferences and meetings and assist other islands in preparing and so on. When she is away it is Mr. **Lorde** and, God forbid, were he to get

ill, what would happen. So we need additional staff and advertisements will be **appearing** in the newspapers shortly for another two or **three** staff.

Next financial year then, we propose to reorganise CERO, and I will keep the House informed of progress on this matter, by providing additional **staff**. Honourable Members will see also that we are providing additional equipment under **626** in the explanatory note and we are going to try and reorganise **CERO's** legal structure.

Mr. Chairman in **1995-96** fiscal year, CERO was very active. It organised the relief effort after the flood of August 3rd. It prepared the country for the threats from hurricanes Luis and Marilyn. It assisted Antigua, Dominica, St. Lucia and **Montserrat** and I gave a list yesterday explaining the number of persons, agencies and organisations that were helped after the **Weston** flood. Broadly what we tried to do was to assist persons who suffered substantial damage by a contribution of 60% of their claim. The funds that you saw on the list yesterday represented 60% of claims. We assisted CARICOM states which suffered disasters and we poured substantial **funds** into the National Housing Corporation for the relocation and the re-establishment of the residents of Wotton now at Bakers.

In **1996** a number of activities are scheduled to be undertaken. I have mentioned the restructuring. There is to be a national **hurricane** review conference in May, a national review of the status of disaster preparedness in the private sector, a shelter managers training course and an aircraft crash simulation exercise. There is to be a review, upgrading and expansion of the telecommunications network and most importantly we hope to revitalise inactive district emergency organisations.

I hope that the threats and some of the problems of **1995** will have had the effect of galvanising the country into a state of preparedness early and on a permanent basis from June to November this year. In that regard I **am** making an appeal for **all** those who **are** rendering voluntary service throughout the districts in the name of CERO to make an attempt to organise into appropriate groups. We are trying to get additional staff and one of the functions of this additional staff would be to organise zones. Let us say we divide the island into several zones, one staffer would be responsible for mobilization of the communities early. Virtually as soon as they are appointed and briefed and given some elemental training we would expect because we do not have a lot of time between now and the start of the **hurricane** season. We would expect them to be out in the communities organising the communities. That, Mr. Chairman, covers CERO.

The next item I wish to deal with, Sir, is the Immigration Regulatory Services, page 83. We have had a

number of unavoidable delays and setbacks which have precluded the presentation of a White Paper on Immigration to Cabinet. I do not want to predict another date, Sir. I have made the House certain promises and they have come to nought. I said there were certain unavoidable circumstances including illness of two senior officers who were working on the White Paper. What I can say is that yesterday morning I was shown a file with a lot of handwritten and basic type information which is now being fed into the computer so that I hope that by the end of next week we would be able to have a composite **first draft** of the White Paper on Immigration. It will come as a draft. I know the technical thing is Green and then White but we will put it out as a draft. These countries have to be careful about wastage of paper too. To come with a Green and then a White, some countries can afford that. This is the same thing as you come with a green or a white. But the point is that when it comes it must not be taken that that is final and settled policy cast in stone. We want feed-back. I accept the point that properly it should be a Green Paper, but we will be calling it a White Paper for the time being. Honourable Members understand what I am saying. It is a document out there for public discussion and consultation and we had hoped to set out...

5.00 p.m.

*Aside.*

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: No, no, no. Kite! I **am** definitely not flying a kite. You must not listen to the nation and read their editorials that people doctor to get a chance to give me some blows. Do not mind them. I am a shareholder and not a director, so I have no say in the policy.

What we **are** hoping to do, Mr. Chairman, is to spell out in broad outline the guidelines or principles if you like that will apply to the various types of status. As far as possible we want to limit the area for arbitrary decision and the area for unbridled discretion. People will know that if they want immigrant status these are the criteria that they have to satisfy if they want permanent residence and so on, and how the Department will approach the exercise of discretionary powers. So that by early summer, if necessary I will do the writing myself because I **am** not waiting **anymore**, it will be in the hands of Honourable Members. One of the features we would wish to develop groping towards public sector reform is the provision of a Citizen's Charter because Immigration dispenses services of various **types**.

*Aside.*

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: OK, noted. But what we mean is this. The Citizen's Charter will explain to the public the basis upon which they can expect the

provision of services. Now let me simplify that. It will set out, for example, that an application for a passport will be processed in "x" number of days, immigrant status so many weeks and applications for citizenship so many weeks. At the end of a year the Department will be in a position to mark itself. This has been developed in England and has proven to be very useful for the citizens. The Department **will** have to mark itself to see to what extent it was able to keep to the promise it made. You said that you **are** going to give somebody a passport in **10** days. The man knows that he can **go** and do his other business and ten days after submission of application he can go and get it, assuming that all the documentation is there. We have a duty to inform the public.

*Aside.*

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: How many measures? Plenty. I can give you the legislative programme too.

Sir, in the Immigration Department we have had some teething problems with the computerization. Hopefully, we have given the private sector that we will be behind those problems by the 1st of June. The private sector has very generously contributed to the installation of a computerized system in the Department. They did it on the expectation that it would speed up the draw-back of duty process. I explained last week some of the difficulties that we had with the **NUPW**. At **first** they did not want the Immigration Officers to put the little tear-off at the bottom in the satchel and so on. All those have been resolved. But we had a difficulty with the transfer of staff because we were taking staff **from** the Statistical Department to do the data entry. Some of the staff have come over but the hope is shortly to have enough data entry operators and enough computers to be able to provide a speedier service and not only for the private sector. Because 2 or 3 weeks ago I had a meeting in here with CTO, Caribbean Tourism Organization, and the Minister of Tourism and her people at the Authority and it was envisaged that once the Immigration Department became computerized that Department would be the sole provider of statistical information about departures, **arrivals** and so on. At the moment that Department is throwing out information and the Statistical Department is throwing out **information**. We have been behind in relation to the arrival statistics and the departure statistics. Departures in particular are probably up-to-date to December. Arrivals are probably up-to-date to January. The last count about 2 or 3 weeks ago they were up-to-date to January. They do not seem to have moved very far past that. But the additional bodies and additional equipment will be able we hope to provide all the necessary infrastructure to get the statistics out in a more timely fashion after June.

We had hoped by now to have reinstituted the system of Immigration Officers at the departure points of the

airport. It is a security matter. The Security Committee, the Commissioner of Police and Director of Public Prosecutions have all made very strong cases. I was against it publicly when they were taken off, but we have not yet got them back in place and I hope that within a month they will be back in place. I hope that within a month they will be back in place because we have asked for additional positions and I am sure those positions shortly will be granted. There has been a problem with persons leaving the island. The DPP has complained that very often they are **looking** for witnesses in cases and they are gone, looking for accused persons and they are gone. We all know of cases. Do not press me because I will have to expose what I know about how people can switch passports, use the brother's passport and then the brother said the passport was lost. All of that we **are** familiar with. I want to put a stop to that.

*Aside.*

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: There is a substantial administrative reform that has been done, a very simple thing. But we think from the reports that I have got from the Chief Immigration Officer and **other** Senior Immigration Officers that the Administrative Reform which we recently introduced is **working** to the satisfaction of everybody reducing the bureaucracy and humbugs in the Department. We have delegated responsibility to senior officers. We have tried to take some of the load off the Chief Immigration Officer and indeed the Minister. We are reposing a great deal of trust in these Senior Immigration Officers. When I say senior, technically there is a category called Senior. It is the Deputy Chief. We now have **2** Assistant Chiefs and a Senior who are responsible for the various types of status and we have given them the responsibility to approve applications about which there is no dispute in the name of the Chief Immigration Officer. We have reserved for the Chief Immigration Officer and the Minister areas which are doubtful or disputed. If they **are** not sure what to do, send out for a decision. Otherwise, all these university work permits and student visas, approve the things. They do not have to bog down the Minister. I went back to the Ministry yesterday in the **afternoon** and there were **20** something files and then **10** files came down. But we believe that is going to work well but I want to send the message that a lot of it depends on the integrity of the officer. All over the world at international conferences including the Commonwealth Law Ministers Meeting in Malaysia next month..

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

**5.10 p.m.**

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS:...on the agenda is the question of integrity in public life and corruption of public officials. All over the world at international conferences, including the Commonwealth Law Ministers' Meeting

in Malaysia, on the agenda is the question of integrity in public life and corruption of public officials. In Argentina, in December, they were talking about customs, immigration, police apart from politicians because we always get abused. There is a lot of concern in the world about potentiality for corruption of public officials. They can know in the immigration department that from time to time there will be some spot checks. They wouldn't be told and we just move in and see what they have been doing and check. They have to move around people in departments frequently too so that they don't get too settled. But, for the moment, I have great confidence in the senior officers in Immigration. They work well and hard and they take a lot of pressure, a lot of stick from the public.

I have spoken about the reservations and at this stage I will entertain the questions and comments from the other side before I deal with the Fire Service.

Before we ask for the break, I beg to move that Head 28 stand part.

Hon. R. St. C. **TOPPIN**: I beg to second that.

*On the motion of HON. D. A. C. SIMMONS seconded by Hon. R. St. C. TOPPIN, Mr. CHAIRMAN reported progress and asked leave to sit again, and Mr. SPEAKER resumed the Chair and reported accordingly.*

#### SUSPENSION

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I beg to move that this House be now suspended until 5.40 p.m.

Hon. R. St. C. **TOPPIN**: I beg to second that.

*The question was put and resolved in the affirmative, and Mr. SPEAKER suspended the House accordingly.*

#### RESUMPTION

Mr. SPEAKER: This sitting is now resumed. When the House was suspended it was in Committee of Supply. To that, it will now revert.

#### COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY

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

Mr. F. J. **STUART**: Mr. Chairman, I listened with interest to the Minister's introduction and I was glad to hear that there are plans afoot for the placing of a fire station at Six Cross Roads, St. **Philip** amongst other things. I know that this has been thought of for some time and I

am glad to hear that it is coming on stream. The Honourable Member for St. Thomas dealt fairly extensively with the Central Emergency Relief Organisation and I want to say that I agree generally with the points he made.

I have, from my own observations, always thought that the Central Emergency Relief Organisation suffered from a number of problems and the main one being the staffing problem. I think that the existing staff is inadequate and I have actually investigated this and got **confirmation** from the staff itself that they think that they need some assistance with staff increases because the professionals among them are required to engage in activities that really don't require a lot of professional skill and that should really be dealt with by persons lower down the ladder. The professional staff should really be engaged with a disaster management programme leaving other categories of staff to relate to the public at the level of the public education programme and that **kind** of thing.

There is a need for additional staff in the Central Emergency Relief Organisation. The secretariat needs to be beefed up to make it a more effective organisation. Of course I am aware that there are also concerns about the present grading of the staff that exists, having regard to the awkward hours they are called upon to work and sometimes the extraordinary hours they are called upon to work where there are disasters of a natural kind. It is thought that perhaps there needs to be some **regrading** of the existing staff to take care of those problems.

The third point which I think the Honourable Member made has to do with the question of converting the organisation into some **kind** of statutory authority. I think it needs a personality of its own so that it can more effectively **carry** out its mandate. I am always reminded of the difficulty which the Honourable Member for St. James North had during the floods of last year when at the height of the problem at **Weston** he looked around and shouted in vain for CERO. It really had no personality of its own. I think that making it a statutory authority and giving it a clear mandate will assist greatly in its discharge of its public responsibilities.

I hope when the Minister responds he will be able to tell us something about what is the state of our disaster preparedness at the present time. One always gets the sense that when things happen we are caught off guard and I know last year just after the **Weston** and **Woodbourne** disaster that there was a lot of debate in this House about our getting ourselves ready early for the annual rainfall season and the hurricane season. I should like the Minister to indicate what plans are afoot to get us in that state of preparedness and how that preparation is going to involve the Central Emergency Relief Organisation.

The recent aircraft crash, of course, raises the issue. In terms of aircraft crashes, that was a minor one, but if a major one were to happen in Barbados, what is our state of preparedness in terms of hospital accommodation, for example? Do we have adequate facilities alternative to what we have at the QEH? What is the state of the hospital bay at the Barbados Defence Force? I think they have some kind of hospital facility there. To what extent can they respond to a natural disaster of a more serious kind than we have known in recent times?

There is also the question of the state of our hurricane shelters. The last hurricane season I heard many cries raised. I seem to recall the voice of the Honourable Member for St. Philip North complaining about the state of hurricane shelters in his constituency and I believe I heard complaints from other areas. I would just like the Minister to tell us what is the overall plan from this year forward to deal with these issues.

So far as the Immigration Department is concerned, I take cognizance of the fact that Government intends to bring down a White Paper on Immigration. I think a full scale debate on Immigration should await the presentation of that White Paper. I did hear the Honourable Member talk about decision making in the Immigration Department and particularly the intention to delegate decisions from the Minister and the Chief Immigration Officer to people at the lower rungs of the ladder.

Now, lawyers who deal with immigration matters are sometimes taken back by refusals of applications for immigrant status and sometimes for work permits which they think are made on the most reasonable grounds and which they think should qualify their clients for granting. I am aware of the fact that the Immigration Department does not have to give reasons for its decisions under the Administrative Justice Act. If there is an intention to delegate this decision making, I am wondering whether this is going to in any way alter the status quo so far as the giving of reasons is concerned or whether this closed shop will continue. I am just throwing out the idea and asking the Minister to respond to it because I can understand not asking a Minister to give reasons for his decisions, or perhaps not requiring the Chief Immigration Officer to do that, but if you are going lower down the administrative round, I think that the applicants for immigrant status, work permits or whatever should have some recourse if they think an injustice has been done.

I just wanted to raise those few points by way of getting the debate started and I would await the Minister's response in due course.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: If I may, Mr. **Chairman**, pick up from where the Honourable Member has just ended, I

would like to ask the Minister on the same question of the decisions in the Immigration Department. He has indicated that there is going to be a Paper, Green or White, and I hope I am not **putting him** in any unnecessary pressure in that regard. I expect we will have a debate but he did speak about a Citizens' Charter and juxtaposing the concept of Citizens' Charter with the Administrative Justice Act he would wish to examine the rationale which usually has been on security grounds for, in fact, excluding Immigration from the Departments of Government required to give reasons for their decisions. So long as you are going the route of the Charter, you would be aware that in Britain where they have introduced a Charter they have been hard pressed not to include Immigration as a substantive part of the rights of citizens with the widest possible definition of "citizen" for the purposes of immigration.

One of the problems which we have had in relation to persons who wish to challenge immigration decisions is that in Barbados and other Caribbean countries the tendency has been to deny that the person, in fact, has any status or any locus in the matter which is substantive. The whole purpose of the persons being involved is a question of importance to the well being of the individual and even at that stage the question is raised.

The other matter, of **course**, is that by the time the question of whether **you have** status or not is determined the person has already been handed walking papers and is spirited out of the country, notwithstanding a very famous decision which argued that that ought not to happen. It does not happen in Britain. In Britain one way to remain in the country is to challenge the Immigration authority and provision is made for the individual to remain in the country until there is a hearing, whether it is a hearing before the Immigration authorities **and/or** all the way up to the highest point of appeal.

The second thing I **hope** the Minister, if he does not attack now, will consider as **part** of the Green Paper is **this** whole question permeating the rest of the Caribbean where they seem to be selling citizenship as part of their economic development. I feel fairly confident that there is no divide on the sides on that issue. But I **would** wish to put on record my own abhorrence of any decision maker at whatever level in the Caribbean making the **kind** of decision that makes the West **Indies** look foolish. The Prime Minister is discussing somebody being deported to his country for the first time. I have never seen anything more demeaning in the context of citizenship and **citizenry** than to have a Prime Minister or Prime Ministers discussing whether people can be deported from Third World countries to their country.

The other question I want to raise has to do with the departure. The Minister says he is looking at

reintroducing the departure Immigration official. Well, I have a moot position on that and I believe **all** the Governments and parties have to review their position. I can only say that travelling through Britain or the United States these days you not only have a check point at the point of departure but you have to show your passport on boarding the plane. Because of the new arrangement for security there is now a requirement. You talked about the switch of passports in between points of departure but if you have not travelled recently through the United Kingdom if you are getting on certain flights, you have to show your passport not only at the point of entry into the Immigration area but at the point of getting on to the plane. The very last point before you get on the plane you are required to show your passport.

The same thing is happening in Geneva which is traditionally a very liberal place for travel. If you are getting on a British Airways flight you have to show your passport as you enter the plane. That seems to be one of the security measures which is coming to the fore so you might wish to examine that in the context of people who complain about the long lines waiting to leave the country. It just means that airlines and aircraft will have to make the necessary adjustments.

5.55 p.m.

I wonder if the Minister is able to tell us whether we are within the same **ambit** as Guyana. I read in the papers recently that the Guyanese were putting on fast track the decision concerning graduates going into their country to work. I wonder if Barbados has taken a position. I have seen or heard nothing from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs **and/or** Home Affairs on this and, perhaps, the Minister could let us know where we are in this particular decision because I am not sure that I accept that there is any great difference between persons who have a university degree and other persons who have tertiary training.

I formed the impression that Guyana is saying that persons who go to the University of the West Indies, but it seems to me that it is discriminatory in relation to persons and nationals, from Caricom, who may be educated elsewhere – indeed we so recognise that not every national will be educated at the University of The West Indies that some of our Barbados Scholars are permitted to be trained outside of the University of the West Indies. So I would like to know where the Government is on that.

I have to ask the Minister this next question because we started the whole discussion of the West Indies Cricket Board of Control under Immigration, and I will ask this simple question. Since we had the debate in here, I have been – assaulted would be too strong a word but one or two officials who were either part of the West Indies Cricket Board of Control or some other peripheral interest

in cricket – have sought to find out what are the details of the debate we had in here about the West Indies Cricket Board of Control, and the story which has been given to me differs from what happened in here. Even within my own circle of friends, there has been a suggestion that we chased the West Indies Cricket Board of Control out of Barbados and nothing could be farther from the truth.

It seems to me that they must have had their minds made up. If all it takes is for three political parties to take the same position on a given issue to get some results, maybe we can identify some hard nosed difficulties in Barbados and we could collaborate on them and speak to them, all at the same time, and maybe problems will be solved. I do not accept ...

#### *Asides.*

Mr. B. M. TAITT: I have been accused of joining with the Government to chase the West Indies Cricket Board of Control out of Barbados. I make no apology for the position I took then. I hold to the position I had then, and I hold to it now that no agency of the type, that is the West Indies Cricket Board of Control, qualifies in present **day** governmental activity for diplomatic immunity and no Government that is a serious Government would consider, unless we are going to break down all of the tenets that have been accepted, the **interstatal** relationships that we call public international law, unless we are going to break down all of those tenets, then there is no way that an agency, such as the West Indies Cricket Board of Control could be properly given diplomatic **status** in any of these countries.

I wish the Minister to explain, if he feels like, because this is not one on which I need to have an answer in order to sleep. If he feels like, he could explain what is this OECS status that Antigua has to give that we in Barbados did not have to give, or that had not been given because, as I understand it, the Memorandum of Understanding, signed by the Right Honourable gentleman for St. Michael South, was a commitment, and as the Minister knows, a Memorandum of Understanding has the force of a treaty for all practical purposes and, certainly, if a Government gives it in relation to its sovereign state then it has all the force of law.

I have been most disappointed that some people, who ought to know better, have raised the question as though some great wrong was done to the West Indies Cricket Board of Control. I will make bold to say that it is fairly difficult to consider any wrong that could be done to the West Indies Cricket Board of Control.

Mr. Chairman, I think I have a few more questions but it would be better to let someone else go.

Mr. H. **deB. FORDE**: Mr. **Chairman**, I **first** wish to thank the Minister for having undertaken work during the past financial year at the Worthing View Fire Station. It was in need of repairs for some time and for renovations, and this has helped with the conditions under which the staff functions at that station. I still believe, Sir, that with the increase in housing and commercial development in that part of Christ Church that probably a case can be seriously made for the expansion of the station, although I must concede that we do not have a lot of land in the area to effect this expansion.

The Worthing Station does pull its full weight, together with **Oistins**, the station at the Airport and Bridgetown in servicing the greater St. Michael and Christ Church areas and it responds, as rapidly as well, when there is any major problem confronting us at our airport station.

Also as a resident of St. John, I was very pleased to see that after so many years, it has taken the new Government, the Barbados Labour Party, to renovate that station at Four Roads which had become a real disgrace. It is really significant, Sir, that activity of this nature takes place whenever the Barbados Labour Party gets into office and the people of St. John could look forward to some benefits which they did not enjoy, normally, despite the fact that St. John has largely supported the Democratic Labour Party.

I am very pleased that the Minister has among his plans the expansion of the Fire Service at Six Cross Roads. We have talked about it for several years. As a matter of fact, it was in our plans for some years and I am hoping that it will now be accomplished because it is a bit difficult for the station at Four Roads, to do all of the things that it is called upon to do, having regard, particularly, to the fact that firemen are not only going to put out **fires**, advising on the prevention of fires but they also give great assistance in emergencies with wells, with people in different type of emergency situations.

I hope that during the year we would see, therefore, some concrete movement in relation to the Six Cross Roads Fire Station. I live in the area, Sir, and I traverse this area, almost on a daily basis, and obviously it is a matter that affects those of us who live near to this area and have to be dependent, solely, on the equipment from Four Cross Roads until they can be relieved from the Airport, or Bridgetown or Worthing.

I want to talk a bit, Sir, about the Minister's statement in relation to the reforms which he is proposing for the Immigration Laws in the Immigration Department. It is ironic, Sir, for those of us who were under 40 in the year

1966, just at the time of the West **Indies** Federation, to recognise that today the issue of the free movement of persons from countries to countries, within the Caribbean, is no longer a matter of great division, because, you will recall, Sir, that was one issue that bedeviled the formation of a West Indian nation.

Nowadays, we find that countries like Jamaica and Guyana, countries which previously used this issue in an emotional way as an issue for division, have come to recognise that these small **territories** in the Eastern Caribbean, for which they had very little regard in those days, have proved havens for some of their citizens. Indeed, one of the things about which you can commend Barbados, in particular, and successive Governments in Barbados, is that we have taken a very liberal attitude towards the movement of West Indians into our own Barbados. I do not think that we have taken it, not only because only humanitarian reasons, we have taken that attitude because it has also been beneficial to us. And to the extent that we have encouraged an increased freedom of movement of Caribbean citizens, Barbados has been enriched in many ways by way of investments, by way of getting the benefit of their intellectual expertise and training, and also by the cross-fertilization which has taken place among our citizens.

I therefore am a supporter of liberalisation of the Immigration Laws to permit greater movement, particularly **wherever** there are openings in the work force in our country.

Let me give you an example, Sir. During the oil boom in Trinidad, there was the reluctance on the part of the Republic of Trinidad to open its doors in as liberal a fashion as Barbados did, in those days of economic boom, to people from the other islands. **The** result is agriculture suffered in Trinidad for a **while**. When we had the problem in our sugar industry, in a shortage of labour, we opened our doors in order to relieve that shortage. We did it, obviously, with some **control** and to that extent we were able to reap our crop and **to** keep agriculture going.

So that, I hope Barbados will not revert to a policy on immigration, one to keep out people from the other islands. After all Barbadians have, traditionally, emigrated themselves and we are to be found in almost every part of the globe. You can **find** a Barbadian sort of making his or her way in the world.

I would like to see, Sir, the paper which the Minister has promised, addressing not only immigration per se, but the wider issues of the status of all of our citizens. I am still very concerned that our Constitution retains discriminatory provisions against the children of Barbadian women. I know that steps have been taken, under

different legislation, to try to relieve the hardship. But we **need** to remove, as soon as we possibly can, when we review our Constitution, that discriminatory provision which says that the children of our daughters have not the same right to be called Barbadians as the children of our sons.

I really believe, Sir, that those of us who were at the 66th Conference and fought over that, regret very much that we were not able to persuade the governing party then and the British Government that we were on the right track. I suppose those were days where women's rights had not advanced to the stage at which it had reached. I know I am preaching to the converted and that the Government intends to make this change. I hope that before the change is made, that wherever possible, in the implementation of policy that we should not allow any child, descended, either through mother or through grandmother to be denied the right to come and live and work here in Barbados, and in due course, to get citizenship of Barbados like anyone else, Sir.

I also believe, Sir, that we have reached the stage where we can be less strict in denying reviews to people whom we refused entry into Barbados, either permanent or temporary entry into Barbados.

The Administrative Justice Act, it is true, does not obligate the Chief Immigration Officer, or indeed, the Minister in charge of Immigration to give reasons for refusal of entry into Barbados. The principal reason behind that was a security reason. Several things have changed in the world today and one has a greater grasp of how to manage national security, even before a person has come to your border. One can also manage national security in a much more sophisticated manner even before the Court can give evidence about national security considerations without undermining the security of the state.

I believe that we should move to a much more formalised and humane system of reviews where people are refused entry or denied permission to reside here **permanently**. Whilst I recognise that a Review Commission has been set up, and is headed by a Minister, I believe that we can get past that stage where we have a tribunal independent of the political **arm**, because, after all, the State has an interest in putting its case and however we may appear to be above board, and I have no doubt that the Minister's committee does act at the highest level, yet I feel that justice must not only be done but be seen to be done, and that we have reached a stage where we can have a genuine review committee. If you look at what is happening in some of our commonwealth countries that have even more pressing security problems than we have we would see that they have built in the procedures to allow for a deeper review and a more meaningful review of immigration decisions.

6.15 p.m.

I **am** not asking the Minister to move the review procedure to an adversarial one. That may not be necessary at all. In fact, in the long **run** it may not be advisable at all. But I **am** asking **him** to move the **procedure** to the position where, at least the principles of natural justice in the broad sense of that term will apply and where all considerations will be taken into account. I must be very disturbed about a situation where in one of the other Caribbean countries we can agree to take somebody from Saudi Arabia, at the request of the British Government and that matter can be adjudicated in United Kingdom courts but if for instance a similar situation had arisen here you may not have got that sort of adjudication at the level of our courts. So that we are behind hand, Sir, in this respect and I hope that the White Paper which has been promised will address most of these questions.

I just want to say a short word about CERO and the national emergency preparedness, not to get into the subject except to remind that Government is so connected, because even before we get to the stage of having to call out CERO that necessary measures that should be taken in preparation for emergencies. I want to congratulate CERO. A good deal of voluntary assistance goes into this. People whose families are under threat at the time of **hurricane** or disaster are prepared themselves to come out in those circumstances and give voluntarily of their time and certainly within my constituency of Christ Church West we have a large number of citizens, civic minded people, who devote themselves to this task and I admire their dedication and that civic mindedness and those who say we have not got any community spirit, I sometimes draw these as the sort of examples that we should avert to. I hope more people and more of our young people will become meaningfully involved in this type of organisation and give of their time and recognise that it is the sort of duty that ought to be performed.

My fear in my constituency is about whether or not some of the buildings and some of the shelters, as I do have the same fears about my parish of St. John, whether some of the shelters are today at the level that they can withstand the sort of disasters that we have seen recently in the Caribbean. I think I saw some figure which says that less than 30%, maybe less than 20%, of the shelters in the Caribbean can really withstand **hurricane** force winds that have been lashing us in the last few years.

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

Mr. H. deB. FORDE: I hope steps will be taken to strengthen the shelters and that we will see a greater contribution by the people to disaster preparedness and that we will recognise that it is an on-going educational process about which our people should become conscious. I am indebted to you, Sir.

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: Mr. Chairman, I **think** that I would want to use this opportunity to place on the record some of the areas of concern that were raised by the Minister in his introduction of this Head. I agree wholeheartedly **with** the comments that were expressed by last speaker, the Honourable Member for Christ Church West in his views on the integration of the Caribbean people and free movement within the region. I think that in 1996, having spent some 30 years as an independent country, we should in fact be at one with the rest of the Caribbean in accepting that we are a West Indian people and that there should be free movement within the region where we are truly West Indian and we are identified as such where we can come into our region and feel very much part of the West Indian society.

I must draw to your attention that there has been significant integration among the people themselves where in our own communities we have seen the mixing of St. Lucians and Barbadians and other West Indians, the children of Vincentian mothers and St. Lucian fathers, Barbadian mothers, Guyanese fathers. In fact the Parliamentarians in this Honourable House have a unique track record in that they refuse to marry Barbadian women. Many of them have integrated and set the trend and married women other than from ...

Mr. B. M. TAITT: On a point of order, Sir, I wish to make it clear, Sir, just in case there is anybody who does not know, I wish to make it absolutely clear, Sir, that I have never married any non Bajan woman, Sir.

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: I was just making the point that many of us, even in this Chamber are guilty of having married women from within the region. I myself, Sir, first married a Trinidadian, then I married a Guyanese but in all fairness all of my women have been Barbadians.

Mr. H. deB. FORDE: Mr. Chairman, on a point of order, Sir, the Honourable Member is misleading the Committee I have proof that all of his women have not been Barbadians.

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: The point must be made, Mr. Chairman, that the time has come that we must, as a people in the Caribbean, put these issues behind us. We must accept, not only for university graduates, but we must accept that we are a region and somebody must take the lead and if it is Barbados that takes the lead and says okay we open our doors, there is some control, I believe that the intelligent system within the region is of such that we can keep criminals out or we can keep them under control because a criminal will manifest himself or herself anywhere. I do not think it is an area that we should be too concerned about. We should allow natural flow among the Caribbean people.

I think the time has really come that as Governments within the Caribbean we must address it and stamp out this whole problem which has been surfacing from time to time.

I want to refer though, Mr. Chairman, to the question of the immigration **personnel** at the Departure area at the Airport. For many, many years that problem surfaced at the airport where, when there were two or three immigration officers in the departure area there was a tremendous build up of **traffic** because the number of officers assigned to the departure area were too few and the process took almost as long to process passengers going out as when they were coming in. Coming in you would have some 16 officers operating at peak periods while at departure you would still only have approximately two or three at the departure area. That in itself creates a problem and you would appreciate that at peak time when airlines want to operate their schedules on time that a delay of 20 minutes or 30 minutes can be extremely costly. Because if you are late the connecting flights are then held up and it is a tremendous cost to the airline. One of the reasons why that provision was removed was simply because of the pressure that it placed on airlines and they then had to find other ways and means to get around the problem. They made certain requests to the Government to remove the Immigration Officers, *et cetera*.

6.25 p.m

I take the point quite seriously that it is probably necessary for us to reinstate the officers, but there has to be some readjustment to the whole agenda. Because the airlines themselves will have to play a role in advising their passengers that they must not hang around in the area outside of the check-in counters and that they must process themselves as early as possible as they would have to do at any other international airport. My colleague made the point that in airports where security checks are such that you must show passports here. The checks have increased and in addition to the passport check there is also the security check. There is no equipment that can detect drugs and all of these kinds of things that are going through airports that passengers must be aware of and you must have yourself processed as quickly as possible.

Sir, it is an area that I certainly would have no difficulty **with** and I **am sure** the Honourable Members on this side would have no difficulty and we would not see it in a negative light if the Immigration Officers were once again placed at the departure area. I do not **think** we should make heavy of it. But there is an observation that I would like to make. At the Bridgetown Port, passengers coming off cruise ships can walk freely in and out of the terminal onto buses and so forth with the minimal check. There is no monitoring of it. I know from my experience of some 30 years in the network that there are many criminal minded people who understand the system and

who perceive in their minds that the system is of such in Barbados that you can get on a cruise ship and walk freely through the system and you can bring anything you want to bring into Barbados. We have set up a network here and they have examined the system, understand the flaws in it, and walk freely through the system. The same thing happens with baggage and I want to make a comment on that and I do not want it read in the wrong light. There was a perception in Barbados that when you are travelling here and you are travelling as a tourist, presumably in appearance different from the Barbadian appearance, that you can just simply pick up your bags off the conveyor belt and walk through with the minimum of checking through Immigration and Customs. Many people have said to me over the years that all you need to do is to look like a tourist and just use the system. We have to accept in this day and age where drugs and scourge are affecting the societies of the Caribbean to the extent that they are, that we still have to maintain our checks. I abhor illegal drugs totally. I despise the use of any form of illegal drug use and I think that it is corrupting our societies in the Caribbean and it is an area that we must spare no effort in making sure that our countries are protected from that scourge of drugs. I think that we must all be able to stand as Caribbean people and I can stand at age almost 50 years and say that I have never once in my life used illegal drugs or went anywhere near drugs. I think that every single West Indian should be able to stand up and say that without any fear of contradiction.

Mr. Chairman, my other comment is a quite fairly significant area of concern and it has to do with the Emergency facilities that are available in Barbados. I once had a long association in preparing the Emergency Manual which is used in the event that there is an accident or a disaster such as at the airport. But there is a critical shortage of equipment such as freezers for holding bodies in the event that there is a disaster and it is an area that we really are going to have to prepare for that. We realize that even in our domestic environment we are having a problem keeping bodies at the hospital. We have had cases where some bodies are decomposing and it is an area that we must pay some attention to. If we are in the international arena, it is an area where some money must be spent and certainly with the closure of the St. Joseph Hospital we have certainly reduced another facility that we would have available to the country in the event that there was this kind of a disaster. If you look at the St. Joseph Hospital in a global sense even in terms of the marketing viability of such a facility, it is not simply a case of waking up one morning as a Government and saying that I want to shut down the St. Joseph Hospital. These are serious issues that must be understood and addressed because we are likely God forbid to have a disaster in the area and we will be totally prepared for it.

Sir, I guess that we will be able to come back. But I want to ask the Minister if he would be able to provide

statistics on the fires that we have had so far over the last quarter or so, because there seems to be an inordinate amount of fires. Maybe the Minister may want to comment on those particular areas.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: This is just an intervention, Mr. Chairman, in reply to the 4 Honourable Members who have spoken. I want to deal with the Airport first and the personnel at the departure points. I explained in the opening that the Government Security Committee had recommended the restoration of Immigration personnel at departure points. The argument against them was led by the, for want of a better word, Airlines Association. They said that it caused delays because the areas of departure are narrow and there was a back-up of persons. We had a look last year and thought that with some reconfiguration of the desk there would still be a fairly tight situation. But the problem was according to the airlines that when a person is checked in, instead of going straight to the Immigration Officer and clearing, the person would hang about outside with his mates and have a beer or whatever and then at the last minute he would try to get through. That is where you got the bottleneck or back-up of people. The recommendations that we made broadly involved a little reconfiguration of the desk to carry the desk at the eastern end a little further up.

6.35 p.m.

Secondly, ensuring that the airport PA system worked because one of the problems when we raised it the airport people were saying that the system wasn't working. Well, you cannot use that as an excuse, you must get the system to work and we were suggesting that you have a continuous tape saying: "As soon as you have been ticketed or whatever, would you kindly clear immigration and go to the departure lounge." It would be coming over all the time and that would be between the actual announcements of the aircraft for departure. We thought that if they had that system working the public would be alerted.

The third thing that I noticed myself was that there was an officer in uniform standing just before you went through to the departure area and he would only ask you to let him see your boarding pass. You could be anybody. You show him the boarding pass and he would say, "Go through". It seems to me that that was a waste of a person. He should be out there walking around encouraging you to go through. When he sees a little group of people hanging about with tickets in their hands he should say, "I would be grateful if you would go through. You know we have a narrow area." Do it nicely and shepherd the people through instead of just there standing up asking for the boarding pass. Those kinds of logistical things we have looked at.

I don't know what happens at the Bridgetown Port. I have not been invited to the Bridgetown Port and I

have never been to the Bridgetown Port, except on 2 occasions since I came back to Barbados in 1970. So I don't know what goes on in the Bridgetown Port. I don't know what it looks like really. I am aware that there are attempts made to cheat the system. Honourable Members will see me in conversation with the customs chief yesterday talking about certain things.

The Honourable Member for Christ Church West made a point that was supported by the Honourable Member for St. Michael West about this whole question of openness and impartiality in decision making which I support. You will find in the White Paper that there will be a recommendation first of all to give a right of review to all persons who have been denied status. At the moment, there are some types that **are** exempt from review. I don't think that is fair. If a decision maker refuses the citizen, if he is aggrieved, he should have the right to have that decision reviewed, whether it is a work permit, immigrant status, permanent residence or whatever. If you are going to do that you cannot ask another Minister to have responsibility for hearing all these things. The best thing is to have it as an independent body, a separate little tribunal headed by a lawyer or somebody. I agree with the Honourable Member that it doesn't have to be **adversarial**, it can be inquisitorial. You bring the file. The Immigration Department puts their case. The man puts his case and a decision is made. I think we will move to that. I think that would be to a more humane system, a tribunal to review decisions.

Tracing citizenship through the female line and all of the anomalies in citizenship will be referred to the Constitution Review Committee. I hope the Honourable Member for Christ Church West would have some hand in the Constitution Review Committee. He is a lawyer who has had wide experience in constitutional matters and the White Paper will address the question of the anomalies by pointing out that they **are** anomalies but also pointing out that there **are** matters which require constitutional amendment and that they will be referred to the constitutional committee with the requisite recommendations.

I wish to assure the Honourable Member for St. Michael West that he can rest assured that the Barbados Government has no intention whatsoever of commercialising citizenship. I know some countries have tried to encourage people from Hong Kong and elsewhere to buy citizenship. I think that is demeaning and cheap. They may get a lot of money but I **think** the country is cheapening itself. I set my face against it. So we are **idem** on that.

As to the **CARICOM** Skilled Persons Bill, the Bill is drafted. The **draftsmen are** lawyers and lawyers sometimes

never see eye to eye on the same issues unless it is absolutely clear-cut. A draft was done by Professor Carnegie which Grenada has gone and implemented and Dominica has implemented. Barbados has prepared its own draft by way of amendment to section 17 of the **Immigration Act** and we think in what we have done that we have captured in far less words and less convoluted language than the Carnegie draft the essentials of the decision of the Heads of Government. Essentially what we are talking about is that any CARICOM national who is a graduate – the Honourable Member for St. Michael West was making the point that it goes beyond that. It is not only graduates of the university properly so called. It is people with the equivalent tertiary qualifications that are recognised, not like some doctors who get qualifications as reverends after 2 months from some college in the States. We won't be recognising them.

A graduate or a person with tertiary qualifications from approved recognised institutions – it could be professional qualifications. It doesn't have to be university qualifications – who is a CAFUCOM national, will have the right to seek to work in Barbados.

#### **Asides.**

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Not artisans. Jockeys come and go and I don't even charge them work permit fees. Entertainers no longer have to pay fees. All they do is to fill out a form so that we can keep a record of the fact that the person has come into the country; but we don't charge them fees. Graduates or similarly qualified persons, not only of the University of the West **Indies**, because as I said, when I first read the Bill I asked, 'What about me?' I am a graduate of an English university and the way it was drafted it didn't cover me.

The Barbados position is that any graduate, American, from Manchester or wherever. I don't think there is any difficulty with that. We were tidying it up. We had a meeting day before yesterday and I just want to say that I will expect that it will be laid sometime in April.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: If the Honourable Member **will** give way. You had promised before that you would review the arrivals form on the aircraft. It had been changed from reasonable to unreasonable and I wonder if you could indicate what the status is.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: The form is all tied up with the computerisation. It is a question of the transfer of persons from the statistical department to the immigration department. You see when we had the meetings the statistics department argued that they needed all of that little information in the middle about if you are staying in a condominium or a guesthouse and all of that, because

it helps them to create a statistical base for the Central Bank so that they can value tourism, how many nights people have been here and the amount of money they spent, all of that.

I would hope to have a meeting within the next 2 weeks involving the Caribbean Tourism Organisation, the Board of Tourism and Immigration because there are some wrinkles in there and statistics that we need to sort out. I have said that we would have a meeting the last time we discussed immigration in here after the Estimates and perhaps late next week or early the following week we will have it. We are going to **try** to get out the wrinkles out of the system and also see if later on we cannot move towards something more manageable.

The Honourable Member for St. Michael West raised the question of the West Indian Cricket Board. The Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central, the Honourable Member for Christ Church West, the **Prime Minister** and myself have been blamed separately and sometimes collectively by persons connected to West **Indies** cricket for the movement of the Board from Barbados, and it really is quite unfair. I gave the facts at the time. The Right. Honourable Member had given the Board an MOU in 1993, June or July. They wanted a full agreement. We were discussing an agreement. They asked the Barbados Government at the meeting in October last year. A decision was taken to give the Government of Barbados until December 31 last year to come up with an agreement. The first week in November, almost two months in advance of the deadline, the Board had an agreement in hand.  
6.45 p.m.

I am told that they were tardy in sending it out to the constituent members. But notwithstanding the fact that they gave the Government until the end of the year, two weeks in advance of the end of the year, December 15, they had a meeting and a resolution was **moved** to move the Board from here by the representative of St. Lucia. They played fast and loose with the Government. They did not give us a fair chance. We had until the end of the year and almost two months. Seven weeks in advance they had an agreement.

I have seen the Jamaican offer. Jamaica gave them immunity from suit, not the **Antiguan** offer. Antigua was offering other things about status for the executives, their families, and so on, and some rent free accommodation, but Jamaica was offering immunity from suits. That is all I will say on that. I **think** they were not fair to us because they misled us into thinking that nothing would be done to move the headquarters before December 31, and seven weeks in advance of that date they had the agreement, and by the middle of December a resolution was moved.

Sir, I understand Honourable Members' concerns, especially the Honourable Member for St. **Philip** South and the Honourable Member for St. Michael West, both good students of administrative law and both concerned about the trend to open this decision making and the right of the citizens to reasons for decision making. It is well grounded in administrative justice. I think that since the aim of the White Paper is to reduce arbitrariness and areas of unreasonable ministerial discretion that we will have to make provision for some statement to be given to the person why he has been denied the status. I think a citizen is entitled to know. If it is on grounds of criminal conduct, we can tell him.

As the Honourable Member for Christ Church West says, public interest immunity has gone so wide that the courts themselves reserve the right to investigate a claim by a Minister for refusal to disclose Government documents. The courts can look at them and see whether the basis for claiming public interest immunity was reasonable or not.

Sir, I want to give some information about the need for the Citizens' Charter. Whether the question of judicial review should apply to that or not, I wish to confess to the Honourable Member for St. Michael West that ever so often the depth of his legal knowledge **stretches** me. He sprang it on me **today** about perhaps a Citizens' Charter might open the way for review of some of those decisions. I want to think it out. As I said, it was a sound intellectual point and therefore I am not prepared on my feet to give an answer on that one. It is a nice point.

I would say this, Sir. I am concerned, and the citizens should be concerned. I had six files sent down to me today, Sir, and I am just taking two to illustrate the point. In one case on January 11, 1996 a recommendation was made for status by the Immigration Officer. The file reached the Chief Immigration Officer on March 18. The file reached me today and I made the decision today in the House. It therefore took 69 days from the date of recommendation on a simple matter to the Minister to make a decision. Now that, you might say, is not too bad.

There is another one, Sir, with citizenship. The recommendation was September 15, 1995. It reached the Chief Immigration Officer on March 18, 1996, the Permanent Secretary on March 20, 1996 and the Minister on March 21, 1996. I signed it. That is 188 days between the date of recommendation and the date of decision, and they are not complicated matters.

Now, you will see what I mean about speed and so on. If I cut out that part where the file went to the Chief Immigration Officer on March 18 and allowed the Senior Immigration Officer to make the decision you know what the time would have been between the file and the

decision making? Six days, from the 15th September recommendation to 21st September to the Senior Immigration Officer. I hope Honourable Members understand some of the problems and why we need to change the system.

As to the hurricane shelters, Sir, a review of the hurricane shelters is planned. I wish to say, for the benefit of the Honourable Member for St. Philip South, these are some of the activities that will be undertaken by CERO in the coming year with a view to enhancing the preparedness of the country. As I said in my opening, there is going to be a National Hurricane Review Conference in May. I signed that this morning in the Ministry. I cannot remember the date. It is like May 24 or some such date around that time where everybody will be involved. We want to bring them in early in May before the season to get comments, criticisms and to devise strategies and plans. That is the National Hurricane Review Conference, the third week in May.

At the same time, we are also going to do a national review of the status of disaster preparedness in the private sector. We are going to be checking all the schools for shelter preparedness and so on. But we also have to look at the private sector, in fact, to see if some of their properties would become available in the event of disaster, and we are going to review them. Then we are going to have a training course for shelter wardens. In the **Weston** flood last year we had one or two problems so we want to have a Shelter Managers' course.

The Honourable Member asked about the consequences of an aircraft crash. We are going to have an aircraft simulation at the Airport Fire Station.  
6.55 p.m.

I think it is fairly obvious that we would have a difficulty in finding hospital space...

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

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: ... in the event of a crash of a large-bodied aircraft but the BDF facility is in order and functions well.

The Honourable Member for St. Michael East had mentioned about a mortuary. If he looks at Head 30 he will see \$600 000 approximately there to deal with the Forensic Lab. We are going to be building a forensic lab. The plans have been done by the friend of the Honourable Member for St. Michael West. We are going to pay him too. You all would not pay him. We have the money in here to pay him. We do not play it so.

*On the motion of Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER, seconded by Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS, Mr. CHAIRMAN reported progress and asked for leave to sit again, and Mr. SPEAKER resumed the Chair and reported accordingly.*

#### SUSPENSION OF SITTING

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I beg to move that this sitting be now suspended until 8.00 p.m.

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

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

#### RESUMPTION

Mr. SPEAKER. This sitting is resumed. When the Suspension was taken, the House was in Committee of Supply. To that it now reverts.

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

#### COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY (Resumed)

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Committee of Supply is resumed.

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: Our Attorney General, over the last year or so, has spent considerable time and effort in reshaping the Immigration Department and indeed other departments under the Head of Home **Affairs**.

Certainly if one looks at the Immigration Department one finds that, first of all, the physical features of the Immigration Department – I have always felt that this department was over crowded. I have gone into this department on numerous occasions and I have found that the physical features need to be carefully examined. I am not sure if the department has to be on the Wharf side, but I believe that a new department should be looked at by the Immigration Department.

I also believe, Mr. Chairman, that there are some things about Immigration Department that need to be looked at. For example, persons who were **born** aboard and lived in Barbados for a considerable time, I think that we need to take into consideration. Only last year I had an old lady from my constituency who was born in Guyana, British Guyana, and she came here at the age of three. She lived here for over 75 years, yet she found it difficult to get citizenship after 75 years.

Now I think that something has to be done and despite Members, even in this Honourable House, were able to give affidavits and so on that this lady actually lived here, she got problems. I think that department should look at cases of this nature. When people live in a country for more than 15 years, I believe, some kind of amnesty should be given to people once they have *bone fide* status.

I believe that the department should consider persons living in a country for 15 or more years. It is important because that person would have contributed significantly to the economic and social development of that country. So, I believe that the system should be put in place. I do not think that one should have to go and appeal to a Minister in order to solve a case like that. In this case we have to appeal to the Honourable Minister to solve a case where a woman was waiting for her pension. She could not get her pension after working at a plantation for all those years, and only the Minister was able to give direction so that this old lady could get her pension. I think something is wrong with the department. The Minister needs to look at that.

I also feel that there should be free movement of the human resources in the Caribbean. The time has come where Caribbean people should move across the region, within the CARICOM area, because I have found, over the years, a number of companies, registered in Barbados, foreign companies, bringing in workers rather than CARICOM people. They claim that they cannot find the expert, they cannot find professionals within CARICOM, even in the hotels, yet they can find a number of chefs from outside the region. I believe that talents are in the region and that the Immigration Department should be looking at that. I think the Minister should look at free movement of CARICOM people. I know some States within the region have been looking at it. I do not know how far they have gotten, but I would like to see a greater degree of free movement of people within the CARICOM area.

I also want to say under this Head, Mr. Chairman, that in the area of the fire service, I believe the Fire Service has done tremendous work over the years, in fact, many young people like to see the fire engines, I think those engines that are traditional and old, should be put in some type of museum where young teachers can see and examine what the fire engines look like.

8.05 p.m.

I also believe – I do not know the number and I would like to ask the Honourable Minister what is the complement today? How many vehicles are now in operation? I notice that in this year's Estimates there is provision for an extra vehicle, provision for an extra fire engine. I have also noticed that one was purchased in the last Estimates and I want to find out what is the

complement is today because in my area the fire service at Four Roads was refurbished and it is very beautiful indeed. I want to compliment the Minister for that because for years the fire service at Four Roads was running into problems. The firemen had no where to sleep sometimes, no lunch rooms. I went there recently and I must compliment the Fire Service and the Ministry for providing a modern station in St. John to service the parish of St. John, St. Philip and St. George. I think they are rendering a good service and doing very well. I would like to compliment them.

I also want to say that there is one planned for Six Roads and the Ministry is at present negotiating to purchase that complex at Six Roads and I believe the Minister will talk more on that later.

I also want to say under this Head that there is a need at the St. George Post Office to improve the structure there. It is small. It was set up since 1958 to service a small population. Today the population has increased tremendously within the central St. George area and it is not serving the needs of the people adequately. There is a need to have improved postal services at the Glebe in St. George and I would want to impress on the Minister because we have a building at St. George that can be used. I think I have already spoken to him on that where we have the new post office within the parish of St. George. I hope that is considered in the near future.

I also want to say finally that I understand that at the airport there will be extended services where there will be an immigration officer in the departure area. I think that it is a very good idea. People like to see the uniform of the Immigration Department and it would lend some form of discipline to persons who travel in and out of Barbados.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Mr. Chairman, I do not intend to say too much on this particular Head but what I would like to say, Sir, is that I believe that the district emergency relief organisations should be given equipment and not find themselves in situations that whenever you have a problem they have to run around and ask people for donations. These organisations are too important to the communities and I believe it is time we give them some equipment, things like chain saws, search lights and things like that. Whenever you have a problem you find that these people do not have equipment and I am a bit surprised that the vote is only half million dollars for the Central Emergency Relief Organisation and also for the district relief organisations. I believe, Sir, that we should do something about that.

Sir, I would also like to congratulate the Honourable Member for St. Thomas for giving us back the fire station that we once had. I would not accuse him of taking it

from us but prior to 1976 we had a fire station in St. Lucy at the Naval Base. It is true it was privately owned but I congratulate them for bringing it back to St. Lucy and we expect to see it by June.

You cannot argue, Sir, that you do not have a location for it because there are still some buildings down at the Naval Base that you can still place it.

*Aside.*

Mr. D. St. E. **KELLMAN**: He would only be giving us back what we had before. Do not get involved in this. I would not tell the House that it was taken away from us by you. I want to thank the Honourable Member for St. Thomas for giving us back our **fire** station. It is something that I have been calling for for a long time and we are extremely grateful that you have recognised the need for a fire station in **St. Lucy** after taking it from us for 20 years. Thank you very much.

Hon. R. N. **GREENIDGE**: Mr. Chairman, I have learnt of the coming of a fire station at Six Roads, **St. Philip** for some months now, and I am pleased to join the debate beginning with this very point.

**St. Philip**, Mr. Chairman, I believe is the fastest growing of the 11 parishes in Barbados. I have recited on more than one Occasion the number of housing developments that we have in that parish. In my very constituency we have places like Harmony Hall, Inch Cape, Apple Hall. Many housing estates have gone up in recent times and therefore I believe it makes it all the more necessary for us to have this **fire** station at Six Cross Roads. In fact I can think of no better place in the parish to have a **fire** station located than at Six Cross Roads because there is easy access from that location to every single part of **St. Philip**.  
8.15 p.m.

Now, **St. Philip** is really served by the fire station at St. John and it takes quite a while for a fire truck to arrive from St. John and sometimes one will come from the airport as well. But very often by the time the fire truck reaches a lot of damage would have been done. In fact, in my constituency some 6 weeks ago we had a house which was completely destroyed by fire. By the time the fire truck arrived, it was burnt to the ground. One of the things that **worries** me, Mr. Chairman, is the fact that that particular house was not insured and I can do no more than to call on Barbadians in **general** to make sure that assets as valuable as their houses are insured.

Sir, I want to also take this opportunity and I do this all in my capacity as Minister of Women's Affairs to congratulate those **15** females who are presently in the Fire

Service. They have virtually entered into what used to be a man's job and I believe that I can safely say that most of them are doing an excellent job in the Fire Service. Indeed, when I was a child, it would have been almost unheard of for women to be in the Fire Service or the Police Force. But Barbados has come a long way where we can now boast that women have actually taken on the man's portfolio and in some cases they are performing just as well if not better.

Now I also want to commend the Attorney General on the renovations at St. John Fire Station and I do this, Mr. Chairman, in light of the fact that the surrounding in which you work are very important when it comes to your productivity and so on. Once the location is conducive and comfortable it encourages you to go to work. I know of days when fire stations used to be in very dilapidated conditions and clearly there is an effort now in this administration to try to correct all those wrongs. The Fire Service is something which I believe Barbadians have taken for granted over the years. We have an excellent Fire Service but because we have come and found it there we tend to believe that that is what it should be and, as I said, we take it for granted. That Fire Service over the years would have averted numerous catastrophes and it is very rare that you get people except if they are directly involved, really commending and thanking the Fire Service in the way they should.

The Fire Service can boast I believe of some of the best trained firemen in the region. I know two of them who are good friends of mine and I know that they have undergone training abroad which I believe would have stood them in very good stead. Indeed, they are perhaps the best trained in fire fighting techniques. I want on the very floor of the House, Mr. Chairman, to commend the members of the Fire Service for having done such an excellent job over the years.

In the light of Immigration, Mr. Chairman, I want to say up front that I chair the Review Committee and that is the committee which looks into the appeals made by the applicants who are refused immigrant status. I do not want to go into it in any depth but I want to say that both sides will have to be balanced. On the one hand, Mr. Chairman, any island like Barbados would have to be concerned about problems such as over-crowding. It would have to be concerned with problems such as the infiltration of illegal drugs, crime, security and about threats to jobs and so on. We have to be as frank as possible and therefore we have to do some screening. But that has to be balanced, Mr. Chairman, because very often the ones who come before us in the Review Committee are CARICOM citizens. That is something we have to balance the fact that we are all one regional community. In the same way that we promote our University of the West Indies, our cricket team and so

on and in the same way we have marriages with parties one from one island and one from another, in the same way we have relatives living in other islands, we have to look into this particular balance and see it as a regional thing. Sometimes it is almost painful to have to turn down an applicant who is really a regional brother. It is like we all belong to one small village and it is really not a nice feeling. I feel, Mr. Chairman, the time has to come fast when we have to put measures in place where we can stop this regarding one another as a "foreigner" a term which I think is very crude.

Thank you, Sir.

Hon. R. C. EASTMOND: Mr. Chairman, I take it that the learned Attorney General is asking this Committee to approve the grant of in excess of \$30 million for the Home Affairs component of his Ministry. At this point, Mr. Chairman, as I endorse the programmes and the forward thinking posture that the Honourable Member has taken, there are some supportive comments that I want to make in relation to the matters before us. I am confident, Mr. Chairman, that the learned Attorney General will not only be able to ensure that the funds that he is asking for are properly applied but at the same time this country is bound to see in the application of the programmes which the Attorney General is bringing.

8.25 p.m.

At this point, Mr. Chairman, I will look at the whole question of immigration. In relation to immigration two pertinent points must be raised. First, we have to look at what the current laws pertaining to immigration permit, and secondly, we have to consider what new policies the Government would want to encourage in relation to its immigration programme. In this respect, I am sure that every Honourable Member here is aware of the fact that the provisions to do with immigration, like for the most part in Cap. 190 of the Laws of Barbados and, to some extent, Cap. 186 often clarifies Cap. 190. We have a situation, Mr. Chairman, where our law looks at certain categories. Our law talks about citizens, nationals, residents, visitors, students and I believe there are also provisions for certain special considerations to apply.

I was present in my seat when I heard a very pronounced statement being uttered from the mouth of the Honourable Member for St. Michael West, who considered it an obscenity for countries to raise funds through granting citizenship. I want to comment on this at this stage, Mr. Chairman, for the reason that I quite understand what the Honourable Member for St. Michael West was saying. He was saying that a particular status ought either to be derived as of right or ought to be conferred when certain discretionary powers apply. I support that, for the reason that our current law permits the Minister in many areas to

apply discretion, sometimes on a case by case basis, when matters come before him.

I am disappointed about something that has happened in Barbados in recent years. Under the Barbados Labour Party regime of 1976-1986, the Right Honourable Prime Minister of that era granted an amnesty to CARICOM nationals who had come to Barbados either as visitors or on short-term visa permits and had overstayed their time. The Right Honourable Prime Minister, Tom Adams, considered that in cases where people came from CARICOM and had overspent their stay in Barbados, they should have been entitled to an amnesty. I believe that a large number of persons from St. Lucia, Dominica, Grenada, Trinidad and Guyana responded to the grant of the amnesty and, as they say in North America, they put wrong things right and went straight. But alas, Mr. Chairman, a fairly significant number of persons who were eligible for amnesty during our regime of 1976-1986 did not take it up. The result is that a lot of them are still in Barbados, having failed on their own to take up the amnesty, and sometimes having struck hardship.

I know of five cases, Mr. Chairman, where persons living here for 25 years failed to take the amnesty and have become welfare cases through hardship, sometimes through conditions and considerations not brought on themselves on their own, except for the fact that they did not take up the citizenship. These people should have gone and qualified for the amnesty, but they remained in Barbados, saw hard times, and when our welfare facilities were approached to help them, they could not qualify for the reason that they had no status at all and our welfare officials were hesitant to help persons whose status they were unsure of. This would have happened, not because of the fault of the Democratic Labour Party or because of the fault of the Barbados Labour Party, this would have happened because these people, through ignorance or negligence or fear, failed to go forward to explain their circumstances.

This brings me on to a current problem in Barbados, Mr. Chairman. There are persons from neighbouring CARICOM states who come here and sometimes overspend their stay by a week or two days or three days, small amounts of time, who are not known to have been involved in crime or anti-State activities, who should really properly get up and go to the Immigration Department to ask for clarification of their status or for an extension, as the case may be. These people, through fear of going to the Immigration authorities, after having overstayed their time, will literally hide and run about Barbados. When employers are approached by them to offer them work, the employers, timid that they would be employing illegal immigrants, do not give them any employment and some of them eventually resort to anti-social activities and all sorts of problems result in consequence.

Mr. Chairman, this Government, as you well know from its enlightened programme since its election in September 1994, is a humane and caring government, quite unlike the administration it succeeded in 1994. There is no way that the Honourable Minister of Home Affairs, if a matter comes before him,...

Mr. B. M. TAITT: On a point of order, Sir. The Honourable Member is misleading the House. I think it is quite unconscionable for the Honourable Member to be saying that the Government of the Democratic Labour Party was uncaring. Everything he has said up to now is the epitome of the caring attitude of the Democratic Labour Party. Why must he spoil his speech now by delving into untruths and unnecessary statements about uncaring. It is not true. The Democratic Labour Party is dear, loving people. Everybody knows that.

Hon. R. C. EASTMOND: Dear, loving people, Mr. Chairman, who cut Civil Servants' salaries by 8%, who laid off scores of people from the Ministry of Public Transport, from the National Conservation Commission, and indeed paid the supreme penalty in September of 1994. I **am** not agreeing with the Honourable Member for St. Michael West who, up to now, manifested a measure of quietness, restraint and manners by listening to the debate, but whose sense of anxiety and restlessness now impels him to come for punishment. If he gets up again, I shall lash him.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: On a point of order, Sir. I could not resist the temptation. I have never seen him lashing anybody. I just get up so you can do it. Let me hear you.

Hon. R. C. EASTMOND: Mr. Chairman, I will not be distracted by the eccentricities of the Honourable Member for St. Michael West. What I **am** saying is that under Cap. 190, even when persons enter Barbados as non-Barbadians who are visiting and they overspend time, they should either apply for extensions or ask the Immigration authorities to examine their circumstances. This being so, I believe the Honourable Attorney General is left with no choice but to review the number of persons who come into Barbados, for whatever reason, the number of persons who have overstayed and then find a policy that he feels is acceptable in the present circumstances of the realities of Barbados. An immigration policy which I believe the Honourable Attorney General is likely to be able to continue improving will be of importance for the fact that the Attorney General is going to have to embark on what some Members on this side call social engineering. He has to look both at the plight of Barbadians and the extent to which persons entering Barbados might be competing against Barbadians for opportunities, because we always as a Government have to bear in mind the fact that locals become very resentful if they see people entering their

country and getting privileges which the locals do not feel they should be entitled to.

In addition to the matters I have raised under this Head, Mr. Chairman, I should also like to say that in relation to the funds being sought for CERO, I am heartened that under this Attorney General and Minister of Home Affairs, CERO has an excellent opportunity for the **first** time in years to be given a measure of guidance and administration not known before. I believe all Barbadians will agree that up until recently we heard about this notional entity called CERO, we were cocksure that it was a big organisation, independent, self-financing and ready to go. People used to wonder what precisely was the structure of CERO because there were occasions when things happened and what seemed to be the response did not come in time. Barbadians must know that CERO is an umbrella which really draws on the resources of several supportive institutions, such as the Defence Force, the Police, the Fire Service and a whole range of other entities. **8.35 p.m.**

I **am** confident that our Minister of Home Affairs has already considered **CERO's** position and is in a position to introduce a system of coordination that would strengthen CERO to a point where it has never been strengthened before. This is notwithstanding an outburst that I myself made sometime last year where out of **innocence**, in a **genuine** emergency, I had cause for **concern** and did in fact put two left jabs at CERO in a situation where I thought that CERO should have **been** omnipresent and omnipotent and therefore it had let **me** down. But in a few hours, the learned Attorney General **has** put wrong things right and eventually things worked to my satisfaction.

Mr. D. St. E. **KELLMAN**: On a point of order. The Honourable Member for St. James North is misleading this House. He did not tell us that he put **two lashes** as CERO and they landed right in his face.

Hon. R. C. **EASTMOND**: The Member for St. Lucy is fast emulating the Member for St. Michael West in relation to the scoring of non-points.

Mr. Chairman, as I come to conclude my modest contribution I **am** heartened that the budgetary allocation provided under Head **28** is going to see part of our national security strengthened. Not everything to do with considerations of national security **are** covered or subsumed under Head **28**. There **are** other departments that have to do with national defence and security which would not fall under the Attorney General's portfolio but I am satisfied that in light of the introductory remarks he made and in light of the sensible allocation he has received and in light of the fact that he is a creative thinker that these **funds**, once this Committee is minded to approve them, will

be properly applied and that Barbados will be the better for them.

With these remarks, Mr. Chairman, I am obliged to you.

His Honour R. D. MARSHALL: Mr. Chairman, I rise to support this Head. Sir, Caribbean people have our origins when we made that trip from Africa and we were put off at different locations in the Caribbean. Since then, we have tried desperately to keep ourselves together within the Caribbean and we started the Federation. That didn't work. Then we tried CARICOM and that apparently didn't work or doesn't work as it should and then we tried together with cricket.

Mr. Chairman, Caribbean people are all connected. As a boy, I came along and heard of people from Barbados being headmasters and in the police forces in Trinidad and St. Vincent and Grenada. I remember that years ago when a lot of the pan boilers who worked on Barbados plantations originated from Guyana. What I am saying is that there is a place in the Caribbean for the movement of people with skills. Mr. Chairman, years ago people came from St. Lucia and St. Vincent to work here. As a boy I remember people selling, coals, coconuts and greens who were St. Lucians. They came to this country and many of them stayed in this country without any **kind** of status and their children and their children's children went to school in this country **and** they helped build this country. A lot of these people who do not have status are older people and they have built homes in Barbados and have their businesses in Barbados. This is the **kind** of thing that we have in Barbados and I believe that we should extend ourselves to these people from the Caribbean.

Where the Immigration Department is concerned itself, I want to compliment not only the Minister but those people in charge for the jobs they are doing at Immigration. I would say to this Chamber that what I would like to see in place at the airport is some **kind** of communications set up where when people come in at the airport in order to find out those who come in here illegally because they come and then they are deported. They spend 6 weeks and then they are back here again. There is no system at the airport where you can check through a computer screen or some book to find out if these people were here before.

I do believe that the Minister would be putting on stream something to that effect very soon. Recently at Immigration there was some refurbishing done and I am quite sure that very soon the outside of the building itself will have a face-lift to give it that kind of good **appearance**.

Sir, I want to look at the Caribbean Disaster Emergency Response Agency. As I mentioned before, we

Caribbean people are one and I like the regional security system. This response to emergency system works similarly where we can respond to each other in times of emergency and I am glad to see that we are contributing to this system. It is during the hurricane time that we in the Caribbean become very edgy because as soon as the first system is seen in the Caribbean all the people in the Caribbean more or less come together because they know that as soon as a **hurricane** is in the area there is a possibility that anyone of the countries can be affected.

I want to just make a few points on the Central Emergency Relief Organisation. This is an organisation in Barbados that I believe should not only be thought about during the hurricane season. I do know that we do not have many aircraft problems nor crashes and the main area that this organisation responds to is during the hurricane season. I remember at **Weston** last year the organisation coming out and I do believe at that time it was a little rusty in getting things together, but I believe that in Barbados what we should be trying to do in all the parishes in Barbados is to have some **kind** of small system set up where at the constituency level we would be able to know up front where to find persons such as old people. We should know our areas, gap by gap and street by street because in Barbados the houses are not numbered as such but we should have a system where you know exactly where to find the old people and invalids just in case there is an emergency.

In St. Michael especially in those areas where there are a lot of chattel houses and the area is densely populated. **Anytime** we have any major disaster such as a major **fire** when these chattel houses burn we should be able to know exactly where to find these people that need the attention most of all.

Sir, I am glad to see that the Minister has noticed this particular organisation and that whatever he can do for the organisation we will lend support. I thank you.

8.45 p.m.

Rt. Hon. L. E. SANDIFORD: Mr. Chairman, if I may say a few words in the time available to me on the items of the Fire Service and the Central Emergency Relief Organisation. In respect of the Fire Service, I would wish to indicate that all administrations in the past have recognized the value and the contribution of the Fire Service to the growth and development of this country, and all administrations have tried with the resources available to them to develop the Fire Service and to improve its capabilities and efficiencies. It is the responsibility of any incumbent Government to try to improve those services further. I would wish to support the call that has been made for the further continuing training of the officers of that particular department.

I think particularly in light of the many fires that occur and, also, in the need to determine the cause of fires, that training should be concentrated because sometimes we hear of the fires. Not **too** often do we hear of the causation of those fires. There may be **reports** on the fires but I believe the Fire Service is in need of further resources in the causation or causes, to suit the Member for St. George South.

*Aside.*

Rt. Hon. L. E. **SANDIFORD**: So we have that position, Sir, that there is need for further training. I am sure this is a call that has been made by the Chief Fire Officer, and I would like to take this opportunity to praise the work of that official and his department for the work they have done and continue to do. I speak because I know that more often than not that perhaps my constituency has been the target of a number of fires. Only in the last few days there was one on Upper Bay Street and there was the usual response. I would like to pay tribute to them. I believe, therefore, that the additional resources should be placed at their disposal to continue their work.

If I may turn to the question of the Central Emergency Relief Organisation. I listened with interest to what the Attorney General was saying and I support his approach on these matters because I believe the time is right, and we have seen this organisation operate long enough, that we should be able to come to a determination as to what kind of organisation and structure may be required to make that organisation capable of responding in as efficient and effective a manner as possible to the emergencies and disasters that may occur in the country.

Sir, sometimes we underestimate the complexity of the organisation. As you know, Sir, I have had responsibility for the subject, and I have been refreshing my mind on the very complexity of that organisation. There is a secretariat and I will come back to that. But the secretariat itself is part of an organisation that is headed by a Chairman who is a Permanent Secretary. There is a Coordinating Advisory Council, or used to be, an Executive Committee, a number of Standing Committees, Emergency Management teams, District Emergency Organisations, and then there are the non-governmental organisations that interrelate with that organisation. Then, Sir, there used to be something called a Coordinating Advisory Council.

The Executive Committee itself is a small body of which the Supervisor of the Emergency Services was the Secretary. The Standing Committees, I said there were about 11 of those, deal with emergency services, public media and public awareness, telecommunications, damaged statistics, health services, welfare services, food and general supplies, public utilities, tree trimming and road clearance and emergency shelters.

Then I believe a committee was brought into being. I do not know if it was temporary or intended to be permanent, a Relief Housing Committee. All of these things have to be coordinated. Their work schedule has to be planned and the staff to do all of that work is clearly inadequate for that task in hand. My representative, the Member for St. James North, hinted at this kind of complexity and he is quite right in that particular regard.

The Emergency Relief Organisation has been set up in such a way that it calls upon resources in other departments, Ministries and agencies to carry out its work. That is how it has been structured, and that has been the perception so far. But I believe the Attorney General as Minister is right in his diagnosis of the situation in that even if the organisation has to call upon the resources of other departments, and it will have to by the very nature of the work involved, it should have at its disposal the staff resources even to relate to these different governmental departments and agencies. So I believe there is a good case for additional resources, the staff of which at the secretariat is just a Supervisor of Emergency Services, an Assistant Supervisor, a **Clerk/Typist**, one permanent, and I believe there is provision for a temporary **Clerk/Typist** as well, and then there is a maid or cleaner. There used to be a Special Assignments Officer, but I do not think that officer is there now.

Sir, let us look at the area of the district organisation. I do not think this is the strongest part of CERO although, if I may follow or adapt the title of a book by a former **Speaker** of the United States House of Representatives, Mr. Tip O'Neal - "All Politics Is Local," emergencies do not take place in a vacuum. They take place in communities, in localities. It is therefore necessary for the communities, themselves, to be structured and organised in such a way that they can be their own first line of defence and their own first line with dealing with the emergency.

8.55 p.m.

I am conscious - my own community council in St. Michael South, performs the role, Sir, of the district organisation. Now we do not jump on a house top and say these things but if there is a vacuum it will be filled. I will ensure that there are people available who can rise to a situation and to help themselves as far as maybe possible. This is a role that voluntary non-governmental bodies can assist greatly and their efforts should not be frowned upon but should be encouraged, **Sir**.

In the appraisal of the structure and the work of CERO, let us not forget that the CARICOM Disaster Emergency Relief Agency is located here in Barbados, as well. It is, perhaps, little realised that it is Barbados that played a leading role, not only in articulating the need for such a body, but ensuring its location here in Barbados. I played a small part in that but I say no more

about that. I say that for the information of my own representative who should be well aware of these things and know the kind of leadership that came from his constituency.

So, Sir, I think that we are well placed and should be well placed to have the most efficient and effective emergency organisation in the region. We are well placed for that, Sir, but we have to give the organisation the resources to be able to perform that role.

Sir, talking about training, this is also a very important role. We are fortunate in that leadership of the organisation, at the level of Supervisor, is in the hands of a well-trained public officer and we certainly, would hope, Sir, that in addition to herself and her deputy, that other resources could be found for strengthening the organisation. I am sure you will agree with me on all of these matters.

I do not wish, Sir, to be much longer on this particular matter. I just want to raise one other matter which is not at the level of CERO but at another level. Sir, sometimes the response may be good but then the follow-up action afterwards at other levels of Government may not be as good. I have an example, Sir, of a large tree falling on a house in my constituency, Sir.

#### *Asides.*

Rt. Hon. L. E. SANDIFORD: Behind the Garrison, you should know up there.

Sir, this is now almost two years and relief has not come. Sir, it is not the fault of the house owners or occupiers. The matter came up to the Cabinet and when we were leaving office a few weeks, or two weeks or so before we demitted office the matter came up and the Cabinet, on examination of the matter, felt that there should be additional assistance provided, that the compensation that was being offered was inadequate and it went back to the officials for a reworking of the matter.

I have not heard that it has reemerged. I certainly have not heard of any decision. What I am saying is that we would have left it there in train but nothing has happened since then. It is like the case that you have given about the time taken to move a file through the labyrinth of the Immigration Ministry back to Immigration and then out to the people. So, I just raise that particular matter.

Sir, I believe with the resources that have been placed at the disposal of CERO, they have done a reasonable job. Sometimes we may get a little irked but remember it is a human organisation that depends upon the cooperation of a large number of people. I believe that if we give the assistance and encouragement, or continue to

give assistance and encouragement, that we will get a good job done.

Finally, Sir, let me raise the question of disaster areas. Sometime in the last year I have heard some **announcement** from the Government that an area has been declared a disaster area. It was in relation to **Weston**, Sir.

#### *Asides.*

Rt. Hon. L. E. **SANDIFORD**: Sir, but there is no connection with anything else. Declaring something a disaster area, that is a form of words because there is no legislation. It does not trigger anything, as far as I know, as happens in the United States. When something is considered a disaster area, it means that the President can therefore make available resources and activate a whole system in order to bring aid and relief. I believe this is an area in which, if you declare an area a disaster area, you recognise that there is some work that needs to be done further and it may be that we need some legislation in this area to strengthen the hand of the executive for dealing more effectively with such issues.

9.05 p.m

Hon. R. St. C. **TOPPIN**: Mr. Chairman, I rise to support the Minister of Home Affairs in this debate and to say I am particularly happy with the increased allocation under **Subhead 1** dealing with the Central Emergency Relief Organisation. If we examine those figures, Mr. Chairman, we would see we have gone from 1994-95 where the sum of \$218 000 was allocated to that organisation to 1995-96, Sir, where the sum of \$445 000 was allocated and now this year, 1996-1997 we are going to have the sum of \$516 000 allocated to that organisation, an increase, Mr. Chairman, of almost \$300 000.

I have acted, Mr. Chairman, from time to time as Minister of Home Affairs and I have had to work with the personnel in that organisation and I want to place on record my view that they are in fact a committed group of people and so well known is their commitment and their competence that they are recognised, Mr. Chairman, even in countries in the region outside of Barbados.

When I went to Antigua last year August or September following the hurricane in Antigua, I **was** very pleased to see that in fact CERO from Barbados had been invited to assist with the relief effort in Antigua; together with St. Lucia as well. So they are a committed group of people and their competence is known and recognised.

The **truth** also, Mr. Chairman, is that they are really constrained, by the circumstances in which they have

to operate, from perhaps giving of their full potential in the area of disaster response. When, for example, I visited the building in which they operate I was literally shocked to see the conditions which they had to operate in. In fact in **1994** there was not one single cent allocated to the maintenance of property for that organisation. I am pleased to see that this year there is the sum of \$50 000 allocated to that effort.

I heard the Honourable Member for St. Michael West Central make the point. I think the Honourable Member for St. Michael South also made the point about the need for participation of non-governmental organisations. The Honourable Member for St. Michael West Central was making the point that we as representatives need to know where in our area, certain people are placed, especially the elderly, so as to respond rapidly. That is in my submission, Mr. Chairman, only half of the responsibility because having identified the people we have to be able to respond and I am really concerned about the capacity and the ability of the organisation to respond in terms especially of the vehicles at its disposal. I am really concerned about it and it is unrealistic to believe that that party or this Government would ever have the financial resources to provide the number of vehicles needed and the type of vehicles to respond in a really serious crisis.

I well remember that in the flood of August last year in trying to get to my home, my home which is finished, I, in fact, got caught in a serious pool of water. It really was a lot more than a pool and I had to get out of the car and literally walk home but someone from the very area in which I lived, came on a phone call from me with his vehicle and moved mine out of the water and took it home. Right away it occurred to me that what is needed for this organisation to function effectively is assistance from private individuals in Barbados contributing their vehicles primarily to this organisation. We need to have that and in fact when the fellow moved the car for me he said that any time he is needed please feel free to call upon him and I am making a call now to individuals in Barbados to make themselves available, contact CERO and make it known to CERO that they are willing to assist in a response.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Mr. Chairman, the Honourable Member is misleading the House. If he fully understands CERO then he would understand that individuals, whenever there is a problem, give of their services and their vehicles to CERO.

Hon. R. St. C. TOPPIN: I am not talking of a haphazard **arrangement**, I am talking about a formally structured system in place.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Mr. Chairman, the Honourable Member is misleading the House. Earlier I

spoke about the district relief organisations and that is exactly what I am talking about. These people come together in districts and they form these organisations.

Hon. R. St. C. TOPPIN: Mr. Chairman, I am talking about a pool of resources available to respond to national disaster. Certainly when I was acting in that capacity and I was working with CERO it was not known that there was any structure in place dealing with that type of situation. There was none. The Honourable Member for St. Lucy does not know what he is speaking about when he seeks to equate what he is saying with what I am saying. Mr. Chairman, that is my view and I believe that would go a long way towards alleviating the problem but Barbadians would have to understand that in a crisis it is a team effort but you cannot just go about it hoping for somebody to call, there must be a formally structured system in place where people enlist themselves into the programme and know that they can be called upon and that would alleviate many of the problems we have in disasters.

Mr. Chairman, that is what I wish to say on that head. Briefly to comment in relation to the question raised by the Member for St. Michael East, I believe he was commenting earlier on the question of the free movement of skilled persons within the **Caribbean** community. I believe he was asking the question what was the difference between a university graduate and a non-university graduate.

I had the honour to attend a recent Intercessional Heads of Government conference in Guyana and in fact the whole mood of the meeting was to indicate that the region was willing to move in that direction and in fact they have agreed that in time, individuals, not necessarily at university and so on, can in fact move between countries in the region. Of course this would be subject to any individual country accepting the credentials presented by any person seeking to come into the country. More importantly in the case of Barbados, Barbados even went further and stated that the legislation we propose to amend to bring this into force would also cover the **employment** of Barbadian nationals who work with regional bodies that are based in Barbados. They themselves will no longer have to make application for work permits as they have to do now. We are going to remove that barrier as well over a period of time. As you would recall Rome was not built in a day. So it will be a gradual process but at present that could not be done. So I just want to clarify that for the benefit of the Member for St. Michael East. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**9.15 p.m.**

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Mr. Chairman, I just wanted to discuss part of what my colleague was discussing when he last sat because he had not finished the point. First of all, I would like to join with what the Honourable Member

for St. Michael South said in relation to the Fire Service. I think that we are very fortunate in Barbados over the years to have had a series of distinguished leaders. We have had great leadership in the Fire Department and that we have been able to do as well as we have done with the resources we have had is a tribute to Barbados. I really think **that** we are very fortunate and I wish to join in putting in the record my own appreciation of the attitude which I have noticed since I have been representing a constituency for a long time. I think that Honourable Members on both sides will acknowledge that when there is a **fire** in one of the constituencies the attitude of the Fire Department is exemplary not only in the way they approach the **fire** itself but the after-care so to speak is something which I have always found comforting. I would like to join my colleague in going on record with that.

I also wanted to say that I have no difficulty in spite of the fact that I make fun of the notice, whereby including in the places that the **fire** stations are going to be located, that the Member for St. Thomas is lucky once again that they fall within that particular geographical framework. I really have no difficulty with the location. I hope that we can come to **fruition** quickly in having these **fire** stations which have been **talked** about for a fairly long time. If we can have them completed in this cycle, I think it will be worthwhile because once we have the locations settled and the firemen and firewomen are in place I think that Barbados will be well served.

I was particularly pleased to note that our Fire Service is at such a high standard that there is a female who is going to be able to leave Barbados as a **firewoman** and go straight into the Service in London as a **firewoman**. I think that is a great tribute to Barbados because...

#### **Aside.**

Mr. B. M. TAITT: The Honourable Member is here pleading to be included in my statement. He comes from the distinguished constituency and he is the distinguished representative of St. Michael East. They are **quarreling** now about where she comes from. Mr. Chairman, there is nothing like having a woman who is the **first** or the leader in anything. Everybody wants to make sure that she comes from their constituency, but one thing that I am certain about is that she is from Barbados and the Barbados Fire Service. We can all be proud that she could be chosen without more. It is almost like the Cricketers' Club.

The point that I really want to talk about at this time is CERO and I want to caution the Minister whose thinking I believe is genuine when he suggested that he might wish to put CERO into the status of a statutory board. I want to suggest to the Minister that this service is too important. It requires to have the close authority of a Minister, not a

Minister that is diluted by some statutory agency. CERO is too important. A Minister must be able to speak because the system of Government that we have recognizes Ministerial authority and I want to suggest to the Minister to think out very carefully whether the difficulties and anomalies which he identifies would constitute sufficient cause to make the change in this particular agency. This is one of the few areas where Governmental authority is necessary and also coupled with the idea offered by the Honourable Member for St. Michael South about our having a clear possibility of the delineation of disaster areas. I want to suggest to the Minister that the long awaited amendment of the Financial Administration and Audit Act would in fact remove the **kind** of anomaly that would have people scrambling to see where they are going to find the money from to pay a supermarket. Included in the amendments to the Financial Administration and Audit Act should be a section for emergency and that would take care of any anomaly which appears on the rather antediluvian approach. Here we are headed towards the 21st century but we are stymied by ideas that were nurtured in the 19th century. I really think that Barbados must make the quantum leap. We have done it in these Estimates at the level of the words in how they are set out. No longer do we have this great divide between capital and current. According to what I have seen here, they are now all included as Estimates. But I think the Minister should seek to have that reform of the Financial Administration and Audit Act which has served its purpose but which now is in need of carrying forward. I think that once that is done he will find that the barrier to decision making during an emergency would have disappeared.

I do not believe there is an Auditor General on earth who freed from the shackles of the particular piece of legislation would wish to stand in the way of decisions that are properly made by a Minister in relation to emergency. I think that the authority should rest with the Prime Minister. I think that a Prime Minister of a country is in fact the leader of the executive of the country and should have vested by law the authority to declare an area a disaster area. No doubt if he is a sensible Prime Minister, he will consult with the appropriate authorities within his Cabinet. I think that having declared the area a disaster area that it has to be a definable area and not like what we had during the floods in St. Peter – you know that kind of underhand declaration. We need to have a clear, specific authority in law such that there will be no **nit-picking** afterwards. Because when you are in an emergency, decisions have to be made. There can be no wondering if you have done the right thing. Even if subsequently it **turns** out that it was the wrong decision, a decision maker ought not to be stymied by an inability to act because in an emergency somebody has to take the responsibility. I am sorry the Honourable Member for St. Michael North is not in his place because I want to say to him that if he understands the structure of emergency relief in

the Caribbean he will see that **CERO's** move to Antigua was not something unusual or something for which we have to pat ourselves because that is the nature of the **structure** of relief we have set up in the region under the aegis of the Pan American Health **Organization** – Centre for Disaster Preparedness. There has been over the last **10** years or so a series of developmental assistance from PAHO which has devoted an entire section of its agency to disaster preparedness. There is a coordination which has moved forward arising out of each disaster that we have had and the various hurricanes we have had in the region moving from David to Hugo or to whomever. Each time we have one they try to see how the system works and how they may improve it. I do not speak a lot about these things but it is not well known for example that I led a mission to Haiti during **1994** to examine the relief operation that had in fact occurred. We were not there at the same time.

*Aside.*

Mr. B. M. TAITT: The Honourable Member for St. Michael South is seeking to find out. It so happened that we were destined to overlap and the Minister did not arrive until the day after. So we have never been in Haiti at the same time.

Mr. Chairman, this side that I have is unbelievable.  
9.25 p.m.

The point I am making, Sir, is that I led a mission to Haiti to examine the way in which humanitarian assistance had been applied in the period between **1991** to **1994**. One of the things that makes Haiti different from almost anywhere else in the world is that in fact it is the **non-governmental** organisations that have the power of action in this whole question of relief to Haiti, and they had a very interesting and unique problem where the de facto government was not authorised to deal with the United Nations system and they had to work out a very unique way to ensure that Haiti itself did not go down the drain. That would be the subject of a different discussion under a different Head.

Mr. Chairman, I am just inviting the Minister to review his initial thinking on this to recognise that a Statutory Board, however constituted, still has to look upward. The Chairman of a Statutory Board or the Permanent Secretary in a Statutory Board type situation still has to look upward for the source of authority, whereas a Minister acts per se. A Minister who is given authority under a specific piece of legislation is the ultimate authority in that piece of legislation, so long as he acts within the four **corners** of the legislation. In those circumstances an emergency does not lend itself to too many tiers of decision making. It requires swift, decisive

and finite action, if you will pardon the expression, and so I would recommend that you give very careful thought to strengthening CERO.

I formed the impression that what I hear the Minister to be saying is that the Secretariat can do with some deepening. The widening has occurred with the co-ordinating arrangements which the former Prime Minister outlined so well, but the deepening needs to be done as part of the resource building of the organisation. Once the Government accepts, as I hear that it has, that CERO is not a kind of flaky organisation to be brought in for public relations purposes when something happens, but is rather part of the ongoing and forward planning of the country, then proper resources for CERO ought not to be a difficulty. The fact that we have had two or three near misses, that hurricanes have kind of bypassed us and we have had prayer vigils and all of the other things that make Barbadians the arrogant people we tend to be from time to time, should not in anyway remove the necessity for the kind of institutional planning for emergencies that now form part of the everyday living of civilised countries.

In that respect, the question raised by my colleague from St. **Philip** South, and adumbrated by my colleague from St. Michael East, is a question which I myself would raise, except that every time the language is used a certain knee jerk reaction occurs, but I think it is very unfortunate that we look at the necessity for alternate hospital beds – not beds so much as bays – that is important if for any reason the one hospital we have is deactivated for a short period of time, that period of time might be crucial as to what is the nature of the disaster for Barbados. It is very important and I have to confess that this is one of the things which motivated me, when I had the responsibility, to ensure that we have what I choose to call alternate hospital facilities. It is not that there will ever be anything to replace the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, but in certain circumstances.

For example, in Guyana they were going along very well with their **mining** up river of gold and suddenly they had a disaster, something blew, and they had to fly all of the people to Barbados. Fortunately we had gone into an agreement between the Government of Barbados and the agency that is mining gold in Guyana that should they have an emergency the Barbados facilities would be available, because they would expect to have to move people if they had bums, for example, or burning. That is one of the reasons why we needed to have a bums unit here.

*Aside.*

Mr. B. M. TAITT: That is not true, that is information that has been put into this House quite mistakenly. It has worked. We have had over **158** bums

in this country between **1987** and **1993** and I wish that that kind of frivolous information which has been put out about the Bums Unit would not be put into the marketplace, because I will not contest it except to say that it is not true. The Burns Unit has been used. The thing about bums is that nobody knows when it is going to be needed. We have a Bends Unit at the Defence Force here in Barbados, and it is not known, and it is not likely to be known unless persons are included in it, that patients have come from as far as California. The unit which they have at the Defence Force is part of a network of such units. There is one in Puerto Rico and there is one in Barbados, and when all the ones in California were in fact in service they flew people by ambulance from California to Barbados. They fly people from Puerto Rico to Barbados, because we are among the few countries that have a unit like the one we have at the Defence Force, and it is important. That unit may not be used for six months and then suddenly it is needed for the next five months nonstop.

Emergencies are not things you can deal with in the ordinary run of the mill everyday thinking, they are things which you have to plan for and sometimes the best laid plans of mice and men do not come to fruition, but no one knows when the planning will come to emergency stage.

When we created the Accident and Emergency Department at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, we decided to put in some extra capacity for asthmatic children. It was popularly believed and carefully determined that as the graph looked at that time we could not possibly need the extra capacity before the year **1998** to 2002. Mr. Chairman, the ordinary information available will point out that the asthma bay has not only reached its limit, but in recent times, for some strange reason, there has been a phenomenal increase in asthma in Barbados, the asthma bay at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, which is the best of its kind anywhere in the region and possibly in the hemisphere, is almost obsolete, not in terms of the equipment and the resources but in terms of the number of bays, because the number of children who over the last five years or so have developed into asthmatics far exceeds any normal planning that could have been done.

Mr. Chairman, I am grateful to you for allowing me a few minutes, I believe, over my time, because I was making a point which I believe the Attorney General... I have found him to be amenable to suggestion and therefore I give him more than I do perhaps others in this particular area the benefits of my thinking. I do not expect that each of the ideas I have or this side has will find favour in the final decisions made by that side, but I believe that there are some matters which do not require any contention and which require each of us to put our hands to the till. And so I offer these comments for what they are worth.

Mr. F. J. **STUART**: Very briefly, Mr. Chairman, I just wanted to raise a few administrative issues in relation to the Departments which we have been discussing. I am referring to the **1994** Report of the Auditor General in which, at page 60, he said of the Central Emergency Relief Organisation, he observed as follows:

- (1) that documentary evidence was not provided in support of certain payments made by the organisation;

**9.35 p.m.**

Some payments were made without requisite Government contracts, purchases were obtained directly from suppliers that should have been acquired through the Central Purchasing Department. As I looked at this I reflected upon what the Honourable Member for St. Michael West was saying that emergencies sometimes can result in this kind of...

What I want to draw to your attention is what he said about the Immigration Department and this is that the **main** stock of passports are kept in a location not directly under the control of the Chief Immigration Officer and the stock in issue records do not show the balances for stock in hand. I should just like the Minister's response, particularly to the question of the stock of passports not being directly under the control of the Chief Immigration Officer and to hear what implications this might have for the security of the passports. I am obliged.

*Asides.*

Hon. D. A. C. **SIMMONS**: Mr. Chairman, I think that the report to which the Honourable Member refers is the **1994** Report of the Auditor General. From time to time there have been problems with passports' stock. There is no doubt about that. But we have been able to **correct** the situation and we believe that there is better security as a result of the strictures of the Auditor General and the re-organisation of the Department. In fact, if the Parliamentary Secretary for Housing were here I would have reminded him since he called for more space for the Immigration Department that he is right in that call, but since he is in housing he should be helping me to get out the Cooperative Department so that we can have the whole building and then there will be no problem with the security. We have tried to create a vault situation and the new Chief Immigration Officer has been able to establish systems and procedures for stricter security in the matter of passports. This applies both locally and overseas.

There was a time some years ago, Honourable Members will recall, where passports disappeared from the Consul General's Office in New York and ended up in the hands of Africans who were vending them.

I want to give some statistics in winding up that members may find useful. For the period April 1995 to March 1996 the financial year now is on its way out, there were 940 applications for citizenship and 702 were approved. **189** for permanent residence, **148** were approved, 586 for **immigrant** status - 266 approved, permission to reside and work - 153. No applications for that - where you apply for immigrant status but you don't qualify we might give you permission to reside and work for 2 or 3 years. Work permits - 1 609 applied, 1 469 were approved. Student visas, where there is a potentiality for cheating the system, student visas - 1 907 applied, 1 320 were approved. There were 29 159 passport applications, almost 30 000. Passports lost, stolen, burnt, misplaced or defaced - 497.

One of the most distressing episodes since I have become Attorney General was a letter which appeared in the newspaper within 3 or 4 months of my assuming office, written by the wife of a lawyer who is an immigrant into Barbados, accusing me of ethnic cleansing, deporting Guyanese. I was very hurt about that one because contrary to assumption, take the last financial year, we deported 54 persons from all over the place. She was trying to make a case for Guyanese; but the truth is we were having some problems with Guyanese who were involved with prostitution and we had to get them out. 77 persons were asked to leave in the last year and there **are** other statistics.

The Honourable Member for St. **Michael** East asked me about the figures for fires. For 1995, the period January 1 to March 12 in respect of cane fires, the Fire Service had 50 calls for cane fires. 98 **1/8th** acres were burnt. For the period January 1 to March 12 this year fire service had **144** calls and 774 acres of cane burnt. There **are** 26 vehicles in the Fire Service, including water tenders, respiratory tenders, ambulances and so on.

The Rt. Honourable former Prime Minister was concerned about causes of fires. What really happens is that when there is a fire the fire service and the police **and/or** the Government Electrical Engineering Department will do an investigation to see if they can **determine** the cause of the fire. If there is a reasonable suspicion of arson then the matter is handed over to the police; but they do their own investigation. The way **fires are** set nowadays it is very **difficult** to trace the source.

9.45 p.m.

Sir, the Capital and Maintenance Programme for the Fire Stations and Immigration Department, we spent \$140 000 on the Immigration Department in this financial year. At the Four Roads Fire Station we spent \$180 000. At the Fire Service headquarters, especially for rewiring - \$77 000. I am not happy with how that work is progressing but this year we are going to spend a substantial amount in

addition at the Fire Service headquarters because we **are** all on both sides in praise of the fire officers, the quality of leadership of the Fire Service Department, the job they have done over the years and so on, but if any of us take the trouble, drop in there **anytime**. Ask Mr. Cadagon to show you around. You would really be disappointed with the conditions under which the Chief Fire Officer has to work.

The Government has authorized the Ministry of Housing and Lands to negotiate for the acquisition of the **burnt-out** Plaza to give additional space to the Fire Department. What I have recommended is that we build a building that will accommodate the Immigration Department and the Fire Service. The Fire **Service, with** an extended building, can have the ground floor and Immigration can have the top floor or something like that because Immigration really wants more space. With the additional work they **are** going to be asked to do in providing statistical information for tourism organisations and so on, we need the space.

Sir, at the Worthing Fire Station we spent \$32 400 last year. I cannot deal with Head 50 now but I want to assure Honourable Members on the other side that I am looking after them.

*Aside.*

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Head 50 is the Post Office. It is part of the Ministry of Home **Affairs**. You do not ever get to it. I was pleased, Sir, the **first** major work I was able to do as Minister of Home Affairs on the Post Office was at Eagle Hall. You went and looked at it?

*Aside.*

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Under them it was kicking like a sieve. Go and look at it.

**Brittons** Hill Post Office we spent \$28 460. I wonder! Did I have any opportunity in my eight years in Opposition to compliment you all for doing anything for me in St. Thomas? Tell me one...

*Aside.*

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Nearly kill the people in Arch Hall and **Bennetts** with Mount **Stinkeroo**.

We spent some money at **Worthings** and St. Lucy.

Mr. B. M. **TAITT**: If the Honourable Member would give way. The Honourable Member asks if there was anything done in his constituency. Can the Honourable Member forget so easily that he sat with me when I gave him a new **spanking** landfill?

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: In 1992, September, Sir, about to cost the Government a pretty penny.

Rt. Hon. L. E. SANDIFORD: Playing fields in St. Thomas. This party provided the playing fields at **Welchman** Hall. You have a whole area there developed with a Post Office and whatever else at **Welchman** Hall and proposals for a Police Station. That was the proposal to come there and **Harrison's** Cave. You should not be complaining.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: I inherited those things.

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: I also have some difficulty in understanding how the Honourable Attorney General could pass Welches, Eagle Hall and **Brittons** Hill and does not understand that Welches need to be repaired. I am a little confused. I am sure the Honourable Attorney General would explain that.

Mr. D. St. E. **KELLMAN**: The Honourable Member for St. Thomas is misleading this House when he gave the impression ~~that the~~ Democratic Labour Party did not do anything for St. Thomas. I would like it to go in the record that we were the first party that put a secondary school in St. Thomas.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: I will also give the marriage licence statistics, Sir. In terms of the value for the period April 1994 to March 1995 total fees for marriage licences were \$233 755. There were 3 035 licences issued. April 1, 1995 to February 29, 1996 there were 3 354 marriage licences issued, fees received \$267 670. They are going up a little bit each time.

#### Aside.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: The annual revenue, I can give you that tomorrow. I think it is about \$2 million or \$3 million.

Sir, I do not believe there is very much more I have to add. I am very grateful to the Honourable Member for **St. Michael West** for the points he raised, interesting points about how we can get around some of the problems. I am going to give them very careful consideration because we have at last received the recommendations for the amendment of the Financial Administration and Audit Act and the Financial Rules so we now have to do the drafting since we now have the policy document, but it is really something else.

We have been delayed in doing the construction of the wall at the Prison because of the Financial Rules. It is only on Monday we were able to award the contract. Cabinet had to get around it by applying Rule 135, but we

had to go through all this wait because of the Financial Rules. They do not provide for emergency situations. A wall falls down in a Prison. That is an emergency situation. It costs more than \$25 000 to restore it and you have to go through all the rigmarole, but we are going to deal with that in the new situation.

The Honourable Member for St. Michael South, as usual, made a very thoughtful contribution, full of his experience and knowledge. I am going to treat it very seriously. He was concerned about the declaration of a disaster area. It did, in fact, trigger CERO. The declaration triggered all kinds of mobilization including \$4.8 million supplementaries but the point is taken that if we borrow a phrase we have to be very careful about its applicability in the local situation.

Sir, I have some information on the tree. This is a very important thing, Sir, that a tree fell over two years ago, destroyed a house and put two men in some jeopardy or partial homelessness. I am advised that the matter went to Cabinet via the Ministry of Housing and it has not come back to Home Affairs or CERO. It means that it has been bogged down or forgotten, but certainly it is languishing. I give the Honourable Member the assurance, Sir, that we will investigate it in our Ministry. We will try and locate it and move it on. I am sorry that you did not drop me a note before to tell me what the problem was, the names of the people and so on. We will get it looked after.  
9.55 p.m.

I do not think I have **anymore** to ...

#### Asides.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: ...Sir, in terms of other work at fire stations. We completed work at Worthing Fire Station and we are doing work, as I said, at the Headquarters, the Airport and **Weston**, **this** year, Sir.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: On a point of order. A matter which did not come up, but since he is talking about the **fire** stations, for some time there was a question as to whether we would pass the Airport's Authority exam. I cannot remember the term, but there was a question concerning the capability for **aircraft** protection at the Airport arising out of inspection by the America's programme for the **FAA**. I wonder if you could address that.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Sir, to the best of my knowledge, all that was to have been done to obtain the necessary accreditation was done in the last 18 months to two years, starting with the previous Government. The situation at the Airport Fire Station has improved. Only

this evening all the refurbishment that was to have been done by **Angloco**, the suppliers of the equipment was completed and, I think there were three or four vehicles which were refurbished and handed over to the **P.S.** just today Sir. The Fire Service is in pretty good shape, Sir. I **think** we have said that next year we will **try** and get another appliance for them, but right now, as I said, there are 26 vehicles in pretty good shape.

One final thing, Sir, in case the Press or somebody got the wrong impression. The Government recognises the need for a **fire** station somewhere around the Six Roads area, for reasons which we have discussed in here before, but having to do with the necessity to maintain at the Airport a supply of **fire** service vehicles and the proximity of the Woodbourne Oil Fields. Of course, as the Honourable Minister of Labour said, the demographics of **St. Philip** make it mandatory that some consideration be given to coverage in an area which is fairly equidistance to housing as well as Woodbourne and even to lend support to the Airport in the case of a **fire**.

Last year Government identified the property, the former Plantations Complex at Six Roads, and the team of us who went was of the view that it was an ideal location for fire station, court, police station, post office, library and revenue collection department. In fact, at the back there is a large room with main doors, Sir, which will be ideal for the **fire** service and Government has therefore mandated the Ministry of Housing to enter into discussions with the Receiver of the property, with a view to negotiating a price for its acquisition and assessing and determining the feasibility.

My view is, Sir, we should acquire it but centralise all those services. I **am** sure we can get the property at a reasonable price. But if you had to build a **fire** station, a court, a police station, a post office, a library throughout **St. Philip** and so, Sir, it will **run** you into millions of dollars. You have a property there. You will have to do some modification and renovation but it will be worth the Government's while in the long run. I hope that the recommendation comes back from the Ministry of Housing that we should pursue it.

I think we have exhausted this Head, Sir, I beg to move that Head 28 now stand part.

Hon. R. N. **GREENIDGE**: I beg to second that.

*The question that Head 28 stand part was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.*

#### **HEAD 29 – DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC PROSECUTIONS – \$220 200**

Hon. D. A. C. **SIMMONS**: Mr. Chairman, Sir, in moving that Head **29** stand part, I will take the opportunity

to distribute to Honourable Members, Sir, a document which I had specially prepared for this debate.

Mr. Chairman, ever since the **1994** Manifesto of the Barbados Labour Party was published, it committed the Government to capital punishment and corporal punishment, in certain cases. There are constitutional implications in relation to corporal punishment and that matter will be referred to the Constitutional Review Committee, and indeed the whole question of the five-year rule. There is only one speech I made to the Constitutional Review Committee. I intend to put to the Constitution Review Committee, a proposal to get around **Pratt** and **Morgan** because we have been committed, Sir, to carrying out the death penalty in appropriate cases which outraged this society, and because we have made that commitment with some vehemence, certain people have got the impression, Sir, that nothing can be done or that the Barbados Labour Party is soft on its promise. That is a perception, Sir, and I have to deal with it, because when you really examine the allegations which appeared in some editorials written by a certain lawyer, they are not fair. On March **24** last year a decision was taken that **Ryan Clarke** was to hang and it was only a leak that prevented **Clarke** from going down on the morning of March 28 at **5.30** when a press release appeared on the afternoon of March 27 which alerted lawyers, which then caused the High Court to come out at 8.00 o'clock and the Court of Appeal at midnight.

**10.05 p.m.**

Now we have had all kinds of manoeuvres and complications since then and the fact has been that we have been unable to carry out the death penalty because no one in here would wish us to attempt even to carry out the death penalty when people are on appeal. The Right Honourable Member is with me on this and a lot more. The Government will respect the rights of appellants who must pursue their cases legitimately to the **Privy Council**. So long as they are pursuing their cases we will not attempt to carry out the death penalty. We cannot. We would be lawless indeed. The fact is that we now have in maximum security, persons convicted of murder and we cannot do anything about them for a number of reasons which will soon become apparent. I will tell you how many there are. There are 18. I have counted them. Let me tell you now, in relation to each one, what is the score

**Oliver**, convicted on the **8th** of November **1985**. His five years would have expired in November **1990**, give or take the time he was out on escape.

I have got a column here which I will call status on appeal to Court of Appeal or Privy Council. There is a limitation of 5 years applying to his case because of the Privy Council decision in **Bradshaw** and **Roberts**. He was with them so he is out.

Peter Bradshaw and **Denzil Roberts**: Bradshaw was the same date as Oliver 8th November 1985. His 5 years have gone.

Roberts 24th April 1986 Privy Council upheld.

Then we have Robert Ryan Clarke. I have here Mercy Committee because his appeal to the Privy Council was dismissed but he raised a question of his mental competence and they have sent back and said that in light of the medical evidence about that they have to reconsider. There is a thing that you cannot hang a fellow who is not correct upstairs.

Then you have Trevor Foster, he was convicted on the 24th April, 1989. His 5 years expired in 1994, April. He is on appeal to the Privy Council. Not disposed of.

Derrick Smith, October 1989. His five years expired in October, 1994 but he is on appeal to the Privy Council.

Bentley Greaves, November 2, 1989. His five years expired in 1994 but he is on appeal to the Privy Council. And it goes right down, Vincent **Murrell**, **Cedric Williams**.

Lester **Harewood** (Toffee). His five years will expire in October this year but he is before the Privy Council.

**Stephen Nurse**. We have time with him. He was convicted on 20th April 1993. He is before the Privy Council.

**Carlos Licorish**. He is 1994. With the Privy Council.

Jesse Owen **Norris** – reduced to Manslaughter by the Court of Appeal.

**Nathaniel Nelson**, he is the one who killed the policeman, Springer. No evidence that there is anything wrong with him. There is plenty time.

**Adrian Stuart**, Anthony Mayers and Victor St. Rose, these are for the murder of Games. They are on appeal to the Privy Council.

*Aside,*

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Careful what you are saying. There is a David Thompson in today's paper arrested. It is on page 8 or 9 here. Anyhow let us get back to serious business.

Richard **Bourne** – Court of Appeal

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: Mr. Chairman, so as not to confuse the House I just want to make it absolutely clear that the David Thompson referred to is not David Thompson, the Leader of the Democratic Labour Party

whom this House understands clearly is overseas on *bona fide* business not like the Leader of the Barbados Labour Party who has fled and left them leaderless today.  
10.15 p.m.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: We will discuss that tomorrow. I just want to say something else that is related to this. Part of the problem for delay has been the system. I want to announce tonight that Cabinet approved the commencement of a new course at the Community College to begin shortly in computer **data** transcription. We are going to train court reporters and parliamentary reporters in the new system that will speed up the taking of evidence and consequentially the preparation of the record of appeals. We want to train at least 25 persons. Let me give the cost. The Government is committed to **putting** in \$1.4 million for 2 years because it takes 2 years to train the person. You cannot get any short cut and the United States Government is going to be contributing U.S. \$140 000 to the project. The Ads will soon be **coming** out. There is an Ad to come for the consultant and technical man and we will get this off the ground shortly. I wish to compliment the Principal of the Community College, **Mrs.** Holder, and also **Mrs.** Cadogan and the former Registrar of the Supreme Court who were able over a period of a year or around 18 months to go and visit Bahamas, Trinidad, and a conference in Nashville to see the systems. We have a project now to **train** Barbadians in computer-aided transcription which should come on stream in 1998 and after that I **think** we should be able to get the records of appeals a lot more quickly.

*Aside.*

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: One of the other things that the Government has been doing, Sir, is this. We do not mind a convicted murderer appealing to the **Privy Council** in pursuance of his rights. But it is now becoming very, very costly to Government. We have had some bills recently for Bradshaw and Roberts for 30 000 pounds and 28 000 pounds and we had to pay them. In future, the instruction has gone out that we will pay a thousand pounds towards the preparation of the record. Full stop, *finito*, good night nurse!

Mr. B. M. TAITT: On a point of order, Sir. When I used to play football, the referee could blow a man even though there was nobody else within the vicinity and call a foul. The theory was, as those sportsmen over there will be able to **confii**, he would be a dangerous player even to himself. The Attorney General, when he gets emotional about this issue, is given to making statements which on sober reflection he would not wish to make.

*Aside.*

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Those who understand the language I speak do not understand it that way.

The Attorney General knows that he cannot establish beforehand that he is going to pay a thousand pounds and no more. You cannot say that you are offering them representation and then withdraw it in the same breath. You know that. Let us have that debate at a different time when we will be debating that. Do not let them have the headline now about "One thousand pounds and they are gone". Let us back off of that. Do not worry about that.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: No, no. I am serious about this. All **kinds** of manoeuvres are made, some meritorious and some absolutely without merit. I am glad that the last one the Privy Council dealt with it. I had a bet **with** Mr. Shepherd that he could not succeed and in the case of Reichley, the fifth time Reichley went to the Privy Council, they chased him out and he last a week. Do you know what his point was? They were arguing that when you come before the Mercy Committee you have a right to **be** heard.

*Aside.*

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Barbados was prepared to argue it. Reichley argued it and the Privy Council said no. When you get to the Mercy Committee, you have no more legal rights. Your legal rights stop at appeal.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: If the Honourable Member will give way. I believe that is why **Delroy** Sharp has decided to become a politician because anybody, and I am saying this quite seriously, that has examined the concept of mercy in the Mercy Committee that it has nothing to do with being heard. It is a prerogative from the sovereign and therefore it is not susceptible to pleas from below. Where the Mercy Committee is activated, all of the legal procedures have been completed to that point. Therefore, the question of being heard does not arise. Anybody who goes arguing that before the gentlemen up there would only have been making in my humble submission a little bossa-bossa. It does not work.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: We tried to get them to overrule and they said no. So that one is settled now. But I understand that they must make their move to **try** and save their next one. Then if you are asking the state to pay and you are coming in the form of a pauper, the state is now calling the tune. I will help but I am only going to help for a certain **part** of the way. Do you know how much we paid for **airfare** for Shepherd to go and argue? All of that is finished. We will pay to get the record of appeal.  
10.25 p.m.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: If you are not prepared to pay the lawyers to go up there, then pay for the Privy Council to come down here. I don't have any argument with that. Do not pay for the lawyers to go up, I agree with you, but get the Privy Council to come down and let them sit down here. They would love to come.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Mr. Chairman, I beg to move that Head 29 stand part.

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

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

*On the motion of Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER, seconded by Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS, Mr. CHAIRMAN reported progress to His Honour the SPEAKER and asked for leave to sit again, and Mr. SPEAKER resumed the Chair and reported accordingly.*

## SUSPENSION OF SITTING

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that this sitting be suspended until 11 o'clock tomorrow morning. It is proposed that we would start at 11 o'clock tomorrow morning in order to accommodate Honourable Members on both sides of the House who have early commitments. It is further proposed that we will break for lunch at 1 o'clock and that we would work until 8 o'clock. The guillotine is expected to fall at or about 7 o'clock.

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

*The question that the sitting be suspended until 11 o'clock on Friday, March 22, 1996 was put and resolved in the affirmative without division, and Mr. SPEAKER suspended the sitting accordingly.*  
10.28 p.m.

## RESUMPTION

Mr. SPEAKER: This sitting is resumed. When the suspension was taken, the House was in Committee of Supply. To that it will revert.

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

## COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY

Mr. CHAIRMAN: This Honourable Chamber now reverts to Committee of Supply.

## HEAD 30 – ATTORNEY GENERAL – \$33 075 100

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Mr. Chairman, Sir, in moving that Head 30 stand part, I will do as I did yesterday and give the House a broad prospectus of Head 30 what has been done and what we hope to do with the money which we are asking the House to vote.

Mr. Chairman, Sir, as I outlined for the Ministry of Home Affairs, the year 1996-97 will be one in which the Office of the Attorney General will continue its programme of refurbishment, renovation, redecoration and upgrading of the physical plant within the various departments of the Ministry. This was a programme which we started in early 1995 which the Leader of the Opposition at this time this year predicted and was carried in the Advocate on the front page would never happen that we would not be able to repair police stations or fire stations, post offices and so on. I am pleased to say that the officers in the Ministry have worked extremely hard and have enabled us to give the lie to that prediction. It was quoted and he did not deny it and he was on the radio saying it. It was on VOB and then also reproduced. I have it.

Sir, the programme that we started in early 1995 I think has been very successful. The Leader of the National Democratic Party, the Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central, three days ago recommended to Government that we should be engaged upon a number of small projects all around Barbados which would not only upgrade the physical plant but perhaps more importantly would create regular economic activity aimed at the relief of unemployment. I am pleased to tell him that in the Ministry we started such a strategy in advance of his call for it and, as I said, it has worked well generally speaking. The programme has served to reduce much of the unhappiness and low morale that was evident in departments of the Ministry hitherto and in a sense, whereas the public officers who are in CTUSAB have agreed with Government on a financial package, it is still left over for further negotiation that the parties should discuss improved terms and conditions for the workers in the Fire Service. Some of those conditions relate to improved physical conditions, the amenities and facilities under which public officers are called to work. We see in the Ministry of the Attorney General ourselves as making a contribution to the improvement of the conditions of work for many of the public officers within the Ministry.

Mr. Chairman, on the assumption that the Ministry will be able to complete its programme of refurbishment during 1996-97, the Ministry at the same time is planning for the future development of the various services and departments within the Ministry with a view to the implementation of new projects, programmes and policies for the next financial year. So that these 2 financial years 1995-96 and 1996-97 are years where we are consolidating. We are improving existing structures, upgrading and renovating and once we have got that programme settled we can now look to new projects and programmes.

*Aside.*

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Sir, during the financial year 1995-96 refurbishment was carried out on the

following police buildings. As soon as you get a shower of rain and workers complain, the television crew runs and films Eagle Hall Post Office whose roof was leaking in April last year. For example, the Eagle Hall Post Office has now been finished and I have not seen a programme yet showing the work that has been done, or asking the people if they are satisfied and so on. The same thing happened in relation to Head 30. We have done work at the Belleplaine Police Station to the tune of \$16 900, District E Police Station out on the hill in Speightstown \$24 000, Hastings Police Station \$24 600 and counting because I insisted that those ugly green windows at the front of the station had to be changed. They are disgustingly unsightly and some more money is allocated for changing those windows and painting the exterior of that building. Work has been done on the interior and that work is continuing. District B Police Station coming down from St. Philip – part of the roof is on. That is on the northern side. We are refurbishing there at the cost of \$245 000. District C similar renovations are taking place there – \$254 000. In the last financial year we have built a new Exhibits Room in the yard as it were of the Central Police Station right under the building where there was a petro pump and some vehicles used to be there for repair. We have enclosed that area. That is the Exhibits Room – \$110 000. We have done work at the Supreme Court – \$237 143, Magistrates Courts – \$40 000. Now I will say what we will do in this year in respect to the Magistrates Courts. That is what we have done in the year just gone, Sir.

Now for the coming financial year, Sir, the whole East Wing of the Central Police Station will be gutted and completely rebuilt, renovated and refurbished. I think that the Central Police Station of Barbados should be a place of some pleasure to the eye and dignified. Now we have a structure which has certain architectural characteristics and features which ought to be retained. I am told that it is a heritage property. But the fact is that over the years we have allowed that to fall into disrepair.  
11.15 a.m.

We have a new design, tenders went out, tenders have been received, a recommendation should be going to Cabinet shortly for a decision on the award of the contract for the complete renovation of that long building on Coleridge Street next to the Registry and opposite the car park. When it is finished I think everybody will like it.

In this financial year we are going to try and start the consauction of the forensic lab. I mentioned that yesterday. We have \$687 000 in the vote to pay for professional services, page 92, Object No. 626 and we are going to try and begin that, because it will take at least 18 months to complete the forensic lab, so we will start later on in the financial year. Most of the drawings have been completed, so it is only to decide when we want to start and get on with it.

The prison wall, Sir, approval was given on Monday for the work to start. I hope they can start next week. It will cost \$197 000 to rebuild that section which has fallen, but it looks as though we have to do some additional work throughout the year to ensure the integrity of the whole peripheral walls. The only reason for the delay in starting has been the constraints of the Financial Rules. We have no elbow room. They do not contain emergency provisions, but the new ones will address that.

Maintenance. We will continue the programme of **maintenance** at **Oistins**, District A, Station Hill, some work at District D, Holders Hill, where the roof there has started to leak again. I had some complaints last Saturday. Would you believe it? The contractor has to look to find money to do repairs to the **Holetown** Complex. That complex was opened by **Philip** Greaves on September 2, 1994 and termites have taken charge. They took charge of the Post Office section last year, we did some work and the Superintendent at a neighbourhood watch on Saturday evening told me that the situation is terrible. We are still within the defects liability period and the contractor will have to go back and do it. This is millions of dollars.

Sir, I had really hoped that by now I would have been able to tell the House that we had in fact constructed an extension to the St. **Matthias** Magistrates Court. That has not progressed with the speed and alacrity I had hoped, but it is going to be on the front burner. It is absolutely essential that we create another court at St. **Matthias** to assist with the traffic cases. Some could be tried in town, but some could be tried at St. **Matthias**, still within the District A jurisdiction. I want that as an urgent project to get off the ground in the new financial year. In that way we think we will be able to lick the problem of the backup of traffic cases.

Honourable Members will be pleased to hear, I hope, that the three magistrates courts in Bridgetown are being air-conditioned. I think it is **Plantrac** Engineering Ltd. that has been awarded the contract for the air-conditioning of the two District A criminal courts and the traffic court.

I must not forget the Registry. The Registry will also be air-conditioned in 1996-97, and we owe it to them. The officers in the Registry have suffered hard and long, especially when the weather is hot, **from** a lack of ventilation in that old building. We have some internal renovations to be done, small things, to be redesigned and we **are** going to air-condition both the ground floor and the first floor of the Registry.

*Asides.*

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: I hear the concerns of the Honourable Member. We will give consideration to that. I am not making a promise at this time.

Sir, last night I believe I mentioned **under** Subprogram 01, page 91, that Cabinet has mandated the Ministry of Housing and Lands to negotiate with the receivers of the Plantations complex at Six Roads to determine the feasibility of its acquisition and use for several different Government offices. I am strongly **commending** it to Government because I think it makes sense to centralise those services. It will be far, far cheaper to have one complex housing all of those services, it will be more customer friendly than the services are at present, dispersed all about, and I hope that the Ministry of Housing and the Royal Bank will be able to conclude successful negotiations.

In that vote of \$314 000 on page 91 there is provision for the commencement of the computerisation of the Registry. It is absolutely vital for the modernisation of the justice system that the Registry be computerised so that there can be better case management, better co-ordination between the Registry and the Police Stations, and so on.

I wish to say a few words, Sir, about the National Task Force on **Crime** Prevention, which is on page 93. The National Task Force on Crime Prevention got off the ground in March, 1995 and it has two arms, as it were, the Executive Secretariat which is essentially research and planning, and that is staffed by three full time persons. The other arm is the part time inter-disciplinary body which is of an advisory nature and that is a larger group that works with the criminologist in Trident House.

I think everybody understands the mission statement of the National Task Force on Crime Prevention, but during the last financial year they conducted a survey of 145 of the prison population. The purpose of that social enquiry helped us to identify the factors which are predisposing to criminal involvement.

Before I give some information which I think Members will be interested to hear, during this year we **are** going to be doing discussion forums to share research findings with relevant Government Departments. We are going to be formulating crime prevention strategies together with the management of the Police Force, we are going to do a literacy and numeracy assessment of the prison population and also do a pilot project **on** community service orders. The report is not yet ready, but we are getting some information. The Director of the Task Force brought me some information day before yesterday. The survey started on September 22, 1995, so these figures that I give are related to that base date, September 22, 1995. The prison population was 753. 87.8% of those were convicted males as you can imagine, 67 persons were on remand and there were 21 convicted females and 4 females on remand. It is an interesting statistic that we have found. 72.2% of the **male** convicts at **Glendairy** are under the

age of 35. I will tell you where the bulk is in due course. The peak age range of that prison sub-group is between age 30 and 34.

11.25 a.m.

When they were interviewed, there were 55 different categories of offences that were actually listed in the database. We have now done some regrouping and they have now been reduced to 15 broad categories of offences. 245 of the inmates of the prisons are actually serving time for what I may call acquisitive offences, breaking and entering and larceny related offences so that 245 represents 37% of the total male population. If you add robbery related offences to that, 52% are serving time for property related offences and a further 14% of that group of 93 persons have been **inside** because of drug offences, specifically related to trafficking or possession. We are doing the analysis as to how many of them have had involvement with drugs prior to going to jail. All that was in the questionnaire.

In terms of length of sentencing, 264 of the inmates or 40% are serving sentences ranging from 2 to 5 years and a smaller proportion are serving longer sentences so that total convicted males by age groups are: the group 20 to 24 – 137 representing 20.7%, 25-29 – 155 representing 23.4% and 30-34 – 170 representing 25.7%.

Sir, I will say some indication of the **kind** of offences being committed and securing convictions. Breaking and entering, larceny – 245, aggravated robbery – 99, drugs – 93, murder and attempts – 45, manslaughter – 32, rape – 44, wounding – 24. Those are the significant ones.

For sentences, the actual figures. Those who are serving between 1 month and 2 years – 162, 2-5 years – 264, 6-10 years – 110, 11-15 years – 51, 16-20 years – 21, 21 years and over – 11.

I thought, Sir, that I should give Honourable Members some of that information because for a long time we have been strategising, theorising and hypothesising about crime in Barbados without any data. You cannot deal with crime in the absence of data. You cannot deal with social planning in the absence of data. We are now getting the data and when that report comes I think it will be of inestimable value to all of us and to all social planners and I compliment the Task Force on the work that they have been doing and I hope they can get a little more speed in the production of the reports.

Parliamentary Council Services. I have Government's legislative programme. We are currently working on approximately 36 or 37 bills. The National Insurance and Social Security Amendment, the Insurance Bill is before the Select Committee, Special Development Areas Bill,

Income Tax Amendment, Financial Institutions Bill, Offshore Banking. A Bill for the National Productivity Board, Highways (Amendment) and the Flood Prevention (Amendment) should be in the House any time now. I have certified them already. Coastal Management Bill, Marine Pollution Control Bill, the NCC Bill, all these are being done. The Defamation Bill ought to be circulated **today** and later on we would wish to give notice and a copy should be coming down today. Limitation of Actions. That is before the Law Reform Committee. I have virtually signed off on it. We have not had any feedback from people. They seem satisfied with what we have drafted and we will get that to come by May.

The other Bills we had already. The Ministry is **looking** at freedom of information and a National Protection of Secrets Bill to replace official secrets legislation. The Statutory Boards Pension Bill is being drafted, CARICOM Skilled Persons. The first draft of the Minor Offences Bill has been done and seconded. You will remember that I gave the House last year when we did the Vagrancy (Amendment) Bill the assurance that we would try and collect all the minor offences and put them in one bill. The first draft has been sent to me and I must confess that I haven't completed my reading of it. I try to read all these things myself. Exempt Limited Partnership and Exempt Mutual Funds legislation is being reviewed now by the Minister of International Business. Very soon we will be getting a massive bill called the Shipping Corporations Bill and the Aircraft Mortgages Bill. The Ministry of International Transport is going to send them for certification very shortly.

The Free Trade Zones Bill in the Ministry of Trade, the Shops (Amendment) Bill, all those are being drafted and in addition to that there was one other that is in an advanced state of preparation.

I didn't give the figure for the computerisation of the Registry. The IBM quotation is \$783 106.48 to computerise the Registry.

11.35 a.m.

I made a brief reference last night just before we **adjourned** about the Computer Aided Transcription programme which will start at the Community College very shortly. I will give Honourable Members more information about that today since it is more related to this Head than the DPP. I will come back, of course, during the course of the morning to deal with other matters but, for the time being, that is as much as I can say to Honourable Members.

Before I sit down, Sir, the National Master Plan on Drugs, the National Drugs Strategy, I have the first draft here which is to be finalised shortly. This will then have

to go to Cabinet for approval but we have developed a national **drug** strategy on the demand reduction side. I must emphasize that. The supply side is a different matter. That is being done through Government's Security Committee. I cannot publish that. On the demand side, this is the plan and I will discuss this with Honourable Members during the course of the day.

I beg to move, Sir, that Head 30 stand part.

Hon. R. C. EASTMOND: I beg to second that.

Mr. F. J. **STUART**: Mr. Chairman, just a few brief remarks on the matters raised by the Honourable Member for St. Thomas. I listened with interest and a certain amount of delight to the plans which the Honourable Member has unveiled for the Police and the Courts. A lot of this work, in my view, is necessary work and I **daresay** is long overdue. It is a matter of interest to me, of course, that there are plans to improve the conditions under which policemen have to work. I have been concerned about this for a considerable time.

The public unsparingly criticizes policemen when the public thinks that it has been shortchanged but I do not think anybody really stops to examine the conditions under which policemen in Barbados have to work. I am very glad to hear the Honourable Member for St. Thomas say that the eastern wing of the Central Police Station is going to be gutted and substantial repairs will be done there because policemen who work in that building work, in my view, in sub human conditions. I have to go there from time to time in the discharge of my professional responsibilities and there must be a connection between how policemen perceive themselves and the conditions under which they have to work, both at Central and in the outstations.

I am aware, of course, that the Honourable Attorney General has been having work done at other police stations across the country. At District "C" in my constituency I have actually seen the work proceeding apace and I am sure that once that work is finished they will be working in much more congenial conditions. This is all short-term because, as I understand the Minister, there are plans to ultimately transfer to Six Roads if Government and the Royal Bank of Canada can reach some kind of agreement on a reasonable price for the Complex at Six Roads.

My voice has been heard in this House on the issue of the Six Roads Complex already. I want to let the Minister know that he will have my unqualified support in his pursuit of the acquisition of that property at Six Roads as long as the price is right. I have said in here already that the Complex at Six Roads as it is now stands is mute but eloquent testimony of the fact that white elephants are not the sacred and exclusive preserve of Government or the

public sector, that the vaunted omniscience of private businessmen can sometimes lead to the results which we have seen at Six Roads and that ultimately it usually falls to the **State** to come to the rescue and to bail these private sector individuals out.

Six Roads is another example of that. We hear all this **talk** about white elephants in the public sector and how Government should not pre-empt opportunities available to private businessmen to invest because businessmen can invest more wisely than people in the public sector. I do not submit or admit to that **kind** of theology. It has never impressed me. I believe, and I have said on the Floor of this House already, that there is as much wisdom in the public sector as there is in the private sector and if I had to give anybody the edge, I would accord the edge to the people in the public sector.

Having said that, I think that a cost benefit analysis will have to be done in terms of what it would cost Government to establish on its own separate facilities for all the departments it contemplates having at Six Roads and what it would cost Government to acquire the Plantations' Complex at Six Roads and to centralize all those services. I have a sneaky suspicion that it might be cheaper to acquire Plantations Six Roads and, if I am right on that, the Government has my wholehearted support in **that regard**. It can only redound to the advantage of the public sector and certainly can only enhance the prestige of the people in the Six Roads area in particular, and the people in **St. Philip** South and **St. Philip** in general, so I have no quarrel with that.

The postmen at the Six Roads Post Office work under very cramped conditions. The police at District "C" work under very cramped conditions and I think they would all rejoice if an opportunity were accorded them to work under conditions that are much more favourable than they do now. I know that the **Princess** Margaret School is waiting to snatch up the facilities at present being used by the Post Office and the Six Roads Library so that once the postmen and the Library are forced to vacate that building that building can then be used as an extension to Princess Margaret School which itself is desperately in need of additional space. So I am delighted to hear that these plans are in the pipeline and there might be some relief coming in this area in the constituency of **St. Philip** South.

I want to say to the Minister though that while I applaud the repairs being done at District "C" Police Station, I want to say that whether the policemen are working in good conditions or bad, their situation would not have improved, in my view, if the state of lighting from the main road into the station is not improved. I believe the Honourable Member for St. Thomas knows because he used to live in that gap. I do not know

how something serious has not happened up there yet. I really hope that by saying this I am not putting any idea in anybody's head. I do not believe that the policemen at District "C" work under the most secure conditions after night fall. It is very, very dark, treacherously dark once night falls. I just want to ask the Government to apply its mind to that situation and try to improve the state of lighting from the main road into the station so that people can move securely during the night.

11.45 a.m.

The Magistrate's Court at District "C" is in a very bad state of repairs as well and I did not hear the Minister say that when you finish the police station you are going to the Magistrate's Court. The windows of that court, some have dropped off, the Magistrate there, quite justifiably, complains daily about the oppressive heat, the conditions of oppressive heat under which she has to work from day to day. Litigants and attorneys-at-Law and so on **are**, similarly, very uncomfortable in that court, nowadays. I am glad to hear that once the police station is finished that some work could be done there.

Of course, did I hear you talk about Bellplaine? For years Bellplaine was in very bad condition as well. I do not know whether repairs would help down there or whether you do not need a new police station down there altogether. I am glad to hear that the police are going to get a better deal than they have **gotten** in recent times. They render human yeoman service to this society, sometimes thankless hours, and it is only fair that the conditions under which they work should be improved.

I am aware that during **the** regime of the Democratic Labour Party some attempt was made to alleviate the conditions under which they worked by **transferring over** to the Barbados National Bank building on James Street, some of the senior staff of the police. A recent visit there satisfies me that the conditions under which they are working now are quite impressive, and the conditions under which their colleagues across the street work are barbaric by comparison.

So far as the Registration Department is concerned, traffic through the Registry has increased over the last decade. The staff of the Registry work under – I have to declare an interest because as far as I am aware, about four constituents from St. Philip South work in there, so I can declare an interest.

*Asides.*

Mr. F. J. STUART: I can declare an interest because four of my constituents work in there and I am here to promote the cause of my constituents.

*Aside.*

Mr. F. J. STUART: St. Philip is one parish, Mr. Chairman, and you really do not segment St. Philip. What is good for one part of St. Philip is good for the other.

It is true that the Registry staff has been a very forbearing lot over the years. Working in very dusty conditions and very sultry conditions, and one gets the impression that they will soon be **pushed** outside by the number of filing cabinets in that part of the Registry. I am aware that the computerisation will alleviate that problem but still the number of people who come into the Registry, members of the public, has increased over the last decade and I think that the **Ministry** should give some consideration to expanding the facilities available to **those** people who work in the Registry.

I do not know what are the opportunities for physical expansion there, but I think it is something that has to be given some serious thought because, as I said, the employees there have been a very forbearing lot and render an inestimable service to the public. Of course, seating accommodation for the public is very scarce in the Registration Department as well. This Department renders a very critical service to the public and I think that the people who work in there and the people who have to use in there should be more comfortable than they have been over the last few years.

So I am putting in a plea for the Registry. The plea, if the Honourable Member for St. James North wants me to say it, is a tendentious one in that I have constituents who work there and I have to have regard to their welfare. But I am also very concerned about all other persons who work in the Registry, with whom I have to interact daily and whose courtesy and cordiality I have enjoyed throughout my law practice.

Now so far as the National Task Force and Crime Prevention is concerned, I share the view of the Attorney General that you really cannot plan an assault on crime unless you have reliable information on which to base that assault. The most reliable information can come from a study of crime patterns in the country and an examination of the profiles of those persons who have been involved in crime over the years.

I do not know what is the state of record-keeping so far as criminal activity in Barbados is concerned. I want to suggest to the National Task Force that while research is done at the level of the criminal population now, it might not be a bad thing to go back a few years, depending on the state of the records, I do not know what the state of the records might be, and to try to get some information on crime patterns in the past as well.

I have a sneaky suspicion, for example, and I just rely on a rule of thumb I use for the constituency of

St. Philip South, or St. Philip in general. For example the "C" stream at Princess Margaret School is a stream of the school that, over the years, has had to come to school and float. There is a monstrosity at the Princess Margaret School called a floating form and you have about nine floating forms there now, nine forms of students that leave home on mornings and do not have their own classrooms in which to sit.

Now, these are not the brightest children in the school. These are the dumbest children in the school, the ones who need the most help, but they have to lead a nomadic existence from day to day.

Over the years, while I taught there I noticed it and I warned about it, but since coming into legal practice it has struck me that to the extent, that those who get into criminal activity come from Princess Margaret School at all, it is usually those persons who have had to lead that **kind** of existence during their school lives. That is in itself criminal and I think that if we are **looking** at the profile of criminals and so on, it is that kind of information we need as well to help us to draw reliable scientific conclusions and to plan sensibly and meaningfully to combat this problem.

I will have to come back later on in the debate but I just want to rest my case there for the time being.

**Thank** you, Mr. Chairman.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: Mr. Chairman, I would like to make a brief contribution to this debate this morning. First of all, as it is generally known, I am very supportive of capital programmes which involve domestic expenditure without any foreign borrowing, as far as possible, like these small projects, paid for out of our own resources to be spread around the country and I am happy to see that that approach to capital programmes has been adopted by the Government. My latest **call** was on **Monday** but it has been **advocated** for many years and that is why I have no difficulty in saying on the one hand that there is a need for some capital inflows in major projects but the employment generating capacity of these small projects is much greater than many larger projects that cost several times more and the social and economic satisfaction for the country is also commensurately greater.

11.55 a.m.

I want to ask a few questions, first of all, in the area of the forensic laboratory. Quite clearly there is a need for better facilities in Barbados and I welcome the improvements that will be taking place in that **area**. Now what I am also interested in is whether or not the Attorney General is keeping a close eye on the development of new technology in the **area** of forensics and the importance of

the ability today to send images thousands of miles around the world for almost instant verification of information. Whilst we are thinking of building new facilities here and employing better qualified persons we should at the same time be thinking of making use of internationally available facilities.

Let me give you some idea what I mean. At the moment there is a technology where you can go to an ATM machine and instead of using a credit card you can use your thumb print for the withdrawal of money and things like that, as a security measure. It is anticipated that this will replace credit cards in order to prevent fraud in relation to the use of credit cards.

It is quite clear to me that that same technology, using a simple international source ...

#### **Aside.**

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: Finger printing. We may only need, in Barbados, the capacity to take the finger print and file it in a particular way and at a minimum cost, probably for the cost of a telephone plus 10% or something like that you can get information going to and fro. The same thing applies in the area of DNA technology. DNA technology is replacing a whole lot of the traditional medical and pathological approaches for identification of specimens and so on. The infrastructure for DNA technology is a highly expensive thing but at the same time the Government can tap the facilities with modern telecommunications and modern uses of computers and so on by simply having an arrangement with an appropriate laboratory overseas. So we can actually have the benefit of that technology in Barbados without having to put in the infrastructure. I believe some thought should be given right now to the possibilities of making use of these kinds of facilities. We do it in medicine and I gather that several countries now do it in law where you can tap law libraries and so on and not have to set up the whole laboratory at your home or office or anything like that. I think that is something that we need to look at so that Barbados can probably be very rapidly propelled into the modern era of forensic technology, drawing on the international possibilities and it is something that needs to be looked at.

The idea of the thumb print raises really some very serious possibilities where if you are travelling you do not need a credit card and wherever you go you just stick your thumb and take the money out, if you have money in the bank. Of course if you do not have money in the bank you will just hear a noise.

The second interesting thing that has come out of these statistics, as far as I can see, is that we have an awful lot of people in prison in Barbados. Quite clearly we

are either going to have to be **looking** down the road of building an additional prison or we are going to have to find ways and means of keeping people out of prison as far as possible. That decision has to be taken pretty soon and that is why I welcome the idea of the **trial** period of community service orders this year and I wonder whether we should not be **thinking** seriously of a parole system, a more effective parole system **in** Barbados. I will tell you why I think this is necessary. When you really think about it there are a whole lot of people who end up in prison because of an incident that happens in a split second in their lives. Because of the seriousness of the crime the law prescribes a penalty and I think there should be a constant evaluation and re-evaluation of each prisoner on an annual basis or whatever to see whether or not they could not be returned to community life at an earlier stage. This of course is going to call for significant expenditure in training and in human resources made available for this purpose but I think it is absolutely critical. Either we are going to look at putting more and more people in jail, building a jail for young offenders so they are not going to be mixing with the hardened criminals or we are going to deal with the problem up front. I think that a programme for effective education, especially in moral values for young prisoners and so on, coupled with a parole system, coupled with community service orders and things like that, will go a very long way towards dealing with the problem.

I am not too sure whether building more and more prisons will be the answer in Barbados. I certainly do not think, at this stage, that that is the way to go. I think the way to go is in the direction of better facilities.

Another thing that bothers me is the treatment of remand persons at Glendairy Prison. Now, I hope I am wrong. I saw in the newspapers some time this week that a case against someone charged with murder was thrown out by the Magistrate on grounds that his constitutional rights had been seriously infringed for a variety of reasons. I think Magistrate Greaves set out the situation very clearly. The person said that he was kept on death row as a prisoner on remand. If that is so this is a serious problem. This is something that we have to look at very carefully because the fact that somebody is charged with murder does not mean they are guilty of murder. The fact that anyone is charged with anything does not mean they are guilty. Of course I am very glad that we are getting a new Bail Act to deal with that aspect where bail is inappropriate or where bail is denied. I think it is equally important to make sure that prisoners on remand are treated differently from convicted prisoners. It seems to me that you cannot start treating a man as though he is a convict even before the courts determine that he is a convict. It certainly would be a very alarming thing if the police could charge someone with murder and he is kept in there for a year or whatever and he is put on death row and then he is

released by a Magistrate because of lack of evidence and this **kind** of thing. It is the kind of situation where someone should be in a position to sue the state for compensation because it seems to be grossly unfair to an individual for that to happen. Basically, I think that whereas we have to be very **firm** in dealing with crime in Barbados we also have to make sure at all times that we do not infringe the Constitutional rights of people. All the people involved in law and order in Barbados should not be left in doubt, and those of us who have to defend the Constitution of Barbados and the civil rights of the people of this country feel very strongly about it. One would expect that due care should be taken in dealing with these matters.

12.05 p.m.

The other area is the question of medical facilities at the prisons and access to medical care whether or not there has been or will be any further improvements in these areas. Mr. Chairman, I believe in appropriate punishment for individuals but I do not believe that people who have committed a crime should be treated like animals. I believe that every effort should be made to rehabilitate those persons. I feel very strongly that we should have certain adequate medical facilities, adequate facilities for exercise and adequate opportunities in prison for people to exercise their mind beyond coming out and hanging around an open square all day and **walking** around virtually doing nothing all day. I also believe that is an opportunity where you have a captive situation, if I may use that word, to get people involved in creative activity and further training, and very often to recover the lost years. Because as has been brought out here by the Honourable Member for St. Philip South, a lot of young people at Glendairy are the failures of our education system. Here you have an opportunity to expose those people to get into education and teach them to read and write and maybe through appropriate education you may be able to inculcate the moral and ethical values which prevent them from a continuing life of criminality.

Sir, this is the kind of approach, firm yes, to let people understand quite clearly that if they commit crimes in this society that they will be punished. But at the same time let us be sure that we can rescue and save as many of these people as is possible so that they can become useful citizens. I think **that** we have an opportunity to do this. There will be some vagabonds, Mr. Chairman, no matter what you do, they **will continue** to be a nuisance and a danger to society and a danger to other people as well. If those people have to be punished severely and locked away, I have no problem with that because in the long run the society has to be protected against such persons. My suspicion is that you are probably dealing with maybe 40 or 50 per cent of persons who find themselves in prison who do not go back there for a second time. I am not quite sure. Do we have that kind of information of the extent

of recidivism? That is very important because you can be fairly sure that if you have a low percentage of recidivism, persons returning back to prison, then the kind of programme which I have suggested could work. It would mean that there will be a lot of people in there who will be susceptible to that **kind** of rescue operation. I also believe that if the programmes are properly articulated that the Attorney General will get public support. But I must say that sometimes I wonder when I hear the attitudes of people in Barbados towards these matters because it seems to me that people just simply want blood. For example, I hear people saying that you put people in prison and you should not feed them. Can you imagine that? There are people who come on call-in programmes and who go to church on a Sunday three times a day and on a Monday morning at 11 o'clock or whatever will call in on a call-in programme and say that you should starve the prisoners at Glendairy. Can you believe that? It is almost incredible. When I hear those things, I turn off my radio because that kind of thing upsets me. The point that I am making is that if people are in custodial care then there are certain basic human approaches that we must all have to these people. If you do not, you are creating a vicious animal and when he comes out he is going to 'cut loose on somebody. Because a lot of these guys have a problem in controlling their emotions and once they feel the pain of that bitter experience of prison and if you keep humiliating people, punishing them and destroying whatever little self respect and self image they have of themselves, you are really creating a monster. That will produce somebody who will come out and within 48 hours either commit another crime probably more serious than the one before, because perhaps the only place of comfort that he would know would be prison. Whatever is left of him after that experience, he can only enjoy that particular bit in the context of a prison. You do not want to create that **kind** of person out of a prison experience.

Sir, I believe that although people will say that you ~~are soft on crime~~, but recognize that that is a bunch of ignorance and in **point of fact** what you are really doing is applying an appropriate measure of humanity and common sense to deal with the problems of crime in Barbados. At the same time you are making it absolutely clear that those people who cannot benefit from this **kind** of approach and who continue to be a nuisance to the people of Barbados, people who are likely to cause serious bodily harm to people, people who are likely to rape people and people who are likely to **kill** people that you are not making any mistake about it and you are going to keep them in jail. Let there be no doubt that your mission is to protect the society but at the same time you are going to do it in a scientific manner and a constructive manner.

Therefore, Mr. Speaker, I suggest that we look at the issues of parole, the issues of Community **Service Orders**

and the other supportive issues that I have suggested. I sincerely hope that this kind of programme will be a happier programme for a small society like Barbados. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Mr. Chairman, I am very pleased with the tone and tenor of this debate so far because we have had an indication from the Attorney General of the things which he has done and is proposing to do and we have had two colleagues so far put on record their views with which I largely agree. I am particularly moved by the concept which has been introduced about the need for us to examine the causes of some of the attitudinal changes we have seen in our society and not look merely at the symptoms which manifest themselves in the increase of the population at Glendairy.  
12.15 p.m.

I recall about 10 years ago the then Assistant Commissioner of Police had done some original work for a conference under the aegis of the **UNDP** to do with drugs; some raw statistics had been extracted and those raw statistics formed part of the record somewhere in the Government sector. I called him the other day to ask him if he could find them and he, unfortunately, could not lay his hands on them. I know I have a crude copy somewhere at home, but I could not find it. I recall that one of the very clear conclusions that could be reached from those crude statistics was precisely the point raised by the Honourable Member for St. **Philip** South about the origins of the persons who constitute the majority of the population in our prisons.

No one knows why people kill, no one knows why people become criminals, no one can speak with any certainty as to how a particular individual will turn out, but there is no doubt whatsoever that the environment and the self-esteem which a person has at an early age will determine to a large extent the kind of adult and the kind of individual a person will become. I have some very clear personal views on a number of matters relating to that and on the occasion when I have had the opportunity to participate in the teaching and training of young people in the law I have been able to bring some of those views to bear on the subject.

But, Mr. Chairman, in some ways we have been **talking** about the same things for a very long time. If you have been in this House and you have participated in Estimates and other debates, in some ways it is like *deja vu*, it does not matter whether you are on the Government side or the **Opposition** side, there are certain verities which seem to perpetuate themselves, they seem to be **never-ending** in the intensity with which they are discussed during the months of March and early April, and then they recede until next March and next April. The

Attorney General says he is **determined**, and some of the votes suggest that there is some determination to change some of the things that can be changed without much effort, and to that extent no one can begrudge him the kudos for daring to try, because some of these things do not require – or so it appears to ordinary **mortals** – much more than the will to try. He can expect that sooner rather than later there will be a coterie of persons who will go for his blood, because if you start being too successful in doing things that people said could not be done, they have a way of dealing with you by ensuring that, even if you succeed, such success as you may have had is relegated beyond the back burner.

That notwithstanding I would like to ask him about a few things which we have discussed over the years. One of them relates to the courts and the ease with which justice flows through the courts. I am not going to talk about any hifalutin aspects of the criminal justice system I am talking about the simple ordinary things in the courts. When the Honourable Member was speaking earlier, I said from my seat – of course, you would not have heard that, Sir – that you should include the benches where people sit in the courts. There is an attitude which is manifested in public administration which assists in the development of negative attitudes in the society and it is not always realised.

I recall when we were building the Black Rock Polyclinic and we came to the question of what kinds of seating we would have in the polyclinic, I said we must have Pipe Fine, and I recall there was a reaction: "Man, yuh can't put **Pipe Fine**, you can't put that kind of furniture in the polyclinic, they **gwine** brek it up." I remember saying to the persons concerned: "But, I know the people who are in the catchment area for the Black Rock Polyclinic. I grew up with those people and if you put proper furniture in there they will not break it up, especially if you air-condition the place." I said that to make this point: on the few occasions I have gone into a magistrate's court as a witness I have always found the magistrates to be extremely courteous, I have found the police officers who function around the courts to be extremely courteous, but I have found the conditions in which the ordinary people wait either as witnesses or as observers to be oppressive. Some of those benches in the courts that people have to sit on, and sometimes there are old ladies, the elderly, are not fit for persons to be sitting in ~~or~~ on at this time in our development.

**As we are** a few years from the 21st century, we should have proper seating in the courts for the people whose business it is to be there. I really feel that it does not cost that much to change the entire environment in the **courts** in this country. If you do not have respect for the majesty of the law, you are not going to have respect for the application of the law! You have to feel when you go

to a place where justice is dispensed that it is something different from the ordinary run of the mill, and that is why the late Eric Williams decided that out of the abundance of oil receipts coming to Trinidad & Tobago he would leave as one of the lasting monuments to the people of **Trinidad & Tobago** a **Hall** of Justice. I recall the ridicule, the sneering attitude which some commentators had on the concept of this "massive expensive" Hall of Justice, but in some ways he may have left a much more important legacy for the people of Trinidad & Tobago than some of the more esoteric and theocratic utterances and remembrances that people refer to when they think of Eric Williams. Because the way people practise law, the way the police behave, the way the lawyers behave, the way prisoners are regarded, all of this is a function of the environment in which it happens.

I remember one time when I was assisting **Maurice King** with some research and they said: "Bring up the prisoner!" This was a man who was tried for murder – he is now in Glendairy at Her Majesty's pleasure – but he was not yet convicted and I recall they brought him from downstairs. If you saw where he was, you could not but doubt that they were bringing up some kind of caged animal. That had a lasting impression on me. It was the first time I had seen them. Now the practitioners and the police who frequent the place where prisoners are kept, and these are people who are charged not people who are convicted, they cannot but have a certain attitude, a certain mind set. In fact, it struck me then and it strikes me now that they have to block some of these things out of their heads.

12.25 p.m.

When a prisoner is brought in and you are sitting in the Magistrate's Court you are there as a witness. You may be a perfectly well behaved, Sunday School type but you have to go as a witness. Somebody steals something from you, you have to be there as a witness. When you see this process start to unfurl, your concept of ~~is~~ some kind of twist. If I am ~~making this~~ point dramatically it is because I feel **very strongly** about it. I talk about it with my family and what I am saying to the Attorney General is that we have to applaud the Magistrates who call for air conditioning because air conditioning in the Caribbean is not a luxury. We could not conduct the business we conduct in here if this were not air-conditioned. There is no point anybody telling me that the people of yore used to do it with the windows open. We passed that stage because air-conditioning is now something that is acceptable for people who work in an office. Imagine that in **1996** we have to be talking in Parliament about providing air-conditioning for the Magistrates' Court.

I wish to suggest to the Minister that he should take another look at the furniture in the Courts so that

when people come to the Courts to sit down they can sit on something – it doesn't have to be luxurious but it doesn't have to be crude and crass and hard and ugly, which is what is now the norm.

There is another thing I want to talk about in that regard because it has to do with the attitude. One of the things which we teach in administrative law is that bail is a normal expectation and ought to be a normal expectation for persons who are charged with crimes other than certain specific crimes. That is how it was in the common law. That is how it is now except that it has been enshrined in a statute. I know the Honourable Member is going to bring a Bail Act and I **am** not proposing that we discuss it, but if you listen to some of the call-in programmes or if you read some of the utterances by some of the learned people, you cannot believe that this part of the document which we call the Law of the Barbados has enshrined in it a section that specifically deals with bail.

I would like the Attorney General to tell me if this is the normal practice which he observes in Barbados. Section 27, Cap. 116 says and I am quoting:

"(1) A person charged with any treason shall not be admitted to bail except by order of a Judge."

We haven't had a treason charge in Barbados for a very long time.

"(2) Where a person is charged with any felony other than murder the magistrate may, if he thinks fit, admit him to **bail**."

"(3) Where a person is charged with any offence other than those mentioned in subsections (1) and (2), the magistrate shall [not if he thinks fit] admit him to bail unless there is evidence **sworn** before the magistrate that the accused person either intends or is likely to leave Barbados or by any other means evade trial or unless such person has previously been convicted of a felony."

Now that leaves a broad spectrum from which a magistrate has no recourse. Unless somebody is going to come in and say, "Sir, he might commit suicide and therefore will not be coming to trial", he has to come on the stand and kiss the Bible and swear – I mean that in itself is not necessary. When he goes on the stand to swear the person who is representing the other person as I understand it and as we talk it, can say, "Tell me, is it really true...?" In other words he can cross examine him.

Now I don't practise in the courts of law; but I know what the law says and I would like the Attorney General to

tell me if in his long sojourn in the Courts if that is what he has observed. I do not expect him now that he is Leader of the Bar to make any value judgements, but the point I am making here is that we must not allow the population out there to believe that **bail** is something which people are given as some kind of **favour**. Bail is something to which people are normally entitled except for the ones as outlined here. Therefore, we should help to educate the population to understand that when somebody gets bail they **mustn't** get **angry** with the Magistrate. When somebody is given bail all that has happened is that the law is being put in place and more people according to this should get bail than those who don't get. It may very well be that that is the case but I **am** making this point to put in a framework the kind of discussion which we are going to have today because I am going to be addressing some things related to that attitude.

I do not believe that we are going to have a better Barbados unless we set out to make it a better Barbados. The first place we have to begin is at the caring level. You have to *care* for one another. You have to care for poor people. You have to *care* even for criminals because they are humans. It doesn't mean that you are **molly-coddling** criminals. We are not in the United States. Our policemen do not shoot **first** and then ask questions after. Our policemen are not dealing with people that they don't know or never saw. They are dealing with people who make up part of the **166** square miles and the 250 000 people, all of whom are more or less families.

This is a very small and highly personalised society in which everybody is either family to or knows somebody who is family to everybody else. And there is no reason why, having reached the level we have reached, we would not have had our share of everything that you have in the large societies. But the violence which has been imported **into** this society can only be dealt with if we make a conscious decision as individuals that we are going to deal with it. And the first step towards dealing with violence has to be a personal decision. We must start caring.

I will speak again, Sir.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Mr. Chairman, Sir, I very much wish to speak to this Bill and the subprogramme which deals with Community Legal Services Commission. The establishment of the Community Legal **Services** Commission in Barbados was a **good** and a positive step. There are many people who need legal aid. In fact, it has filled out now to a place where it provides an excellent social service to Barbadians and I compliment the people who have to run it, especially in the circumstances and the conditions under which they have to run it.  
12.35 p.m.

The Community Legal Services Commission, in my view, is severely under-served and I am very pleased

to see that in these draft Estimates at page 96, for those who care to look, it is proposed that there will be an increase in the monies voted for this Commission. This is where people go to when they need legal aid. I would like it to become too a place where people would go in greater numbers when they need counselling. The Family Law of Barbados requires counselling and I am not at all satisfied that we have the best counselling services available to those who cannot afford to pay somebody to do it, or who for whatever reason cannot find access to a service they can feel confident in.

I am particularly unhappy, Sir, about a particular feature of Legal Aid. I believe I have spoken of it on this Floor before and I will go on speaking of it until something is done. There is a discriminatory practice, particularly in matters to do with civil legal aid, and more particularly with matters which would fall under the umbrella of Family Law in the Court as it now exists, and has done for some time, and I hope will cease to do in the soon future. A person, it can be a man or a woman, it can be a partner in a marriage, or a partner in a union other than a marriage – Mr. Chairman, I do not know how much Barbadians fully appreciate the liberal, much admired Family Law we have. It is perhaps the most liberal in the world. We are one of the few countries where unions other than marriage are recognised by the Court. What the Church may rule is a matter for the Church. There is no need for confrontation on this matter because the State cannot ignore or overlook the needs of those it is there to serve.

So, whether it is a man or woman, whether it is somebody coming from a marriage relationship or a union other than a marriage, as it is termed, if they go to the Magistrate's Court, and it is usually for matters to do with maintenance for children, matters to do with division of property or whatever, and an order is made, and in particular matters to do with maintenance, and I want to agree with the Honourable Member for St. Michael West. We do not always see eye to eye on things but we see eye to eye on this. When they go to the Courts and particularly in respect of maintenance for children, an order is made by the Magistrate, if the other party defaults on that order after a certain number of weeks, sometimes months, that person is automatically brought back before the Magistrate with the complainant as well to say why he has defaulted on the maintenance of the child or children. The Magistrate will then deal with the matter of arrears and try to deal with getting the person current or whatever.

But this does not obtain at the level of the High Court and this is where the discrimination lies. If you go before a High Court Judge to get Legal Aid to do these things and an order is made, and the order is not respected and no monies are paid, no properties are settled or whatever, in order to get back before the Court to complain of that, it

does not happen automatically in the High Court, you have to start the process all over again and the Registrar of the Supreme Court has to certify that you can go back again. The Registrar, generally speaking, in my experience has not been willing to certify in less than a 12-month period so it means that in the 12-month period children are starving, children are going without clothes, women cannot find money to help pay rent and whatever is required. Now, this discrimination goes right across all social levels in Barbados. I have seen this in my practice and I have observed it generally speaking at the level of people at all levels of our society. Divorces are on the increase. The whole concept of family is changing.

There is another area of discrimination as well. I really should not call it discrimination because it goes to under-service, and I hope the Attorney General hears me on this. Again I have complained about this. The Legal Aid fee at the level of the Magistrate's Court is \$250. That can only be described as a joke. So you will find that a number of attorneys do not want to put their names down for the legal aid. I think that as a matter of civic duty you should do it, and mine has always been done. We have taken a lot from this community. This community has educated, fed, clothed and nurtured all of us and we have to find ways and means of giving back to it. But it is ridiculous that \$250 is the fee to appear at the level of the Magistrate's Court in these matters. It is ridiculous, not because people do not want to do **free** work. We all do free work. All of us who are professionals do it in one way or another and even those who are doing non professional work do free work. Carpenters and masons do a lot of free work for old and sick people in this community and it is still a caring community in that sense, but most attorneys have an office to maintain. They have to pay a secretary. They have to pay a clerk, sometimes a messenger. They have to pay utilities. They have to pay their National Insurance as self-employed people for their staff as well, so they have administrative and office running expenses.

In these cases you do not go once to the Magistrate's Court or to the High Court at all. You can sometimes go several times because the first four or five times you will hear that the man did not get served. You cannot find him. I hear the Honourable Members on the other side saying "Yes" to that. For the next three or four times you will go and you will discover that the witness did not turn up or that the case list was **too** long and the Magistrate could not get to it. You will find that **the Probation Officer**, as the Honourable Member for St. **Philip** South is reminding me, has not been able to find all the people so that the report which the Court will more often than not rely upon, and quite properly so, is not ready and available. So sometimes for weeks and months on end you are traipsing to and fro.

I do not expect that **Q.C.s** are going to engage at the level of the Magistrate's Court. There are a few **Q.C.s**

who do that but they are outstanding in the professions. I say no more. But there are a lot of young attorneys coming to the Bar who do not do it, who would not do the work. I would like to appeal to the Attorney General that some of these monies which I see representing an increase in the monies voted under this sub programme should go to an increase of fees so that people can get the work done. The work will drive and move if people would only undertake it but we really have to address that area of discrimination. It is not fair.

You would be amazed. It is not only people at high socio-economic levels who take their business to the High Court. That is not so at all. Ordinary working-class people have been my clients for years. You go to the High Court, serious decisions have to be taken there about the care, welfare and maintenance of children and it is not fair that sometimes you have to say – I have said it, and I am sure that everyone who has done this kind of practice on this Floor today would say they have done it too. Sometimes I have had to say to clients "You will get less money but it is cheaper and easier to go to the Magistrate's Court and get an order because you can be sure that when the defaulting time comes you are not going to be able to get back to the High Court to get some kind of compensation. It is not fair.

This whole business of attachment, Sir. There is a practice and an attitude, I would have to say, at the level of the Bench and in the Registry too, that you would not move for an attachment of a man's salary except he agrees voluntarily until after the second or perhaps the third time of defaulting. This works great hardship, Mr. Chairman, great hardship, and I want to agree with the Honourable Member for St. Michael West on a particular point, and this I have said, several times, on this Floor and I will continue to say, until something happens.  
12.45 p.m.

I hear the Honourable Attorney General is saying that repairs are going to be done to the Central Police Station, in the City. It is a disgrace, Mr. Chairman, that in the sun, wind, rain and flood women in Barbados should stand like cattle in the court yard waiting to get an order for child money. It is a disgrace and it must stop. It must stop. I cannot believe that we would go into the 21st Century with this. It has to do with a level of irresponsibility on the part of men who do not wish to support their children. But that is not peculiar to Barbados, that is true everywhere in the world.

There is no waiting room attached. I know that a family court has been built at St. Matthias. I have not visited it yet. I no longer practice. The Honourable Member for Christ Church West, in whose constituency it lies, tells me that it is being used. We need to have a nice waiting room with a water cooler, with comfortable chairs.

Sometimes these women are coming with the child on the hip. You must have a television monitor where you can put some educational videos in there and teach them about family planning so that they do not go on repeating the same mistake over and over again out of ignorance. Teach them about health practices so they get information about good nutrition and about child care and so that they can learn a host of things while they are sitting there, because the reality is, we cannot run away from that, that they are going to be going there on many, many occasions during the lifetime of a child.

This whole area, Sir, is a highly specialised area of law in other parts of the world and I regret that in Barbados we do not look either to the appointment of a family law Judge or to properly establish a family court which moves at more than one jurisdiction.

I see no good reason, Mr. Attorney General, why the Attorney General might not consider, Mr. Chairman, Sir, the possibility of creating a "Master in Chambers." This is a legally trained person, who is on a lower level than a Judge and a higher level than a Magistrate, who would deal with a number of non contentious matters. Although in the area of family, you do have contentious matters to do with custody of children, in particular, there is no good reason why we could not establish a family court, which as I said, would operate within more than one level of jurisdiction to deal with these matters.

These matters, Mr. Chairman, Sir, if you look to see the number of cases down, operate – apart from the traffic court where you have a rapid turnover, and now that we have new technology there is no need for any of that. All of this foolishness with a traffic court with 200 and 300 people waiting outside is rubbish.

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

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: You can just do that through a computer. You fine them through the computer and you deal with them through the computer.

I am hoping, Mr. Chairman, Sir, that this cry that I make almost every year in this Estimates debate will not continue to fall on deaf ears, because the problem is not going away, neither is it getting any smaller. In fact it is getting larger and it is getting more complex and it truly does need to be addressed.

I would like, Mr. Chairman, Sir, also to speak to other matters but time is running against me.

In the circumstances, Sir, I would beg to move that you would report progress to His Honour the Speaker and ask for leave to sit again.

*The question was put and resolved in the affirmative without division and Mr. SPEAKER resumed the Chair and reported accordingly.*

### SUSPENSION OF SITTING

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

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

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

12.54 p.m.

### RESUMPTION

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

Mr. CHAIRMAN: This Committee is in session.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Mr. Chairman, a number of points were made by Honourable Members who spoke and I have a duty to respond to them. Starting with the Honourable Member for St. Philip South, he wondered if the time had not come for consideration of a new station at Belleplaine. Well he is probably right but in so far as this year is a year for planning one of the things that we will be looking at is the need for new police posts, not massive stations. It may well be that we could find alternative use for Belleplaine or fix it up as we did the St. John Fire Station which was really completely rehabilitated. Such work as was done on it last year was of a basic nature, fixing windows and roofs and some internal work and so on but it can still bear more and substantial repairs.

Now, a very good point was made by the Honourable Member for St. Philip South about the physical expansion of the Registry. Into the year 2000 the Registry, as it currently exists, would be inadequate to serve the need of modern Barbados and we are conscious of that.

I did not have time in my opening to deal with everything that we are proposing but I can tell the Honourable Member that the plan for the redevelopment of the Central Headquarters complex is this. This coming year we will do the building along Coleridge Street, completely rehabilitate it, block by block but then we will go down inside in the yard to the building that currently houses the Criminal Records Office, it used to be the recreation room and it then ran on to the police canteen. Now that building is dilapidated. We will push down that building and

construct a building from the existing site running back past the wicket gate and tying back into Court No. 5 and the Registry so that the Registry will get extension on the western side. In the long building that **would** replace the present structure we would have enough space for new stores for the police. If you have ever come under the arch and gone into the stores it is a disgusting place. It is dark, it is confused, congested. I do not know how **they** keep track of stores but we have determined that we have to completely push down and rebuild. So the Registry will get additional space out of that project.

The Ministry of Transport and Works has been, for the last several months, been drafting the designs. I have not seen them yet but I hope that shortly we should be in possession of some **kind** of drawings because **our** idea was to put up a steel frame and then build around it. It is the quickest way and probably one of the **soundest** ways of building. So Honourable Members can expect that building in the new financial year 1997-98.

The Honourable Member for the St. Michael South Central is not here. I will probably reply to him later on. Sir, the Honourable Member for the City raised some very important matters about the differential between the procedures for maintenance in the Magistrates Courts and in the High Court and the difficulties that women experience in collecting their maintenance and suggested that it could be rather demeaning.

This matter was **first** drawn to my attention by the Honourable Member for St. Philip South and the Honourable Minister of Labour two months ago. I have received a letter from the Minister of Labour, drawing my attention to the problem. With respect I have advised him that it should be formulated as a policy paper for Cabinet with drafting instructions. I expect that the Ministry responsible for Women's Affairs will do that, formulate what is the present problem, how they want it changed and send it by way of policy instructions and for us to draft. It will have to come through Cabinet. If Cabinet approves a Bill we draft it **along** the following lines. So I expect that will be done early in the new year.

Legal Aid: I **am** glad that this has been mentioned. Last year we did have to get some supplementary provision to pay arrears of fees from previous years but there are lawyers, including myself, who are owed fees by the Legal Aid Department. I am not bothering with mine. The last two murder cases that I did, I think the fees came to **\$1 500** for one and **\$1 300** for the other and I just was not able to do all of the paper work for that. The last two I represented free, got Manslaughter. That was my contribution to service, but the fees **are** too low. The sum that is included here is the same sum as last year but we have every intention of revisiting this matter of the fees.

The problem is this. We would not wish to change the fees arbitrarily. For the first time, if Honourable Members look at the schedule of personal emoluments they would see that for about 5 to 6 years there was a position of Director of Community Legal Services. The person was never appointed. The Registrar used to do the function of **Director**, unpaid for five years. Now that the former Registrar has gone elsewhere I have decided that the time has come to appoint a Director and therefore we will have shortly to be appointing a Director. Provision is there. \$50 000 or \$52 000 has been voted and there was no appointment.

I think, Sir, this would be a project that the Director of Community **Legal** Services should undertake and he would evaluate all of the current fees and make proposals for higher fees. These fees have existed there for years and years and it is time for a change but as I say, we cannot do it by pulling figures out of the blue but a proper analysis would have to be done, put up to the Commission and submitted to Government. I hope that in that exercise, he would consult widely with the junior and senior Bar to get their ideas and some consensus as to what would be reasonable for various types of cases. So I expect Honourable Members should not worry too much on that score. Something will be done this year once we have got the Director in place.  
2.25 p.m.

Sir, I am glad that the Deputy Prime Minister has given her support to the concept of a Master. In **1985-86**, I tried to have that position established and put in the rules. The then Head of Judiciary would not have it at all. He was very caustic in his comments about Sir Douglas. The Master is a mini-judge who does principally chamber matters and interlocutory matters and takes a great strain off of the judiciary. The judiciary can be left to get on with contested matters. The person has to be a lawyer.

*Aside.*

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Do you mean trained in the work? Well, Jamaica and Trinidad have them and England has them. The person would have to be trained before but it would take a load off the Registrar. The Registrar could concentrate on administration because she has responsibility for everything. The Master could do a lot of the applications that are presently dealt with by the Registrar under the rules and it would be a useful training ground and provide a career path of the judiciary. You could move let us say from Registrar, Master to Judge as happens in other jurisdictions. I did not have this as a matter of priority for this year but we will start the process. I am not going to give Honourable Members any firm commitment that something will be done. We have to look at it and we have to consult with the judiciary and look at

the implications. It will call for some amendment to the rules and so on. It is an idea for which I have support and I am glad that other Members are thinking about these things.

Sir, in **relation** to the penal side. The Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central spent a lot of time discussing the penal system and some of what he said made sense. I just want to put it in context as succinctly as I can. The Government's approach to reform of the penal system is to wait for the report of the Husbands Steering Committee on Penal Reform. But the Husbands Committee on Penal Reform when it was established was briefed about Government's philosophy and Government's attitude to sentencing and broadly Government's position was articulated in here a few times. You put capital punishment on one side. I am not dealing with that. But **Government's** position is that first of all we should create more sentencing options for the judiciary that would run **from** suspended sentences to Community Service Orders, Attendance Centres Orders, Curfew Orders even and right through to imprisonment. I will deal with parole separately.

We are asking the Husbands Committee to look at what will be involved in designing a penal system that has these options. Secondly, we want to follow to some extent the Canadian legislation and the English 1991 Criminal Justice Act which sets out some guidelines for sentencing. The time has come where we should make the law certain or more certain where lawyers can say that in this case the judge is likely to do a, b, c and you **can** expect a suspended sentence, probation, jail or whatever. But those countries have established in the law guidelines to assist sentencers in giving sentences which when you **look** at them over time are more or less consistent. We want to do that, Sir. We want to create the legislative basis for additional sentencing options.

Thirdly, it is clear that there needs to be another custodial institution. I do not **agree** that it should be a prison strictly so called, but it should be a custodial institution to deal with non-violent offenders.

*Aside.*

Hon. D. A. C. **SIMMONS**: We are looking at existing properties. That is the problem to find a suitable location. Remand homes are not difficult. I think that we can find properties, Sir, which can be renovated and refurbished that can serve as remand homes because the person is only there for a few weeks. I think that we can find enough properties about the country to create remand homes. But then there is the whole range of support servicing. It means that you just cannot have a Probation Department in the future. You got to have a Department of Correctional

Services if you like or something along that line which will be staffed not only by Probation Officers. The few that we have work very hard, but it will provide the opportunity for social workers and persons trained in social work to work within the correctional system. This is going to cost the Government a piece of change and I have told Mr. Justice Husbands that I want the Commission to do as much as they can to identify the initial cost. Then there is the annual recurring cost that we have to look at plus the capital cost of restructuring and rebuilding. But if it is going to cost the country a piece of change, the country will have to find it one way or the other because from my standpoint saving young people from jail or giving them a chance to make good in this society is ultimately to the benefit of the whole society. We talk all the time about economic development and GDP is growing by 3 per cent and all of that. I want to hear also that we are doing something for our people and social development policy must not be only lock up, forget, spend money and every year come and get another \$500 000 and build more prisons. That is foolishness. I know that it sounds incongruous and people tell me to my face that this is the kind of philosophy that I have for the penal system, but at the same time I am in favour of hanging. Well, those are the paradoxes of life. But on the matter of capital punishment I do not quarrel with people for having individual views and I have my individual view on capital punishment. Those views do not derogate from my perspective for a different penal system in Barbados that gives more young people more options and more changes to see the error of their ways and pull back from them, Sir.

2.35 p.m.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Mr. Chairman, I should like to make a few comments in this debate, but before I make some general comments I should like the Attorney General next time he gets up to let me know when I will be getting my law books. I cannot function without them. It has been a long time.

Mr. Chairman, there are a couple of comments I should like to respond to. A suggestion has been made in this Assembly today that rooms should be built so that when women go to collect their dues from the court, child support, they can watch television. I have no problem with that, but it is the last remark that womes me, that some programmes should be put on so that those women can learn the process of family planning. I have no problem with that, but I hope that when that speech was made certain considerations were taken into account. There are some groups of women who will tell you that their religion would not allow them to practise birth control. I am a bit womed about that, because if our Barbadian women are expected to practise birth control, I would expect that all groups living in Barbados would practise birth control. If it does not happen, Sir, soon we will have a particular problem in this country which we will have to deal with.

So I hope that those statements apply to all women in Barbados and not a particular group of women.

Mr. Chairman, I would also like the Attorney General to note that there are certain practices in the legal system I would like to see cleared up. Every year thousands of poor people have to go to the magistrate's court, they have to line up, wait their turn just to hear "granted", when they could have been producing in the interest of the country. I promised some people that I would bring it up here, because I have witnessed it, that when the police go around and do their checks, the only people who should have to go before the courts are the ones who have not paid their licences or those who are applying for new licences and would like transfers. I cannot agree that people who have done everything right still have to go to hear "granted". You can find yourself in a situation where you might have businesses at three or four locations and it means you have to turn up three or four times to hear "granted". Sometimes you have a situation where there are more pressing matters, where lawyers put up good arguments that they have other matters in other jurisdictions and that your case has to wait, which means that you might have to wait for three or four hours just to hear "granted".

That is something I should like the Honourable Member for St. Thomas to deal with, and I hope by December, because I do not think it should take long for that to be changed.

Also, on Police, when I look through Personal Emoluments I see that there are 799 constables and 212 sergeants. I ponder on this and I ask myself if I were in the Police Force, starting as a constable, and there are only 212 positions of sergeant, how I would feel...

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: On a point of order, Sir. The Honourable Member could not qualify for the Police Force. He is not 5'8".

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: So you understand now, Mr. Chairman, the type of foolishness we have to deal with in this Assembly. That is something that needs to be changed too and I am calling on the Attorney General to change it now, because this is the second time I have mentioned it to him and he is even challenging me as a short person and telling me that short people have no right to be policemen. This is discrimination and I do not expect the Attorney General of Barbados to discriminate against anyone.

Mr. Chairman, as I was saying, those 799 constables have to compete for 212 positions of Sergeant. I am saying that a situation like this does not encourage people and we have to change the breakdown. We are either going to reduce the number of constables or increase the sergeants.

I think it will be in the interest of Barbados and of good policing to make a change.

We have heard a lot of talk also, Sir, about the Accountant in the Police Force. When one looks at the salary of the Accountant...

*Aside.*

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: They have a Financial Controller now? What is the salary? \$120 000 too? Do you understand that this is the Police Force which has to look after the whole tourist industry and you are telling me that the salary is not \$120 000 too? The Financial Controller of the Police Force deserves \$120 000 too. I am saying the job he has to do is just as important as the job at the Barbados Tourism Authority, so if we are going to have a category called Financial Controller we would expect...

*Aside.*

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: A lady? My apologies. That means she deserves \$150 000. We must make sure that we do everything in our interest to look after the police, because it is that Force which is looking after our interests when we are sleeping at night and we cannot frustrate these people and at the same time expect them to be out there looking after our interests. It is true that even though we frustrate them they still look after our interests, and that is why we should give them some more incentives.

There is another problem I have, Sir, with the system. Sometimes you have a policeman who is performing well in a particular capacity, but just for him to get a better wage he goes into a different category and automatically it removes him from the role he was playing before when he was doing it well. My suggestion is that if a policeman moves from a constable to a sergeant, or he has a capacity that is different from his comrades, he should be given a special incentive to encourage him to do work that people would normally regard as work belonging to a constable.  
2.45 p.m.

You see, Sir, sometimes when you promote some people you stop them from doing certain duties that they would normally have done in a different rank and all I am saying is that even though he has a higher rank and that is not his duty any more you give him an incentive to encourage him to do that because you realize he has a special capability.

*Aside.*

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: The resident beat policeman. I personally believe that those resident beat policemen should be given special duties just to deal with people on the street corners. I will tell you why, Sir. I

know when we were growing up, and a lot of people will tell you this, there were senior people in this community who whenever they had the opportunity would come and sit with you, play dominoes, drafts and hearts and you had no encouragement to get involved in crime. Now the people who are leading the youngsters are the said ones who are involved in crime and they have no role models. They follow people who will encourage them to do foolishness.

If you have the resident beat policemen, you don't even have to put them in uniform. If they are on duty let them go and the fellows will become part of them. They are stronger than them and I know that once they are with them they will stop them from doing crime. A good example is a couple years ago, about the 85-86 era, in a part of St. Thomas there was a gentleman who used to spend a lot of his time in that area and there was no problem with crime. The fellows used to come together and get music. On Saturdays the fellows would have breadfruit and souse. There was a good relationship; but because of other commitments there had to be a splitting of ways. Then all of a sudden those same guys started to get involved in crime. That is because they did not have the leadership that they had before.

If we want to deal seriously with crime we have to deal with the situation where we are prepared to put people in there to stop people from getting involved in crime and to direct those youngsters. All they need is direction and sometimes even the lifestyle of some people encourage people in crime. There are some people who behave as if they have received the last provision in life and they forget where they come from. We have to change our attitudes. We have to realize that our juniors are looking at us that there are poor people in this country looking to us for direction.

The last point I would like to deal with, Mr. Speaker, is this foolishness of women having to go to the courts and line up for a cheque. My suggestion for that is that a cheque be written and it be posted to them because there are some women who have to lose a day's pay just to collect sometimes \$20 when they could be earning \$50. Some women have to allow the money to accumulate so that it is something worthwhile for them to collect. We must find systems to solve the problems of these poor people in this country.

It is at this point that I will bow out of this debate.

Hon. R. N. GREENIDGE: Mr. Chairman, I just want to make a brief intervention. It wouldn't take much time at all. I heard the Honourable Member for the City this morning speak very passionately about some of the problems which some of our young ladies encounter when they go to the courts to collect maintenance. In fact

the point has just been made again by the Honourable Member for St. Lucy.

I was not in my seat when the Honourable Member for St. Philip South spoke but I know that this is a problem which we have discussed on quite a few occasions and the Honourable Attorney General alluded to this fact just moments ago. I just want to spell it out as fully as possible so that Honourable Members can get some indication as to what will be put in the policy paper when we refer this matter to the Attorney General again and to the Cabinet.

Under the laws of Barbados, when you apply for maintenance and you are married or you have lived in a union other than marriage with a spouse for 5 years or more, you apply for maintenance in the High Court under the Family Law Act. In other words, that is the route you go. Your matter is heard through that medium. If the person is single and has a boyfriend she does not apply under the Family Law Act because she is not married or living with the spouse for more than 5 years. She goes to the Magistrates' Court under the Maintenance Act. That is the medium through which she gets her matter heard.

Let us take a situation, Mr. Chairman, where we have a young lady who has a son for a chap by the name of John. Subsequent to that, she gets married. Her husband tells her up front that he is not supporting John's child. He has to because it is like rebutting a presumption that exists in law which says that automatically a child born before the marriage becomes a child of the marriage. The husband says up front it is not his child and he is not supporting it.

At the same time John is not supporting it. This is a problem. She wants John to support the child. What does she do? She cannot go to the High Court because she is not married to John and she has not lived in a union other than marriage with John for 5 years plus. She cannot go to the Magistrates' Court either because she is not single. The actual form says "being a single woman" when you apply to the Magistrate Court for maintenance. Therefore, we have a problem.

I believe that the mischief for which the Maintenance Act was designed to be a solution was to encourage and insist that men support their children. By having the law as it stands now a considerable section of the young ladies are being disadvantaged. I know for sure that some magistrates have said that they will still hear the matter. I have had the experience of having one magistrate say that he is not hearing it because she is not single. Therefore it was not heard in the Magistrate's Court. As I said, I have written to the Attorney General about it because I feel very strongly about it since I experienced this in the Magistrate's Court and also in my capacity now as Minister of Women's Affairs. I don't think I have any other option but to try to insist that it is remedied.

I believe that we will have to say in our Maintenance Act "single at the time of the birth of that child". I believe that is the way that we will have to remedy that particular situation. Or some other wording. The point is that we have to do something about it because it is a grey area and we have to make it crystal clear that there is no longer confusion with one person saying this and the other person saying that. Even if we do it that way, and say "single at the time of birth" we may still encounter yet another problem.

We have a situation where a husband goes to sea for 14 months and, lo and behold, when he comes back he is saluted with yet another kid that he knows absolutely nothing about. I am not so much concerned about the morals of it. I am concerned about the practicality, what he is going to do about it. Obviously the husband when he comes back is going to say up front he will never support that particular child. You cannot be vexed with him. Now what happens is a case now where in that scenario which I have just painted the real biological father of that child refuses to support that child. In such a case what can the young woman do? Can she take the biological father to the High Court? No! She is not married to him. She has not lived in a union other than marriage with that man. Can she take him to the Magistrate's Court? She is not single. Therefore, if we have in one case the Family Law Act saying that marriages or unions must be referred to the High Court, and on the other hand we have a Maintenance Act that simply says that the matter must relate to "a single woman" we can see confusion from the two scenarios which I have painted, and I am going to say on the Floor of this House that these two scenarios exist. I know of them. What can we do in a situation like this? I have already, as I said, written to the Attorney General on it. It is certainly something which we have to correct. We cannot do other than that.

2.55 p.m.

Mr. Chairman, that is the only intervention I wanted to make so that it could be crystal clear what would be in the policy paper.

Mr. F. J. STUART: Mr. Chairman, to amplify what the Honourable Member was saying, I think it is a decision of the High Court in which the Honourable Member was involved in which it was decided that "single" was to be interpreted as meaning single at the time of making the application rather than "single" at the time of birth. What disturbed me about the decision was in a country that has a Succession Act that accords equality of treatment to children born in and out of wedlock, and a Status of Children's Act that abolishes the distinction between legitimate and illegitimate children, that decision roamed back to the Laws of England to define "single". It roamed right back down to the time whereof the memory of man

runneth not contrary to find a definition of "single" to apply to Barbados in the 1990s.

I take the Honourable Member's point. I have had a few of these problems to deal with and it gets even worse in circumstances where the subsequent marriage of a mother has collapsed as well and she can get no maintenance **from** her existing husband and the children's father is running wild. I have a situation where, in fact, a young lady preferred to invest in the maturity of old age rather than the impetuosity of youth. She got married to a man of advanced years, who subsequently ended up in a Geriatric Hospital. He is there. She has four children for a man who has run off and never looked back at them and she cannot apply to the Court because she is married.

*Aside.*

Mr. F. J. STUART: He is still alive, but in the Geriatric Hospital. He is a man of no means at all, so she is really suffering. I think it is a really urgent matter and needs the attention of the **draftsmen** to clarify it.

I am obliged to you, Sir.

Mr. D. CARTER: Mr. Chairman, I would like first to support Head 30 which is before us now. I am glad that the two **MPs** for St. Philip just **clarified** the technical points of Family Law so that men and women of this country would know the technicalities. I hope the Attorney General would **work** on that very soon because in my own village I know there is a lot of intertwining and there is a possibility there, and, as you know, the parliamentarian is supposed to do everything in the village.

Mr. Chairman, I am very happy to see that in the Capital Works' Programme the Attorney General will make it possible for the majority of the police stations to be upgraded. Some 36 years ago I remember entering a building at Coleridge Street and then I thought that building should have been repaired but obviously I know a little about the painting trade because my father was a painter. I observed then that paper and putty played a prominent part and the surface looked pretty smooth at the time. As I said, I am happy to see in the Capital Works' Programme that that building will be demolished and a new one built.

*Aside.*

Mr. D. CARTER: I am **sorry** you did not have money to rip down the whole thing and really get things going, but I am happy for the little you are doing.

Mr. Chairman, the reason why I have said that is because it is really hard for policemen to work in these inhuman places because I know their counterparts in the

civil service have better facilities. I think we in Barbados should be very proud of the Police Force. Gone are the days when policemen were 6ft. 8 ins. with big arms and those things, but we have some sophisticated policemen now. Quite recently we saw our outgoing Commissioner of Police, and our present Commissioner of Police, people of real substance and, as a Barbadian and a Member of Parliament, I was pleased to see we have people who would look after law and order in this country.

I know in the early days we used to refer to the station at Hastings as the hotel and quite recently we referred to the one at Oistins as the hotel. I think it would be good for the majority of these stations to be brought up-to-date where policemen would be able to work in better conditions. We say that policemen right now are working 8 hours a day but I know from experience, because I once donned the flannels of a policeman, although I probably worked in the hole for a longer period. I am quite sure that we should always maintain standards in this country. I feel very good today to see that the police have been taken seriously.

I heard the Attorney General make a statement today saying that pretty shortly we would be having a forensic lab instituted into probably Central Police Station or somewhere. I am very glad to hear that because I remembered once a long time ago – I know what it is now but then I was working with a very senior police officer..

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: On a point of elucidation, Sir. The lab is not going to be at Central. The site for the lab is roughly opposite the new National Insurance building off Culloden Road. I think the property is part of St. Paul's Avenue or one of them, just over on the other side where we have the National Standards Institute, all along there.

Mr. D. CARTER: I am talking about a substance which I know now what it is, but at the time I did not know. The Senior Officer I was working with told me then we could make history if we really could have arrested the two chaps off the ship who were displaying this thing in the nightclub. We were all ignorant to it but I know right now in Barbados the police are up-to-date with all of these things and I am quite happy to see how things have progressed in the past years.

Also, some Members of the Other Side were making a point for prisoners. I know that years ago when a prisoner was convicted and given hard labour, hard labour really meant hard labour and we saw then they were cutting stones during the day during the hot sun. In that era probably it was good for the conviction. Right now it would appear when you get hard labour the same treatment is not meted out.

Now, I am one of the people who believe that if a person commits crime and is convicted, he should be able to feel that conviction. In this modern era I do not know exactly what you have to do. It was very refreshing to me yesterday when I saw in the paper a chap who was charged with murder and got off with some technicality saying that he would never ever like to go back to that place. That was good news to my ears. It would mean that somewhere along the line he saw something that was not refreshing. I know although in this modern era we do not want to treat human beings like animals, I believe there should be something there to deter convicted prisoners from wanting to return.

3.05 p.m.

It is the same Barbados. There are some people who have a better time in jail than when they are out. I would hope that the Attorney-General will take special note and not just let people go up there and have a rest because we, the taxpayers, have to pay.

One parliamentarian said we do not need a new building but maybe the building could be erected in order to correct that problem. I notice in the Estimates that the Attorney-General is spending \$197 000 to rebuild the wall. I am glad he is doing it so quickly.

Barbados has a good society. We have a few bad eggs. Something happened the other night when I invited a few friends over and to my horror I heard gun shots. I felt embarrassed. The only thing I could say while the melee was going on was that I know the Attorney-General could put in place all the laws for the Police Force, but at the end of the day Barbados could get a bad name because of a few people.

From my experience, I know that the Police have to be there on duty. Certainly when he comes in from duty he would have to make his report. That may be another horror.

I am making the point that the policemen should really be working eight hours. If there is a storm we all go home. The policemen have to remain on duty. As a young person you want to *fête* but you have to make sure that everything is in order.

I am not saying that other Government policies are not working and should not be given time. But I am saying that when the police ask for certain things, please, Mr. Attorney-General, take it seriously.

I said that since 1964 I would not like to have to be in a position where I have to work between 12.00 o'clock and 6.00 o'clock. It is the worst thing. But some of us have to do it. I salute the police, the nurses and any person who

has to work between 12.00 o'clock and 6.00 in the morning.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Can the Honourable Member explain that to us?

Mr. D. CARTER: The graveyard shift.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member has two more minutes to wind up.

Mr. D. CARTER: I have touched on capital punishment. Some people veered away from it. Everybody has his own views. I believe that 1% of the people who find someone in their house will murder that person on the spur of the moment. Someone may pull a knife and the other person may die. I have a little sympathy for that fellow.

But, certainly, when a fellow comes to my home and murders me or my family, I believe he should be hanged. That is my position. Eminent lawyers here notice certain things in evidence and they may tend to favour the policy that you should give them life imprisonment. It would appear that this country wants to go this way. I want to make it clear that I am in favour of hanging those persons.

Thank you very much, Sir.

His Honour R. D. MARSHALL: Mr. Chairman, Sir, a lot of Barbados' law is derived from the English custom and statutory laws. Over the years the English system has been revamped in some areas and they have deviated from things of the past.

I believe that in Barbados we make it too easy for people to go to prison. I say that against this background. The United Kingdom Criminal Justice Act of 1991 gives people other alternatives than going to prison. There is curfew time and also Community Service Orders. We know we have it on our books in Barbados but I do not know to what extent they **are** implemented. In England, people under the age of 21 scarcely go to prison unless they have committed some heinous crime. There are also detention centres and I heard the Learned Attorney General mention this morning that we may be going in that direction.

3.15 p.m.

In England, first offenders do not go to prison. In Barbados the prison has become an institution, not only for rehabilitating people but in some cases, of training young people in crime. In the prison there are these hardened criminals who when young offenders go there they are exposed to these people who **are** only too glad to pass on their knowledge to these young offenders. That is why I am making the call for us to look at our system

of sentencing people and use more community service orders for these young people and first offenders and at the same time get into curfew time.

Many people go to prison and when they come out they believe that the road to go is back to prison. I do believe that sometimes those in authority are too lenient with them. Some treat prison as though it is a five star hotel. They go there, they have all the facilities, they come down, they go back up. It is a habit, up and down all the time. In essence what I would like to **see** is our going in the direction where we would make it difficult more or less for young people to go to prison.

The next thing I want to look at is certificates of character. Sometimes young people **find** themselves before the law courts, they are convicted and as years go by, that conviction, although the person has reformed himself, five, ten, or **fifteen** years down the road and that person applies for a job or a visa to travel, that conviction stands in the way against that person. I believe that when John Public applies for a job and he has **to** get a certificate of character it is not fair that when he goes to get that certificate and looks on the back he sees that so many years ago he was convicted for stealing 5 mangoes as a young man. I believe that if you have one or two convictions and then over a period of time of **10** or **15** years you have a clean record that this should not stand in your way of your attaining a job to make a decent living. You may want to travel to the United States on holiday or you may want to go to some part of the world to visit an ailing relative or attend some function and when you go for your police **certificate** of character there standing in your way again is this conviction.

The Member for St. Lucy touched on a very good point, people and child support. Any human being who has feelings could get children. You have, Sir, young men in this country who go to bed with women, they get children and they **run** away **from** the responsibility of supporting the children. There is the court to resort to. The court might fine someone a few dollars but first I believe some of these fines that the court put on these fathers or supposed fathers, the amount granted is inadequate for supporting these children. I believe that these are things that the Attorney General should be looking at. I do not know what **can** be done. I know if a person is **working** you can have an order from the court to garnish his salary. I would really like to see something done in this direction. In the case where the person is not working he cannot support the child but there are fathers out there who are shifting their responsibility and I am hoping that we can do something in that direction.

I also want to make mention of our court marshals. We get complaints from people that they have been trying

to get a case through the **courts** and when it is fully investigated it is found that there is a backlog of summonses to be delivered. Some excuses are that they are unable to locate the people. People make accusations against the marshals and say they know the people but they have friends and they do not deliver the summonses.

The other area I want to look at has to do with the system in Barbados where people are reported for a motoring offence. By law, people in Barbados should be compelled to drive with their driver's licences and their insurance in the car with them. I have heard or read in the papers where drivers of ZR vans have gone to court and when the story comes to be told they have given a wrong name and a wrong address to the police officer. I do believe that it should be easy to locate these people and these people should not be in a position to have the police or the marshal running around trying to find them when they should be driving with their licence and their insurance in the motor car.

With those few points, Sir, I will rest.

Hon. R. C. EASTMOND: It will not be easy for me to follow the very brilliant speech just delivered by the Honourable Member for St. Michael West Central who has been able to produce a speech of fine quality, character and class. However, Mr. Chairman, I would want to support my learned friend, the Attorney General, and to make some observations on the matter before this Committee.

You will notice, Mr. Chairman, that a not insignificant sum of money is being allocated to a number of capital projects under the Head we are discussing. These are all wanted, Mr. Chairman, precisely because almost every police station in Barbados with the possible exception of **Oistins** is in need of attention. These capital projects are justified because for several a lot of the police stations were totally run down and the plant was inadequate and the morale of police officers no doubt have been affected. Indeed, while I make that point, I would also want to say that these capital projects **are** part of a whole range of capital projects which this Government is embarking upon in this particular year with certain stated objectives including the objective of course of fostering employment. 3.25 p.m.

Mr. Chairman, we live in an era where we now have a clinical type of policeman as opposed to a physical **type** of policeman of 40 years ago. For the Royal Barbados Police Force to keep in its ranks police officers of calibre and quality, it is necessary to provide them with proper facilities, improved conditions at work and motivate them to remain excellent police officers in the system. All too often we have situations in Barbados where a number of professionals especially in the Government Service enter

a particular profession and leave precisely because the conditions at work are not satisfactory to them. But the learned Attorney General is doing his best to make sure that the tone and morale in the Police Force can be improved by giving them better facilities. At the same time, Mr. Chairman, the Attorney General made reference to a problem in the constituency of St. James North, namely the problem at the **Holetown** Police Station which as you well know was officially declared opened a short while ago in September, 1994 and which already is crying for a substantial amount of attention by way of repairs. It is no fault of this administration, Mr. Chairman, that the conditions at the **Holetown** Police Station are already crying out for attention. Indeed, while I comment on the fact that there are problems with the actual police station and the building, there is also the wider problem of a number of things surrounding the station that need attention.

I am disturbed to know that after an amount of rainfall the **Holetown** Police Station floods badly and it is no fault of this administration. I am also disturbed to know that to the north of that compound there has developed a waterway which attracts vermin and mosquitos and other insects. I believe the time has come for us to look at the whole complex at **Holetown** with the aim to doing something about the problem there.

Mr. Chairman, I also want to comment at this stage on a new programme which you can find at page 93 of the Estimates. This programme at page 93 to which I refer is the National Task Force on Crime Prevention. I believe the Attorney General is to be lauded on this initiative. We have come to a stage in Barbados, Mr. **Chairman**, where in relation to crime we can easily apply the old Barbadian adage "prevention better than cure". If you have a situation even when crime is declining that you have crime, you need to trace the causes of crime. Already certain Honourable Members have referred in a non-exhaustive way to factors that go towards making people commit crimes. I believe that we have to support the National Task Force on Crime Prevention on the ground that when this Task Force is able to make an impression we will be treating the problem at source as opposed to waiting until the problem has occurred and then doing something about it. This new programme at page 93, Mr. Chairman, under Head 30 - (Code **300104**) is a programme which will permit us to see what factors go towards the occurrence of **crime**. You will naturally have to look to see whether strict sociological factors apply, whether psychological factors apply, whether perhaps problems in education **are** to do with it as I heard one Honourable Member correctly say. But we **are** going to have to look at the causes of crime because in a progressive society where we are doing our utmost to build people and fashion a strong and vibrant law abiding community we need to know what variables are out

there that make people inclined towards crime. We need to know, for example, whether deprivation and conditions of housing **squalor** constitute a factor. We **need** to know whether unemployment which is often blamed as a factor in crime is truly a factor. We have to see whether the lack of educational achievement is a factor. We have to see **too**, Mr. **Chairman**, where most crime is located. We have to see whether urbanization especially where it has occurred and has not seen all the social services come concomitant with the urbanization if that is a factor. Not to reflect on any of our towns at the moment, but we have to consider these things because sometimes from a sociological perspective where a small rural community suddenly becomes urban and attracts a number of persons sometimes as immigrants or persons who come there looking for opportunities and do not get the opportunities very often you get a social backlash.

I welcome, Mr. Chairman, this National Task Force on Crime Prevention. I heard the Honourable Member for St. Michael West Central make the very pertinent point that we have to look too to the question of rehabilitation in a sensible and humane way. His concern was that a man in 1940 can commit a criminal offence and go clean for 15 or 20 years and then in 1970 or 1980 with that one offence gets in trouble again and after 20 years he is still deemed to have erred and transgressed and fallen from the race. I saw a couple of years ago in the Magistrates Court a man 89 years brought before the Court and his record was there since 1934 and he went clean for 50 plus years and he had a criminal record still. Now I am sure that the Attorney General has already started to look at legislation by way of the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act. I am going to support the Attorney General who I am sure will speak to the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act to be applied in instances where people commit crimes, a length of time passes and then your slate is wiped clean. Let me give you an example. In England if you do a serious crime and then you go clean for 10 years, you are deemed to have been rehabilitated. If you commit a not so serious crime and 5 years pass, you are given a chance to be rehabilitated and your previous conduct will not be used against you. This Government is looking at legislation from the Commonwealth and other places to see whether we can bring this type of thing.

#### *Aside.*

Hon. R. C. EASTMOND: I am advised that it has already been drafted and circulated and it is being looked at by interested **parties**. But this is the type of progressive thing that is informing both the mind of the learned Attorney General and the mind of this Government. Regarding this whole question of looking at occurrences and crime in the world closely, we are making sure that we equip ourselves to be a strong Government prepared to deal with serious offences and at the same time a

humane Government prepared to offer some sense of sympathy for human failures where there is scope for that type of thing.

I also heard reference to the Marshals of the Court. I believe the Honourable Member for St. Michael West Central mentioned something about Marshals and the fact that Marshals of the Court often report that they cannot **find** people. In Barbados we have a very interesting **situation**, Mr. Chairman, where at High Court stage you can get private writ servers to serve people at High Court stage to initiate processing in the High Court and at the Magistrates Court stage there is no scope yet for private writ servers. The amazing thing about it, Mr. Chairman, is that practical experience shows that a lot of Marshals have process to serve, go into the same tavern or place of libation as the people to whom they must serve these documents, and then say they cannot find them. The Marshals **also live** in fear of serving process on police officers. Now most police officers are able to observe the criminal law but unfortunately impregnable observation shows that in certain matters police officers may constitute a group often called upon to attend in Court to answer civil matters usually to do with a debt or a small loan or something like that. The Marshals never find police officers in Barbados although they work basically in the same precincts. Now does this not work in justice? I know of a case not involving a police officer where a Marshal living in St. Lucy had to serve a document on a man who lives in the same village, passed the man every **day** and saw him and reported that he could not **find** the man. Now the Marshals have to get more professional. He said that he did **not see** him. An aspect of justice and the administration of justice is to be fair and impartial and you cannot permit bias to taint your judgment when performing your duties. 3.35 p.m.

Mr. Chairman, there are other concerns that were raised by Honourable Members and of interest is that this debate has ascended to a level where we can almost say that in relation to this matter of crime control all three Parties represented in this House seem determined to support the Attorney **General**. **There** was a matter that was addressed by the Honourable Member for St. Michael West who spoke with some passion on the question of bail. Of course, our Government is looking at a Bail Act. Our Government has a list of legislation that it intends to bring to this Parliament in a short space of time to deal with these matters. But the question of bail is currently addressed in section 27 of Chapter **116**, a section well observed in the breach. Section 27(3) of Cap **116** says:

"Where a person is charged with any offence other than those mentioned in subsections (1) and (2), the magistrate shall admit him to bail, unless there is evidence sworn before the magistrate that the accused

person either intends **to**, is likely to leave Barbados or by any other **means** evade trial or unless such person has previously been convicted of a felony."

Now we have to **ask** ourselves whether this is fully desirable because this really requires a magistrate to place his sworn evidence that the fellow would not abscond. This section falls under Part IV of Chapter 116 and an unfortunate **case** already decided held that section 27 only applies to Part IV and Part IV has as a marginal heading – Preliminary Enquiries. Now it is a basic rule of interpretation that Head Notes form no part of the **interpretative** process. Yet there is a decided case heard fairly high affecting this country that says that this section 27 applies only to preliminary enquiries and that in ordinary run-of-the-mill Magistrate's Courts cases that this section is inapplicable. In any case we agreed that the time has come for us to look at bail again.

Very often bail is granted or denied on whim and by caprice. There is no doubt about it. Sometimes one fellow gets bail after a certain submission and a certain lawyer at 9.15 **and** another fellow is denied bail at **10.15** on the same submission by another lawyer. There is a need therefore, Mr. Chairman, for this to be looked at.

Generally **speaking**, Mr. Chairman, these Estimates as contained under Head 13 commend themselves because they have been clearly thought out, they are supportive of programmes that are necessary for this country's progress and I believe that I personally am left with no other alternative based on what I **see** here but to render my fullest support to them.

With those remarks, Mr. Chairman, I am deeply obliged to you.

Hon. R. St. C. **TOPPIN**: Mr. Chairman, I want to give my full support to the Attorney General in his presentation today. I believe that it is a very properly thought out long-term strategy that was enunciated by the Attorney General. The improvement at the various police stations and the Registry and the Courts are all commendable and very long overdue.

Over a period of some 12–13 years, I have had occasion to work in these institutions and it is clear that there is a strong need for the **facelift** which they will now be getting. There is a congestion **as** well. It is really strange. Some files are misplaced. I know that only recently this week a matter had to be adjourned because the file could not be found. That is not the first time I have known of that type of situation. Counsel has to sit down and then reconstruct the file placed before the Court causing further delay in the process.

The improvements that the Honourable Attorney General has highlighted today will no doubt contribute to an improvement in the dispensation of justice and that is commendable. But, Mr. Chairman, some things bother me because I fear that there are some outdated and anachronistic practices and rules which can at the very practical level, irrespective of the very good work that the Attorney General is doing, strongly militate against the proper dispensation of justice. I am **speaking** primarily about the criminal cases where the life of the subject is at stake. I will give a couple of examples.

The position in Barbados, and I **am** really not 100% sure of the legal basis for it, I understand that it may well be rooted in the doctrine of contempt of court, but the position in Barbados right now is that you cannot discuss a case publicly once it has begun. It is said to be subjudice and therefore discussion in public is forbidden. I ask the simple question, Mr. Chairman, why? Why can't any counsel in a case leave the courtroom after the case is adjourned on any day, go to the press and make a statement to the press explaining what has happened, what he foresees will happen and how he thinks he has discredited witnesses during the course of the day. Why can't you do that? Why can't we take a leaf out of the book of the United States in this respect?

I say, Mr. Chairman, if O. J. Simpson had been tried in Barbados, he would be on death row. That is a fact. I strongly believe that had it not been possible for defence counsel in that case to go to the press in the United States as they were free to go and explain the position to the public, because in most cases, Mr. Chairman, it is really a lot of public sentiment that comes to bear on decisions in cases, especially in a place like Barbados which is small. It is unrealistic to believe that discussions do not go on during the course of cases and that discussions just take place empannelled jurors. Even if they don't go and discuss cases, a lot of information is fed back to them during the course of a case. It is important that the accused has a counsel to be able to balance that. Too many things militate against the accused in criminal cases in Barbados. Further, if you even read the papers after any day that a case is heard in a court, sometimes if you happened to be in the case, you don't recognise that it is the same case that you did the day before. One thing that is clear, and court reporters say this to you openly is, that they do not report cross examination. They only report evidence in chief. It is not glamorous enough, they say when you report cross examination. That's a fact. They do not do it.

No matter how much defence counsel discredits a witness during the course of any day's proceedings, it is never referred to or mentioned in the newspaper. I have known of empannelled jurors who have told me – they can speak frankly once a case is finished – that they were not

clear on so and so during the first day of the trial and they read the papers the next morning to see if they could understand what happened. That is a fact. Some jurors do that in relation to cases. It is something that bothers me very deeply and I believe strongly that there should be total liberty by all parties, the prosecution if they feel like as well, to go to the press and discuss a case freely and openly as happens in the United States. That is one practice in the United States that I believe we can gleefully embrace in Barbados.

I **am** also concerned that despite **all** the good work that the Attorney General is doing that more lip **service** than anything else is paid to this concept of the presumption of innocence. An accused man is presumed innocent until proven guilty. There is more lip service paid to that than anything else.

3.45 p.m.

You start off with the fact, Mr. Chairman, that **as** soon as a man is charged in Barbados a big picture appears in the newspaper with the write-up under **the** picture. Only today I was in a house, a man came into the house and said: "Look at dat man that do da' thing to **the little** girl yesterday." The man is only charged, you know. Not one shred of evidence has been led as yet but the comment was made. I said, of course, that the man is merely on a charge, no evidence has been led as yet, and there is **too** much of that sort of prejudice that obtains in relation to issues like these in Barbados.

There is also the disclosure of the name of the accused. I find especially in relation to sexual offences cases the first thing that is splashed across the newspapers or television is the name of the accused. The name of the victim is not mentioned, and it should not be. That is proper. I agree. But the name of the accused **as** well should not be mentioned. In fact, I go so far to say that in no case should the name of the accused person be published until he is convicted because even if he is acquitted he has a scar for life, and it should be hidden as much as possible that he was ever charged. Therefore, I abhor the practice of seeing, publicly displayed in newspapers and the media generally, the names of accused persons. I want to see the day when we can be rid of that.

Now, Mr. Chairman, if I **sound** pro accused, it is because I have been in the position where for 12, 13 years I have been a defence counsel. I make no apology for that. I have never had any desire whatsoever to prosecute anybody, and I believe that every possible channel should be exhausted before a man is convicted because I believe that it is better for 100 guilty people to go free than for one innocent man to be wrongly convicted. That is what I believe because **the** consequences of conviction are

usually imprisonment or death. The liberty of the subject is to be maintained at all costs, in my view.

I heard the Honourable Member for St. Michael West Central make the statement about prison being a hotel. The prison is no hotel. I have gone there before many times, as a lawyer. I have even had the fortune or misfortune to go and visit death row. Prison is no hotel. It is a cold and cruel place where having had a tour of death row I came out and was on the verge of vomiting. That is a fact. It was not a nice place to be in. Prison is no hotel. It is a place where you go and convictions are recorded against you. Your character is permanently scarred. It is to be a place of last resort. I have never known of anybody to check into a hotel and come out with a conviction and find himself in a position where he cannot get a job because the society condemns him for having gone there, irrespective of the circumstances in which he went there.

The next thing, Mr. **Chairman**, is this willingness on the part of some people to loss away people in jail, and so on. They are bad, we hear. But I believe firmly that there is no effect without a cause **and** it bothers me that when I have visited prison **as** a lawyer, I never went in any other capacity, that the bulk of the people, if not all, were from a certain social standing in this country, and there is nothing inherently bad or wrong with poor people. They **are** not bad people. But they are the ones who are always finding themselves in prison. Therefore those who have this **eagerness** to impose the maximum sentence and **see** prison as a first resort and say send them up there and loss them away and **all** of that must be mindful of the fact that these are people that come from disadvantaged circumstances, and the Honourable Member for St. George South is going to elaborate on that point later on. They come from unfortunate circumstances and recognition must be given to that fact in our system of justice.

Mr. Chairman, I just thought I would add those few comments to the debate today in endorsing the presentation by the Honourable Attorney General. I sincerely hope that **my** comments are taken in good faith as they are, in fact, comments **from** my heart.

I thank you.

**Mr. L. R. TULL:** Mr. Chairman, up to ten minutes ago I had absolutely no intention of getting involved in this debate but I sat and heard the Honourable Member for St. Michael North in what I considered one of the best speeches I have heard since I have been in this Legislature 23 years or something like that. Usually there is a lot of grandstanding with somebody said this, and a lot of **cow-towing** to popular opinion. Quite often what we hear in the corridors is not what we hear on the Floor, so when I heard the Honourable Member speak, I had to get up and

congratulate him and the quality of his speech in relation to his strong sentiments.

We in Barbados **are** getting ourselves very hysterical about this question of crime, **law** and order, and punishment. As I have had to say on more than one occasion on the Floor of this Chamber in recent times that I am not going to be enlisted by anybody in the lick and lock up brigade. There is hysteria in Barbados where we must treat those who **are** the victims of a lot of the ills of the society the way we want to treat them. I am not going along with that.

Let me say, as I have said before, because I **really** am not catering to anybody's views but my own. That is not to say that I do not feel strongly about crime in our society. I have sewed as Attorney General in this country and I have had my hand at some point in legislation to tighten up on the control and conduct of citizens in the society. I have spoken in this Chamber, on the public **platform** and other forums across this island on the need for us to take serious steps to bring back some greater discipline in our society.

In this whole debate there must be some balance, Sir, and I have detected in recent times that there is no balance. You take a poll out there, you listen to the call-in programmes or if you read the letters to the newspapers there is this impassioned, unreasoning thing about how cruelly you should treat people who are accused of crime and found guilty of crime. I agree with practically everything the Honourable Member for St. Michael North has said. I did not think he had it in him. I congratulate him again.

I, Sir, have worked for many years as an **attorney** in the defence of persons charged with crime. I am not saying it **as** a boast, **Sir**, but for a lot of that time I have done more criminal work and defended more people in crime than any other lawyer in Barbados.

3.55 p.m.

I deal with these people at all levels in their communities and they are impressed with the fact that they are frequently visited.

There are those who pontificate, get up and speak as if they know everything. But they never go into the communities to get a feeling of what is happening with these people. Beat them with the cat. Make them break soft stone. When they get up there, that is the attitude.

One example of dealing with crime is Head 30 for forensic services; money to build a new forensic services laboratory in Culloden Road. This will be paid for by the taxpayers. This is a lab that is to assist the police in

the evaluation of evidence used against people. Nowhere do I see that this will assist an accused man to have the benefit of that lab to analyse exhibits. I do not see anything wrong in having the evidence evaluated to assist him in the process of his defence. It is a situation that has obtained in Barbados for a long time, despite the complaints by persons like myself.

When the police and professional witness give evidence, they are Government employees, but the accused man and his lawyer have no access to that lab that has those exhibits. Another party could give an honest and objective opinion. Put before the court, accused people are at a serious disadvantage.

I like what the Honourable Member for St. Michael North said. I welcome him on board. The measure of a man is his standing up and saying his opinions.

We have a situation, if I may move off briefly, Sir, ...

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member has seven more minutes.

Mr. L. R. TULL: Good, Sir. We have a position in this country where there are no continued Assizes. The cases that go before the assizes have increased tremendously over the years and half of the cases are traversed. There **are** cases which have been traversed for two and a half years for the Assizes. That is because the courts **are** overloaded.

I support the introduction of continuous Assizes but I want to show a couple of caveats. The lawyers are few and far between and there is only a small group of lawyers whose services are engaged. Not all lawyers want a situation where people are denied the lawyer of their choice. If the lawyer is not available, too bad, get somebody you are not comfortable with. People cannot have the lawyer of their choice because the lawyer of their choice is an extremely busy lawyer, in all of the courts, and he cannot be in all of them at the same time.

This question of continuous Assizes must take into consideration the constitutional right of each person to choose although I believe in a certain way of dealing with any backlog and the introduction of continuous Assizes.

Make the system work and see that we do not make it work to the disadvantage of those who go before the courts. We are dealing with the question of people. There **is no** area of the law that is as important as that of criminal **law** where lawyers can make tonnes of money.

But the only area where the civil liabilities of the citizens of this country are directly affected, to a great

extent, is in the area of criminal law. People speak glibly about these matters because they talk about them out of an abundance of ignorance. I am in a position, Mr. Chairman, where I see those exponents of insensitivity.

I want to move off that to another point, Mr. Chairman, Sir. I am going to ask the Attorney-General to have a look again at the Disciplinary Committee of the Bar Association. There are people who feel that they can run down town and swear an affidavit for the most scandalous and scurrilous statements and the lawyer has to go before the Committee for all kinds of foolishness. If the lawyer is guilty, I feel he should be punished and removed from the profession. I feel very strongly about that.  
4.05 p.m.

I certainly believe that all of the frivolous complaints made against lawyers should be dealt with. We cannot stop people from making frivolous complaints. People say what they like. What I am quarrelling with, Sir, is the system where this disciplinary committee, a bunch of lawyers, are in a position, according to the law, to summon you to sit down as if you were a common criminal to answer all kinds of foolish charges that people bring against you. I want to see whether heavy costs can be visited on those who bring frivolous complaints. There is only one way to discourage them. If a complaint comes that is frivolous, and is so found by the disciplinary committee, then those who bring those charges must pay out of their pockets for these wanton attempts at trying to destroy the personal and professional integrity of lawyers.

I want to make one final point, Sir. What I intend to say will take longer than one minute so I will take my seat at this time and return **as** the need arises. Grateful to you, Sir.

Rt. Hon. L. E. SANDIFORD: Mr. Chairman, I have not spoken in this Committee on this particular Head that is before us now – Head 30 – but it is a very important Head and I would wish to express myself of my views fearlessly and without fear of any kind of hostility in those high terms that the Member for St. George South enunciated.

I however will beg to differ from him. We do not often differ on a number of subjects but on this one I would wish to express a differing view point, Sir. It is not a view point that I have just recently come to. I have been expressing this view for quite some time and the more I observe the social scene, both in Barbados and beyond, the more I become fortified in my views.

Let me at the outset, Sir, say that I represent a constituency that is substantially working class and a small percentage of my constituents of St. Michael South face

the law courts either in a civil or criminal capacity. The vast majority of my constituents, Sir, like constituents in other parts of Barbados conform to the fundamental values that are outlined in our Constitution, they dream the dreams and live the aspirations that are set out there that they can share in the economic goods that this country may be capable of producing. They want to share in the creation of wealth and **as** the bedrock of all of this, peace and freedom, justice, law and order, democracy and the rule of law are all therefore very precious values to us all.

I too have a very high regard, Sir, for human life and the human rights that are enshrined in our Constitution and we subscribe to international treaties and international instruments attesting to the sacredness and sanctity of life and to the rights of the accused. I can speak in this way, Sir, because while I have not been a subject before the courts of this country, either the Supreme Court or the Magistrates Court and I am not in a ...

*Aside.*

Rt. Hon. L. E. SANDIFORD: Not even to watch a case, Sir, far less on an offence. It is a gap in my education, Sir, but it is a gap that I have no intentions of remedying. I however, Sir, can speak in the way that I am speaking because in a way that no one in this Chamber has suffered I know what miscarriage of justice is and I have been brought before a court in which my accusers were also the judge, the prosecutors and the jury, on trumped up charges. So I know what justice is all about and therefore I can speak, Sir, forthrightly on these matters because we are in the highest court of the land, so it is said. But I believe, Sir, that we have to work out an approach to **ensure** that our criminal justice system, indeed, Sir, our **entire** system of justice really delivers justice to the people of Barbados and I believe that we must recognise those **aspects** of our system that are very useful and beneficial **towards** guaranteeing social peace and harmony, economic **justice** and social cohesion in our society. I believe, Sir, in **this** regard, that the death penalty should be retained in Barbados. I believe, Sir, that we have worked out in this country, and in other countries that follow the rule of law, **enough** guarantees and safeguards throughout the appellate system to ensure or reduce as much **as** may be possible the risks of an innocent person being wrongly convicted.  
4.15 p.m.

*Aside.*

Rt. Hon. L. E. SANDIFORD: A different court! Sir, I make these statements because capital punishment or death penalty is not applied for all homicides. It is only those that are most heinous and atrocious that attract the death penalty. I believe, Sir, not only that the punishment **must** fit the crime but that there should be a retention of that death penalty because I believe that there is still some

inherent utilitarian value to our society without going into the other causes or arguments relating to the death penalty. This is not the occasion and I will await the report of the Commission set up by the Government on these matters. So I will not go through arguments about retribution, vengeance and deterrence and whatever else there may be, Sir, and even rehabilitation and reform. I know the ultimate punishment. Whether it is the ultimate deterrent, I do not know. But, Sir, I think that kind of philosophical examination can await another time.

I would wish to address a particular issue that has been raised from time to time by Attorneys General and by the current Attorney General who seems bent not only about raising issues but also seeking some solutions to problems and I would give my support to the approaches – not about flying kites, Sir, but in his frequent calls for alternative kinds of sentencing and alternative forms of punishment. In particular, Sir, I believe that I support the view that to put young offenders in the same school as hardened criminals, some of them perhaps on death row, is not the right approach. I would like to throw out a suggestion. As I said, I do not speak as any expert or practitioner in this field and I am conscious that we have had the preponderance of opinion during this debate because of the peculiar composition of this Honourable Chamber. A large number of the Government's side are attorneys-at-law and not only attorneys-at-law but defence attorneys, Sir, and to my view there is an imbalance in terms of the viewpoint on the side of the accused.

Mr. L. R. TULL: On a point of order, Sir. I really believe that the Honourable Member is stretching the limit because he is imputing an improper motive to me to suggest that I, as a defence lawyer...

Rt. Hon. L. E. SANDIFORD: I am not drawing any imputation against you or any Honourable Member. That is far from me, Sir.

Mr. L. R. TULL: But do not say that my position on any issue is coloured by the fact that I work for the defence. That is not right.

Rt. Hon. L. E. SANDIFORD: Sorry, I will simply withdraw it and rephrase it. His views are not coloured by his work, Sir, not at all. So I will withdraw that remark and let me say that I meant no imputation about the Honourable Member or all Honourable Members. Let me make my point however, Sir. The experiences of the entire front bench with the exception of the Prime Minister are experiences of defence attorneys.

*Aside.*

Rt. Hon. L. E. SANDIFORD: Therefore, there seems to be a seesawing on these views but I stand firm like

the Northern Star. That is constant, Sir. I believe that the young offenders who find themselves sentenced to a term in Glendairy that a practical approach could be that they should be in St. Philip at Dodds, the Government Industrial Schools. It may be necessary to strengthen the perimeter fencing or something like that. I do not know. Then for those who find themselves now at the Industrial Schools a minimum kind of facility perhaps like a work camp. Let me leave out work because that may create images of some other kind of society. So let us say a kind of camp-like situation which can be developed elsewhere and I believe we could be on the way of dealing with a major problem and meeting some reforming approaches to the whole question of sentencing coming out of the criminal justice system.

I believe that if we put our heads together and if Members of this Chamber are given an early sight of the report coming out of the Commission that may be meeting on it, rather than having to wait until the end of the entire process when everybody else in the community have seen the report and then parliamentarians see it, I believe it would give us more time to consider the issue and also to help in the formulation of our opinions.

Sir, my time has expired and there are other points that I would wish to make but I will stop at this stage. Thank you.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Mr. Chairman, I want to respond to some of the Honourable Members who spoke starting with the Right Honourable gentleman who just spoke. I suppose in his time he would have read a report produced in 1980 by a committee which I had the privilege to chair which investigated certain occurrences at Dodds when Members may recall some of the boys went wild one night and burned down the hospital and there was near anarchy in the place.  
4.25 p.m.

Among the recommendations that we made in that Report was that Dodds and Summervale should be re-evaluated and perhaps what we needed was as the Honourable Member was saying a kind of junior residential institution for boys and one for girls and Dodds because of its structure and infrastructure be used more for hostel type institution. The Steering Committee on Penal Reform ought to have that report among its papers with a view to coming up with their own recommendations but that proposal is there. There were about 30 or 40 recommendations; some were implemented and others have been left over but that is a very worthwhile suggestion because however we take the penal system Government will have to be conscious of the cost implications and as far as possible if we can avoid building completely new structures that is the way we would recommend that we go.

That is why we have been talking about rehabilitating existing buildings like some schools which have been enclosed because of amalgamation. We should rehabilitate them just as they do with housing, using for example St. Thomas Primary for hostel accommodation for fire victims and so on. If we can find a school and the Prime Minister has mentioned for example a school in Boscobelle which he says has a very strong structure, perhaps that can be used in the system.

I would also give the Honourable Members an assurance that once the chairperson of the task force and the steering committee have produced their reports I will let Honourable Members have early sight of them. I am going to do for members on the other side what they never did for me.

Sir, the Honourable Member for St. Michael West Central made some very telling points. He made a very important contribution this afternoon. The first one I wish to deal with is the question of certificates of character. It was November 1994 when we came with a resolution for \$1.5 million to computerise the police force. I explained that when the computerisation of the force was complete you would be able to get a certificate of character in less than 10 minutes. That computerisation has gone well and as soon as it is fully operational I am sure there will be greater speed in the delivery of certificates of character.

On the other side, the question of spent convictions will depend upon the passing of the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act. That has been circulating and even the Press had it. We have to bring 3 bits of legislation virtually together, the Magistrates' Courts Bill which members have, the Bail Bill which parties have and the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act. In addition, it would be tidy to introduce the new system under the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act when the police department is fully computerised because they can record the information, store it but then produce what is necessary at an appropriate time not revealing the fact that the person had a conviction. There would be a time period or various time periods depending upon the length of the sentence. So after 10 years basically a conviction would be deemed spent but obviously for security purposes that information, the original conviction will be stored but it will not show up. When you send for a certificate of character after 12 years it will appear clean but we will still have the fact stored.

The Honourable Member also spoke about the court process officers. I had not intended in this debate to say one thing about that department. I have said publicly in the Press that this year we have to do some surgery in that department. It has functioned less than satisfactorily and one of the things we need to do is to upgrade that department. Honourable Members are aware of all kinds of

photographs that appeared in the newspapers of bottles of drinks in the department. We will draw a veil and start fresh in May. I will go down there and talk to the staff and let them know what the country expects.

We need to look at the upgrading of the post of Chief Marshal and indeed, in the Ministry under active consideration now are submissions from the Registrar for additional staff. We have to have a little sympathy with the marshals as much as we may be dissatisfied with the performance of certain of them. Remember marshals of the court process department are not given replacements when they go on sick leave or vacation leave. A marshal gets sick and he is off for 2 months. His summonses remain wherever they are kept. Some of them keep them in bags and all kinds of things and that has to be changed. We have to devise a system where we can have as it were auxiliaries who can be trained to come in and relieve the marshals as they fall sick or go on vacation so that the work of the courts is not tied up. It grinds to a standstill in a particular district when that marshal goes sick or on leave and it has always been so.

The time has come for a change. I want it clearly understood by the marshals. I recognise that there might be some concerns about the pace at which I am going but in this Ministry it is no longer business as usual.

Sir, I had to take issue with the Honourable Member for St. George South. I don't understand this argument about the disciplinary committee of the bar and the powers of the disciplinary committee of the bar. Lawyers have to be careful that they do not give the public the impression that they are arrogant and they feel that they are holier than thou, they are some kinds of sacred cow that cannot be touched. Lawyers must first of all recognise and I have always been of the firm belief that lawyers render social service and if you are a provider of a service and the service is not adequate or does not measure to certain standards, the consumer must have an opportunity and indeed a right to complain. I know that there are frivolous complaints. All of us have had experiences or heard of experiences of frivolous complaints. I had one complaint in my life years ago. If Honourable Msmbers will recall a husband and a wife from St. Philip South, Carol Fields asked me to work for his wife. I didn't know her from Christendom. It was the one contested divorce that I could recall for donkey years. The husband was a school teacher. He came to court and gave his evidence. He was cross examined. It was the first case of the High Court that Mr. Justice Rocheford did. Justice Rocheford held for the husband. She got vexed and went and swore an affidavit that she did not have an opportunity to put her case. The woman went on the witness stand and gave evidence to Justice Rocheford and she swore an affidavit. You get those kinds of frivolous things. It was a good thing that

Justice Rocheford was able to make his evidence book available to the Secretary of the Disciplinary Committee. It was dismissed and nothing more was heard of it. There are frivolous things, but there is a procedure.

4.35 p.m.

I do not feel that if somebody complains, or a member of the public complains about a lawyer that the lawyer should feel, well who is he or she to complain about me and who is the Registrar to write me. Write back and say there is nothing in this. Give chapter and verse. You have cranks in every society but to adopt the attitude that somehow the Disciplinary Committee of the Bar is, as Jamaicans say, "facety" to write a lawyer and say that so and so has lodged a complaint I think is totally wrong. We have had that law since 1973. Nothing has changed in it.

Indeed, there is the attitude that lawyers should not be asked to respond to something that they consider frivolous but to the client it is a matter of the greatest importance. To the lawyer he says it is frivolous because he probably understands but at least if he understands, the client does not. We should be humble enough to condescend upon giving an answer to put the client at ease or put whoever is the impartial adjudicator in a better position to determine where the truth of the matter lies.

In the case of Niles, and I say it because it is a Court of Appeal case, the Court was at pains to point out that Niles was written about the complaint. He did nothing. He was written the second time by the Deputy Registrar, Miss Beckles. He did not respond. The third time he was written and told that Mr. Smith is coming on such and such a day. There will be a meeting of the Disciplinary Committee the next day at 2:00 o'clock. He does not respond. You know what the Court of Appeal held? It held that far from claiming that he was not heard, he had been given every opportunity to put his side and he never did anything in his defence, not even write them back to say he had received the letter and he could not come.

The profession is self-regulating. I think all professions – the doctors are self regulating, why not the lawyers? Over the time we have seen that there are problems, perhaps with some of the procedures. In the Ezra Alleyne case I was able to show the Court of Appeal that there were areas of the rules that needed changing. I would expect the Bar to write me and ask me for certain amendments and so on. I have not received anything from them, not a complaint from the Bar Association about the operation of the Disciplinary Rules.

Sir, there are other matters that were raised but before I come to that and before we get into anything else, the debate started to get emotional. Before we get into

the emotional side of the debate, Sir, I want to give some facts about young people and what is happening.

The Probation Department was located from Country Road where it was housed in conditions very, very dilapidated and they were relocated to more commodious offices at Cmmpton Street last year. That Department, in my view, is understaffed. In 1995 it supervised 74 juvenile offenders who were placed on probation and 208 adults. In 1994 by comparison there were 34 juveniles and 179 adults. In addition to that, they have produced in excess of 1 500 reports, maintenance and social enquiry reports.

It is a department that, as I said, gives of its best but, again, we need additional staff. We cannot move to additional staff until we have the Husbands Report which, hopefully, will conceptualise a new department of Correctional Services in which the Probation Department has a role to play both in terms of the actual probation and its supervision of community service orders and so on.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member has one more minute.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: At the Industrial School Honourable Members will see in the Estimates at page 99 provision under Object 623 for \$200 000 to be spent on refurbishment, repairs, renovation of the roof and dormitory. That work will start in the new financial year.

Now, the average roll for the Government Industrial School for the period January to December 1995 was 61. The average for boys was 35; and hear this one. The average for girls was 25. That was a far cry from 10 years ago when we were thinking perhaps that we could close Summervale because we had three or four girls. As I say, Sir, it is a phenomenon that I cannot explain. The National Task Force on Crime Prevention when they choose to report might be able to explain this phenomenon. At that age, the age that makes one eligible for Summervale, there is growth in the population among girls.

At the Prison, there is really no growth. For the adult females there is really no growth. There are about 21 or 22, always averaging there, and a good proportion of those at Glendairy are drug mules. But at Summervale for the younger ones we have to be concerned because the numbers are growing. Eighty-four children were on remand at the Industrial School in 1995. Sixteen of those were committed. I am pleased to be able to tell Honourable Members that the period of assessment for a child sent to the Industrial School is now 12 weeks rather than 6. We are taking a longer time to do a thorough assessment of that child and a complete report including medical tests and drugs tests. Psychological and psychiatric testing are requested.

The Honourable Member for Christ Church East Central talked about what happens at the Prison and we must not look at it as a hotel and so on. At the Industrial School the children are taught carpentry, masonry, shoemaking, tailoring, agriculture, landscaping, cookery, laundry, auto mechanics, handicraft, needlecraft, home economics and typing. The boys participate in the BCA Division II Competition, Secondary Schools Football Division II and table tennis.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member must wind up. You can come back again.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: You may have seen some of them on television the other night posing in the Bodybuilding show. Then there is athletics, netball, and so on. We have a problem at Summervale. Summervale was built to hold 15. It now has 29, almost 100 per cent increase, so that is 100 per cent overcrowding. But we are giving consideration especially to the point made by the Honourable Member. Just to balance that, Sir, with what happens at the Prison, for those who are not aware, Sir, we are doing physical work at the Prison this year to improve the conditions for both prisoners and officers inside the Prison. Particular emphasis is going to be given to the farm project in this year, Sir.

4.45 p.m.

I said in here before we have about 10 or 12 acres at Lower Estate and another 23 in Waterford Bottom. It is our intention to have that land ploughed, rotivated and cultivated, Sir, in order that the land can help feed the population in prison. It makes a contribution, Sir, and there is contribution from the gardens and the livestock inside the Prison. In this regard, in the new financial year, we are making arrangements to have a full-time person on contract to organise the farm project for us, an officer who worked in the Ministry of Agriculture.

Do not believe that the prisoners just cool out, Sir. There are trained in all kinds of skills, Sir, carpentry, baking, masonry, furniture manufacturing, these chairs they make and repair, animal husbandry, tailoring and they even take 'O'level exams, in English and Mathematics. One of them has about six 'O'levels which he got up there on a previous occasion, came out, did not like it and went back in.

*Asides.*

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: That happens. There are people like that who just need the security of an institution and are uncomfortable in open society, but that is another argument and another debate.

You indicated to me, Sir, that my time was up. My final point, Sir, I have to make is that for the last

donkey years every year the Estimates have reflected a provision for a highway code, Sir. I want to announce, Sir, that at last Barbados will have a highway code. The Highway Code is at the **Printery** now. I would just be careful, I would say that by May Honourable Members will have copies of the Highway Code. It will be laid in. It is going to be distributed. I will explain the method of distribution later on in another response but the Highway Code at last is ready.

*On the motion of Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER, seconded by Hon. D. A. C. SZMMONS, Mr. Chairman reported progress to HIS HONOUR THE SPEAKER and asked for leave to sit again and Mr. SPEAKER resumed the Chair and reported accordingly.*

#### GOVERNMENT NOTICES

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Mr. Speaker, Sir, at this time I would wish to ask Your Honour's leave to revert to Government Notices.

Mr. SPEAKER: Leave is granted.

#### PAPERS

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I beg to lay the following:—

1. Land Valuation (Fresh Valuations) Order, 1996.

#### GOVERNMENT NOTICES

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

1. The Defamation Bill, 1996
2. A Resolution to grant the sum of \$22 443 866 from the Consolidated Fund to supplement the Estimates 1995-96 as shown in the Supplementary Estimates 1995-96 – No. 15.

#### FIRST READING OF BILLS

*On motion of Hon. D. A. C. SZMMONS, seconded by Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER, the Defamation Bill, 1996 was read a first time.*

#### SUSPENSION OF SITTING

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I beg to move that this sitting be suspended until 5.10 p.m.

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

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

4.53 p.m.

#### RESUMPTION

Mr. SPEAKER: This sitting is resumed. When the suspension was taken the House was in Committee of Supply, to that it should now revert.

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: Mr. Chairman, I am joining this debate fully aware that the Government's side has indicated that they would want to progress with the debate and I would not want to delay the Government unnecessarily but I would say I am a little disappointed that at this late stage where we are now in the last lap that we can safely record these Estimates, it is kind of late to progress these Estimate debates into new areas since some of these Heads are very important to the society and judging from what has occurred during the week we may indeed have to have a two week session of Estimates where there can be a complete debate of the Estimates rather than have from year to year the strategy of where when lashes are about to be shared by opposition parties that the strategy of a Government would be to hide certain heads and including the most important heads that we would have wanted to debate during this Estimate, that is the whole question of jobs and the creation of jobs within the public sector as so espoused by the Rt. Honourable **Prime** Minister. Yet we have had no opportunity during these Estimates to debate this whole confusion about jobs etc.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member is asked to note ...

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: That was by way of introduction, Mr. Speaker because at the time ...

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Just one minute, please. I think it is a reflection on the Chair somewhat as well when I hear about delays being made in this Honourable Chamber. First of all the Member is not speaking on the topic under consideration and secondly Members have up to a maximum of 15 minutes to speak at any one time and they may **decide** whether they would speak or not speak but the debate goes on until this evening.

I do not think we should reflect on the honour of other Honourable Members.

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: Mr. Chairman, I am just indicating my disappointment because I note that we have not had an opportunity to debate the heads of Economic Affairs, Health, Tourism, Labour, National Assistance Board, Education, Industry, Trade, Foreign Affairs. We have had no debate whatsoever for the whole week

on these areas and that is in light of the comments that I am making. Nevertheless I will take the highroad and I will also join in the debate under Head 30 and express some of the concerns I would have under this particular head.

The Honourable Attorney General cleared up some of the concerns that I had regarding the police certificate of character and I think that we are quite satisfied with what he has stated in this House. We are quite *ad idem* with him about the measures that he has proposed and we certainly want him to get them in place as soon as possible.

Now, Sir, the Honourable Attorney General also provided us with information which dealt specifically with the prisoners convicted of murder and presently being held in maximum security prison. I will state for the record that I am a supporter of the death penalty by hanging even though that is true there are a number of colleagues in this House who are opposed to the death penalty by way of hanging. But, as I relate to this issue in a political context, the Democratic Labour Party were pilloried and there was a perception in the public domain that the Democratic Labour Party administration was soft on crime, that we had an Attorney General who was not in favour of hanging and that we were allowing lawlessness to take place on the streets of Barbados but as evidenced by so many other areas of activity in this community the information provided by the Attorney General clearly shows the difficulty that was experienced by that administration and the Attorney General cannot by his own volition wake up one morning and decide that he is going to hang all 10 or 15 people. He cannot do it. Just as this present administration is unable to do that, the Democratic Labour Party was unable to do it at that time. Yet we were told that we were responsible for the lawlessness in the country because we would not hang anybody.

I want to make it very clear once again that this is another area where we were abused only to find out that the same continues. Nothing has changed. No hanging. The Government has changed but nothing has changed.

*Aside.*

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: Yes I can answer that because there are many who have spent 5 years in maximum security and maybe the Government or the Cabinet or whoever has to make a decision can make a decision without wasting any more time or money and commute them to life imprisonment. That is what you may need to do but I feel very sorry for some criminals who find themselves in domestic disputes and silly arguments. There is one here and I will call his name too because it is here, it is part of the record. Nelson, I know he killed a policeman. The day before he killed the policeman I saw the said individual in Bridgetown with a knife stabbing at another policeman.

*Aside.*

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: Okay. It is on appeal? I will not talk about it. I am informed that it has been appealed but that angered me. Those kinds of situations, Sir, anger you when you see clearly a case of total ignorance and then you believe you have the right to take somebody's life or threaten them. I am very offended by anybody who threatens another person's life in that manner. You do not own a person. There is an old saying, if you did not born them why do you want to take their lives. We have to bring some semblance of sanity to this society because right now we have seen crime deteriorate to the point where in my very own constituency, pow, pow, people are getting killed in broad daylight for no reason at all or over a slice of bread. That tells me that something is wrong.

*Aside.*

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: I am not passing judgement but it tells me that something is radically wrong in the society and I think that all three political parties should take some firm position on the question of drugs. We keep abusing each other politically saying that this body is doing that and to tell you the truth the persons who abuse drugs are the criminally minded elements in the society that would want to seek satisfaction in believing that these big boys or "big-ups" and so forth are involved in drugs. Well, I cannot speak for any other Member but I can tell you that this Honourable Member for St. Michael East has never once been involved in drugs. I believe that all of us as leaders in this country should make the call wherever we go in our constituencies or church groups or wherever to make sure that that scourge is rid from our society.  
5.20 p.m.

I have seen situations, Mr. Chairman, where innocent families are destroyed because one son or to a lesser extent one daughter would go and find himself or herself in bad company in the society and then take that drug problem into the homes, and drag innocent mothers and fathers before the Law Courts in support of them. It dehumanizes families and I believe that some provision should be made because of the extent of the problem to provide after care for families who have been devastated by an individual coming into the home and bringing the scourge of drugs in that home. Because on many, many occasions and from my research it tells me that other members are not necessarily involved in the drug taking themselves yet they are subjected and made to look and feel like total criminals because of one member of the family. They cannot abandon the individual. They cannot kick them out even though some mothers and fathers feel that they could get rid of them. There is a real problem that we have in the country, yet the state provides no therapy and no assistance for families who are so affected in this society. Maybe the time has come where we are going to have to go

and deliver therapy or make provision for the assistance of some of those families who are suffering. Many of them have to take up money which they do not have to bail out somebody in the home who is troubled. I have seen about 20 cases certainly within my constituency where homes have been badly affected and destroyed and if I were not in this House I would really express to you how I feel about them. But I feel very strongly about it and I think that our women have to be protected in this regard.

Mr. Chairman, the **area** that I want to talk about in this regard is that I would like to know that everybody in the society has a fair chance. There is clearly a problem where we do not have enough jobs to satisfy the society and there is going to be crime, there are going to be people who are abusing drugs, and there are going to be all **kinds** of problems in the society so people will find themselves in prison. I do not believe that people set out to want to go to prison just like that. I believe that the economic circumstances in the country make some of these people do stupidity and they find themselves before the Law Courts. There are several young women in this country now who are stupidly allowing criminals to tie cocaine onto their legs and feet and all over their bodies to drag all over the world as mules. It is something that we have to do a campaign on and warn our innocent daughters not to pay any attention to any drug pushers tying any cocaine onto their feet. They must have respect for themselves and I do not care what the economic circumstances are. The message must be very clear. Tell them to go and fly a kite **anytime** they bring something to tie on your leg. A woman has no right with anything tied to her leg. It is morally wrong for anything to be strapped to her leg or to her **body**. – (You are not going to make me say the wrong **thing** in this Honourable House.) – but the message must **be** clear that it is foolishness to allow any drug pusher or some stupid person in this society to tie anything onto your **body** and you are walking around like a mule. I really do not want to hear of one other Barbadian woman who is affected in that manner. We want to make ourselves clear that that is foolishness and absolute ignorance.

Mr. Chairman, I want to say that those young students who have "O" Levels and some with "A" Levels and a couple of them have university degrees need assistance very badly. I do not like the idea of sending them to the **mad** house environment. I do not like that at all. Most people feel that once they attend that unit down there that people in the society will deem them to be mad. They are not mad but some of them are just confused. The drugs have their head so confused that they do not know what to do or where to go. But they **are** offended by going into that mad house environment and I believe that we have **talked** about it in this House **from** time to time. I think the time has come where we must have a halfway house. I heard the Attorney General refer to a treatment centre and I must say

that I saw the use of the St. Joseph Hospital where several people were being rehabilitated at the St. Joseph Hospital. It was a bad decision to close it down because there are several reasons why it should still be opened and I am willing to debate the Government on it at any stage, if not all Honourable Members in this House. Because I believe that it was an error of judgment in **terms** of closing it down.

Mr. Chairman, I would want to compliment on this occasion the Prison After-care Committee. They are a group of persons who attend prison from time to time including the Honourable Member for St. Michael South East who attends regularly as a visitor.

#### *Aside.*

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: I have never gone to prison yet. The only time that I have ever been locked up is when I was locked up with the Honourable Member for St. Peter in Boscobel. The two of us were locked up together in Boscobel in a house in a kitchen. I know because I had on a "Cheese Lady" tee-shirt and it was important that I got out and I happened to be in a BLP home so it was important for me to get out. I had to find a way out. I was canvassing and I had to get out, but the two of us were locked up together.

But there are some committed Barbadians, Mr. Chairman, led by the Reverend Lucille Baird and there are some other individuals like Norma **Jackman** and Dr. Bradley Niles who regularly visit the prisons. While I was Minister of Community Development, I had the good occasion to meet with them on several occasions and to look at programmes to provide after-care for prisoners coming out of prison. Because as the Honourable Attorney General indicated, many of them come out and they do not know how to work their way back into the society. You would be surprised at the **kind** of complexes they develop. The society shuns them. The whole question of the police certificate of their character is a problem and they are divorced from the rest of the society. These groups of persons have been counselling, praying for and praying with, teaching and encouraging them to resume their lives and I really think that effort should not go unrecognized. It is a tremendous effort that they are involved in and I sincerely hope that the appropriate recognition is sent to those committed persons. They are doing a magnanimous job in the society and I really hope they will be complimented.

Mr. Chairman, I am aware that my time is up and if the debate continues there are a couple of more items under this Head that I would like to refer to.

Mr. D. St. E. **KELLMAN**: Mr. Chairman, there is one point that I would like the Honourable Member for

St. Thomas to answer and that is that I honestly believe that the Income Tax Act as it relates to pensions in Barbados should be fully interpreted by the Attorney General, because there are certain words in the Pension Act that seem to be misinterpreted by some people in Barbados, and I am a bit worried about this. Whenever one speaks about pensions in Barbados, the belief by certain employers and insurance companies is that when you give poor, black people money they will take it and drink it out.  
5.30 p.m.

Vesting, Mr. Chairman.

*Aside.*

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Right. We want an interpretation from the Attorney General, because **vesting**...

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: On a point of order, Mr. Chairman. I am not the Commissioner of Inland Revenue and therefore I do not interpret income tax laws or provide rulings. There is a problem with the provisions in the Income Tax Act about pensions and the 25%, there is an anomaly, but if he is asking Government to look at it with a view to amending it, that is a different matter. I really cannot interpret it for him or rule on it, because he will have to get the Commissioner of Inland Revenue to do that. I would be acting *ultra vires*.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: All I am asking the Honourable Attorney General to do is to make the necessary adjustments because, as far as I understand it, when something is vested in an employee it means that right belongs to that employee and when he retires that right is still his. When he leaves the employment, the right is still his. There are a lot of insurance companies who do not understand that a funded policy means that when the employer pays the money it goes automatically to a third party and that third party is only holding the money on behalf of...

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member has made his point relevant already, but to continue in that vein is to go over the line, so I would invite him to come in. The Honourable Attorney General has taken cognisance of your request.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: That is why I sat, Sir.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Mr. Chairman, in winding up... .

Rt. Hon. O. S. **ARTHUR**: Mr. Chairman, I would be grateful if the Honourable Attorney General could, for the sake of completeness, shed new light on the Commissions of Enquiries that have been established to investigate

matters, such as the random issue of public service licences and other matters.

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: Mr. Chairman, on a point of order. I know that the Prime Minister in his usual style is playing the fool...

*Asides.*

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Order, please.

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: ... and needs to be told that he is out of order.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Order, please. Honourable Members do not play the fool in here.

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: That has no relevance whatsoever.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member is asked to withdraw his comments about playing the fool. Honourable Members do not play the fool in here.

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: Yes, Mr. Chairman. The Right Honourable Prime Minister is being mischievous, but let the Honourable Attorney General update the Honourable House.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Being mischievous? I don't think Honourable Members are mischievous in this Chamber. The Honourable Member is asked to withdraw the word "mischievous".

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: The Right Honourable Prime Minister is behaving in his usual style, Sir.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Mr. Chairman, the Commission of Enquiry into public service vehicles is temporarily halted by order of the court. The Honourable Member for St. Michael East initiated certain proceedings in his name as Plaintiff. After having told the public that he welcomed the Commission, he then tried to stop it.

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: Mr. Chairman, on a point of order. That position is still true, providing the Commission of Enquiry is properly set up in law.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Sir, the position is this. The High Court gave a decision saying that there was nothing improper that **transpired**, nor was there anything improper in the constitution of the Commission. The Honourable Member for St. Michael East was not satisfied with that ruling of the High Court and he went to the Court of Appeal. The court said that pending the hearing of the appeal no further proceedings could take place. The only judgment that we have which is written, the judgment

of Mr. Justice Chase, said that the Commission was properly designated as an investigatory commission and, secondly, that in the conduct of the proceedings up to the point when the Honourable Member got frightened and stopped them...

Mr. B. M. **TAITT**: On a point of order, Sir. If any other Honourable Member had said that, we could consider it to be part of the frivolity of this hour in the evening coming immediately after the break, but the Honourable Member is not known to imbibe in anything that would make him talk foolishness, Sir, and the Honourable member knows he is not known to imbibe in anything that would make him talk foolishness. I know, Sir, you may have been wondering if on this occasion he had, but the truth is...

Hon. Miss B. A. **MILLER**: No, no, no, no, please.

Mr. B. M. **TAITT**: I am on a point of order.

Hon. Miss B. A. **MILLER**: On a point of order. He cannot use that kind of innuendo.

Mr. B. M. **TAITT**: Mr. Chairman, for an Attorney General to say that the Honourable Member was frightened is to further obviate the Honourable Member's legal rights, and the Attorney General should not be heard to be participating in that kind of dangerous activity. The Attorney General knows that every single person who has a suit, furthermore anyone who is falsely accused, has every right to explore every possible avenue to make sure that he gets his rights.

Hon. D. A. C. **SIMMONS**: It is indeed fortuitous that the Honourable Member for St. Michael West has just come in, Sir, in his dark suit like a dark night destroyer and any points that were taken in the case brought by the Honourable Member for St. Michael East as to the constitution of the Commission, the Honourable Member for St. Michael West can be assured that those points will be **corrected**, taken into account and dealt with in the establishment of the Commission of Enquiry into the St. Joseph Hospital. It is coming soon. He said he wanted it headed Investigatory Commission, yours will be headed Investigatory Commission. The one investigating you.

Mr. B. M. **TAITT**: On a point of order, Sir. Investigating me? The Honourable Member cannot put in the record that he is bringing a commission to investigate me. The Honourable Member has to correct that.

Hon. D. A. C. **SIMMONS**: The Commission of Enquiry investigating the operations of the St. Joseph Hospital during 1989 and March, 1995, a substantial portion of which involved the period when the Honourable

Member for St. Michael West had responsibility for the Hospital.

5.40 p.m.

Sir, let's move on to a couple of points that were raised by the Honourable Member for St. Lucy. I think when I spoke last time he was not in his seat. He asked a very important question today about the state of the Laws of Barbados. Let me just explain the history of this matter. I have every sympathy with the Honourable Member because it has been the tradition and the practice of this Honourable House that when new members enter the House they are given copies of the Laws of Barbados. The history of the matter is this. During the period 1986 to a date about August 1995, the volume of the Laws of Barbados were stored in 2 places. Some at the police band headquarters, the vast majority in the cellar which constitutes the basement of Marine House. They were stored in such a way that they were exposed to the elements and in some cases if there was driving rain it could get into the basement where they were. More particularly, they were exposed to the predatory behaviour of rats and other vermin. They were kept in an awful state for years - I am talking about 7-8 years - down in the basement.

It was so bad that certain officers in the Ministry didn't even want to go into the basement. Fortunately, I have not only an outstanding Permanent Secretary and an assiduous one but a courageous one and last June, I think it was, he volunteered to go with me where others would not go down in the basement in that musty place where the Laws of Barbados were in various conditions. Some were salvageable, a vast amount were not. We brought out those which were salvageable and engaged a group of youngsters for a small fee to fumigate and clean them up, but the fact is that we do not have complete sets. We have the odd volume and they are not even up to date.

In the Ministry itself we have the update. An assignment was given to one of the officers in the Ministry to let us look at the position with the laws, tell us what we need to do to get laws out in a hurry. Part of the problem is that the Government Printery which can probably do the job may have to do it in their overtime and we have to look at all the costs and negotiate the price. I wish to assure the Honourable Member that were it not for the fact that that officer has been ill for a couple of weeks I would have had a more up-to-date statement to give. As soon as she is able to resume duties this is a matter that we are going to press ahead with early in the new financial year because we recognise that it is a great inconvenience to Honourable Members, both here and in The Other Place who don't have laws but it really is nothing to do with this Government.

The Prime Minister has given instructions that we must do whatever is necessary at whatever cost to get

a supply of the Laws of Barbados up to date and available for Honourable Members in the shortest possible time. As soon as the lady comes back and gives us a report we will take the necessary action as a matter of emergency.

He also asked about resident beat officers and their roles and he was concerned about the question of promotion. Resident beat officers are meant to interact with communities and more and more we are going to be developing and intensifying the concept of community policing. I think it was last year that I said that in the planning which will start this year for new stations one of the things to which we will give consideration is closing Worthing Police Station which is badly located and setting up a community police force somewhere in the Wildey/Pine area which is heavily populated and take some of the strain off District A, Station Hill.

In addition to that, Sir, the problems which appeared to the Honourable Member to be problems in career path as between sergeants and constables, the police have submitted in draft new promotion rules for consideration by the Ministry. The truth is everybody has been too busy prior to this week to get together to consider the rules, but early in the new financial year now the pressure of Estimates is off that is one matter we will be addressing. Also, the police disciplinary rules and the police complaints authority. I have the Jamaica legislation on police complaints authority. I have the English legislation in the Police and Criminal Evidence Act of 1984. The English version seems to be a little heavy-handed. I have the experience also of Mr. Jeff Crawford, a Barbadian who has lived in London for many years, who is on the Police Complaints Authority and he has recommended a hybrid scheme to me. I have a lot of literature that he has sent but the point is that we have precedents from which we can now do adaptations to create our own police complaints authority.

Somebody mentioned about having to go to court. The point the Honourable Member mentioned about liquor licences is absolutely valuable. I thank the Honourable Member for St. Lucy for his farsightedness in that regard. It is something that I have been considering recently. It really is a great waste of manpower and time to have a bunch of people who are vying for liquor licences. No objections, but you bring seventy people to court a morning. They stand up in the hot sun in the yard. They are all called into court, stand at attention and hear the Magistrate say: "All granted". They were there for 2 or 3 hours.

Now we must in 1996 and beyond be in a position to make use of the computer and now that the police department has been virtually fully computerised this is one of the matters that I think we can put on computer and

where there **are** no objections I don't see the point in asking the person to come to court. In fact, a print-out can **be** done and sent to them by post because it is only administration. Similarly Sir, when we are up and running with the computerisation of the police department we will have to discuss with MTW, because under the Road Traffic Act, MTW is responsible, the question of pleading guilty by post. Somebody parks in Spry Street on the wrong side and gets a ticket, really should not have to go to court. We want to sort out a system where you agree you are wrong, send a cheque for \$25 or whatever and finish with that. We will record it and store it on the computer. All of that will be given attention this year.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: I wonder if the Minister would address the issue of the bicycles without lights. Apparently, bicycles are now imported into the country without lights and you can find people riding around any part of the urban St. Michael without lights. It seems to be a norm or a status thing.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: I must confess I was not aware that bicycles are imported without lights. It is a long time since I bought a bicycle but I know we do have problems with bicycles up and down the country without lights and they **are** a hazard to themselves. A couple of times I went close to them not spotting them early.

The Commissioner of Police is acutely aware of that problem and certain other related problems, not only bicycles without lights. In some districts in Barbados there are some youngsters who are using stolen bicycles, stolen motorcycles and uninsured motorcycles for the purpose of committing crime and in one or two areas creating a little terrorism in the districts. We are aware of those manoeuvres and the police department from time to time will take swift and stem action by way of sweeps and other things to deal with them; but the bicycle problem is a problem and we will have to enforce the law.

I am sure the Commissioner has the will to do it and as he has done in other areas in a very unobtrusive way he has got results by quiet and determined action. He is not a showman but he is as efficient and as effective as any of his predecessors and nobody must underestimate him because you don't see him on television shooting off. A different style of operation but just as effective or more.

Sir, I think I have said everything that can be said on Head 13 and answered everybody's concerns as best I could. One final question on parole. When I wanted to respond on parole the Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central was not in his place.

Sir, Barbados has been playing a leading role in developing a correctional programme for the region.

We are supported by the UN Office on Crime Prevention in Vienna and I signed a document in Argentina on December 1, in which most of the territories of CARICOM are committed to having the UN office in Vienna help us develop a correctional programme. It is going to cost US\$1.4 million provided they can get funding. They are now battling the project around the world for funding.

One of the emphases of that programme is going to be on reduction of prison population and in particular the use of parole. Parole is not a concept that is easily intelligible to Barbados. We have to do more public relations on it. It is a method that is accepted throughout the developed world to deal with overcrowding in prisons. One of the things I hope the new advisory board to the prisons will be looking at is that question of how to move towards a system of parole without any help from the UN project because we don't know when that will get off the ground. But in the meantime, we can examine, evaluate it and make recommendations.

Finally, Sir, in regard to the prison after-care committee I listened to the Honourable Member with regard to some of the persons he has in mind for that Committee. I welcome his suggestions. The lady, Mrs. Baird, is definitely in our minds. In fact, she has written me. Dr. Niles has already given invaluable help and there are a number of other people.

The Advisory Board is established under the Prisons Act. We passed the Bill in here a few weeks ago. It is not functioning yet. I have to have a meeting with them next week and we have sent out the letters of appointment. We will have the first meeting and I will give them their charge, as it were.

The Prison After-Care Committee is a different thing. That is set up under Rule 29 of the Prisons' Rules and that will help look after the prisoners and organise the prisoners when they are about to go out to try to steer them in the direction of work, help them to reintegrate into the society. We have to reconstitute that Prison After-Care Committee shortly. I will bear the 2 persons in mind, but they are already part of the scheme of things.

With those few words, I beg to move that Head 30 stand part.

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

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

**HEAD 39 – MINISTRY OF LABOUR, COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND SPORTS – \$39 394 789**

Hon. R. N. GREENIDGE: Mr. Chairman, I beg to move that Head 39 stand part and in so doing I want to

make just a few introductory comments. Persons may not realise it, Mr. Chairman, but this particular Ministry I always describe as being sprawling. The reason for that particular description is because under this particular Ministry we have the Ministry of Labour, the Labour Department, The National Training Board, TVET Council, Community Development, the Welfare Department, the National Systems Board, the Child Care Board, the Bureau of Women's Affairs, the National Sports Council and the Gymnasium.

If we were to look back to the last 5 years or so we would realise that when we total the personal emoluments in 1991-92 this particular Ministry would have been allocated \$27 485 118. In 1992-93 – \$20 068 528. In 1993-94 – \$19 502 348. In 1994-95 – \$38 259 049. In 1995-96 – \$41 391 974. This year the sum total allocated is \$44 324 072. The actual breakdown as to the respective agencies can be found between pages 182 and 184 of the Estimates.

6.00 p.m.

The overall point which that indicates, Mr. Chairman, is that for the second time in the last six years this Ministry's sum total would be in the \$40 million region. This would clearly indicate to us that this particular Government has a definitely clear social conscience because I believe that whenever you want to gauge how caring a Government is, perhaps the first area one should look to really is the area involving its social services. I do not think that there is a better barometer to measure than the social services departments. Clearly there is no intention by this Government to keep the allocation in the \$30 million region but, as you can see, in both years we would have passed the \$40 million mark which I referred to.

Mr. Chairman, if you look under the Ministry of Labour you will see a sum of \$300 000 and that sum is really earmarked for our Disability Unit. I have to say something about that at this stage, Mr. Chairman, because it is doing something which has never been done in Barbados. Just as we have an agency like the Child Care Board responsible for our unfortunate children, and the National Assistance Board caring for our senior citizens, the Bureau of Women's Affairs caring for issues relating to the development of women, we believe the time has come when Barbados should not drag itself through the mire of the Middle Ages any longer and we should put ourselves in the 21st Century. We have paid lip service to the disabled in this country for many, many years and yet having done that for the past decade, the disabled still believe that they are not accorded the same opportunities to develop their potential in the same way the normal persons can. Those with disabilities among us very often think that all they are there for is for people to see them as a strain on our financial resources.

When tourists come to this country very often we see letters in the newspapers complaining that we have not made enough preparations and so on, whether it be in terms of the public toilets, the **sidewalk** or what have you, for the disabled. Some of the tourists who come here are indeed people with disabilities. They complain about parking spots which, in other countries, are reserved for disabled people and very few of them would have been reserved here in Barbados for such persons, so we thought it necessary to set up in the Ministry a Disability Unit. We are going to have, no doubt, to put the necessary legislation in place. We will have to interact with a lot of social agencies, volunteer organisations, Churches, employers and unions. That Unit will coordinate all that work so that eventually we can have a complete programme for disabled persons.

I am going to speak on this, Mr. Chairman, because it is something new which we are doing and I am going to address it. I am not going to keep it a secret. I am going to address it because we want to encourage self-reliance and promote the involvement and participation of persons with disabilities in this country's socio-economic development. We want to eliminate the marginalisation and discrimination of persons with disabilities. We aim to provide opportunities for a better quality of life for persons with disabilities and to encourage and support the continuous research projects in related areas. It is nothing, as I said, Mr. Chairman, to keep secret. It is something which I am proud of and which I will keep repeating.

Obviously, Mr. Chairman, the Unit will have its work cut out. It will have to ascertain the numbers, range and ages of disabled persons. It will have to develop profiles of every adult person with a disability and it will have to create registers for all adult physically challenged persons as well as provide a directory of services and supports available to all persons with disabilities. I thought I would make that point concerning the disabled and the Unit which we are setting up in the Ministry.

I am aware, Mr. Chairman, that members of both sides have indicated to me that they want to speak on certain Heads that would fall under this Ministry's umbrella. Therefore, I will try to encapsulate a lot of what I had prepared to try to wind up in just about half an hour. It has now become patently clear to me that we must, and I do not think we have any choice in it, rationalise and coordinate properly our social services. The point cannot be made too strongly, Mr. Chairman. We have allocated some \$50 000 for this particular project. We have to rationalise and coordinate the Social Services.

6.10 p.m.

If over the next five minutes, or so, I sound a bit confused, if over the next few minutes or so, what I am saying sounds a bit confusing, I want to say perhaps, Sir, it could very well be deliberate.

We have a National Assistance Board ...

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: On a point of order. I just want to caution the Honourable Member. I do not think that the Honourable Member should deliberately confuse the House. I really think he should correct himself. I do not think that he should deliberately confuse the House. He said that he is going to deliberately confuse us.

*Asides.*

Mr. CHAIRMAN: I believe the Honourable Member is using a figure of expression and I believe that he would not confuse the House. I am sure he would not confuse the House.

Hon. R. N. GREENIDGE: As long as you understand, Mr. Chairman.

Let us look at a few things that happen at the level of our social services. The Welfare Department is responsible for recommending admissions of old people, generally, to our Geriatric Hospitals. The Welfare Department . . .

*Asides.*

Hon. R. N. GREENIDGE: Yes, the senior citizens. In a lot of the cases the National Assistance Home Helpers are the ones who actually come across those senior citizens in need of going to the Geriatric Hospitals. When they do that, it is the National Assistance Board that ends up recommending and requesting the admission, and so you have the appearance that one person is over in the person's territory.

You have instances, Mr. Chairman, where the National Assistance Board officers that is the same home helpers notice that there is someone in need of light or in need of water. If they go around and they notice a senior citizen in need of light or water they have to report that matter to the Welfare Department because the Welfare Department is responsible for providing the light and the water to the senior citizens.

There is overlap, there is duplication in our social services. The National Assistance Board provides housing and houses, and those houses are called welfare houses. One would think that by the very terminology that the houses fall under the Welfare Department, indeed, they fall under the National Assistance Board.

There are situations where the National Assistance Board officers and the Welfare Officers are both referred to as Welfare Officers, and these are some of the areas of overlap and I ~~daresay~~ of collision within our social services. The Welfare Department and the National

Assistance Board, both administer assistance in kind to elderly people. It is just a matter of who gives what but they both administer assistance in kind.

For instance, the National Assistance Board will be giving stoves and beds and those same stoves and beds are given by the Welfare Department in times of storms. The Welfare Department would be given spectacles. So when the National Assistance Board is giving things like beds and stoves, you get the Welfare Department giving spectacles, paying light bills, and so on. So, there is some collision, a lot of confusion and overlap. There are times when people are so confused that they do not know where to go.

Now the Welfare Department, Mr. Chairman, also will counsel families but if a child is involved, then the Child Care Board gets involved. These are things that we need to try to rationalise. Very often the only difference is who hands it out but very often the programmes are very similar.

I believe, Mr. Chairman, that all we will be doing, if we do not do this programme of rationalisation, is marking time, because we cannot approach the 21st Century with our social services in this very disorderly, muddled, confused and disorganised fashion.

We are incurring, without our realising it, a lot of wastage and will continue to do this, Mr. Chairman, unless we institute and undertake a sweeping, a comprehensive **kind** of integration of our social services. I believe, Mr. Chairman, that it will result in a better distribution of services and the frequent elimination of that overlap.

#### **Asides.**

Hon. R. N. GREENIDGE: We are not like you. Not this side, we do not downsize.

It will be a far more valuable allocation of our personnel if we try and rationalise it, Mr. Chairman.

This obviously, Mr. Chairman, is going to mean that we will also have to do some research into the pressures of the day. We have to look at the social needs which confront the people today and do a new needs assessment. We have to be asking ourselves, Mr. Chairman, if we are realistic in the type of welfare services that we give now and if the problems today are the same problems as they were in 1970s when they were first being tackled.

I believe, Mr. Chairman, that our rates, our cash benefits and so on would have to be revised. We cannot continue to give people, now-a-days, \$12 a week. A mother goes to the Welfare Department with a little child where

the father cannot be found and so on, and it is \$12 for her and \$16 a week for a disabled person and so on. We have to look at these things again, Mr. **Chairman**.

As I said, a lot of the needs could very well have changed. I believe, for instance, we have spoken about it today, that, maybe, the time has come when we need to look at things like, rather than providing some of the things which I have spoken about like spectacles and so on, that a lot of that money could better be spent now, Mr. Chairman, in this day and age on providing tools for people like the prisoners when they leave Glendairy.

We have to look and see if the homeless is not now a problem in Barbados, whereas it was not a problem in the 1970s. We have to do some preventative work, Mr. Chairman.

Now, I know that Members want to speak specifically on certain aspects of the Ministry, in particular, I believe they want to speak on things like the National Assistance Board. I believe, Mr. Chairman, that if any Government were given in the vicinity of \$10 million to spend on repairing the homes of senior citizens or providing homes for them, that \$10 000 000 could be very well spent in two years. The National Assistance Board will now expand its programme of repairing welfare houses and also repairing private houses and assisting with the re-siting of private houses.

6.20 p.m.

There are quite a few problems which they are experiencing in this regard because very often what happens is that when you go to move a welfare house from where it is located you cannot find a spot of land on which to put that welfare house when the senior citizen to whom it was allocated dies. We have many problems where the young relatives remain in the home of the senior citizen who has passed away and refuse to come out. These are problems with which we are faced from day to day.

In the area of the home help some very efficient young ladies are chosen for this programme and it is very important that they have a very good record because we do not want to have any and everybody going into old people's houses when there is money and so on around, pensions and what not. If it so happens that anyone who is not of good character is found to be on that programme, immediately the person is struck off but they provide care for the elderly and at the same time they reduce the need for institutional care. They assist persons who are bedridden and so on and who are suffering from chronic illnesses but who could be treated at home rather than being institutionalised. They also assist elderly persons who live alone and who receive no assistance from their friends and their relatives.

In 1994-95 there were approximately 900 persons employed in this programme. We went over the one thousand mark in 1995-96 and we are hoping to be in the area of 1300 by the end of this year. Mr. Chairman, we want to have this programme instituted throughout Barbados.

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

Hon. R. N. GREENIDGE: Then there are the Activity Centres – we have Eden Lodge, St. Bartholomew, St. John, St. Joseph and St. **Catherines** and one in St. Peter. That makes six of them so far. What really happens is that the seniors come out and they go to these centres and are involved in craft and other activities of that nature. I do not think, Mr. Chairman, that you can adequately give an account of this.

I would like to deal with the National Assistance Board, I would like to deal with the Child Care Board, I would like to deal with the Training Board and I think it is very unfortunate that we have come to a stage where I may not get another opportunity to speak unless I keep jumping up all the time.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Honourable Members are asked to note that the guillotine will come down at 7.30 p.m. so please be guided accordingly.

Mr. H. F. LASHLEY: Mr. Chairman, Sir, I rise on this occasion to make my small contribution to this debate in this Honourable Chamber this evening. Like the Honourable Member from St. **Philip** North I am very cognizant of the time factor that is prevailing here and the technicalities involved in this Honourable Chamber as we approach the guillotine. It is incumbent on me to allow other members to have their say on this important head, Head 39.

As I begin my contribution to this debate I would first like to begin by saying there is a prevailing atmosphere in Barbados where we start off by criticizing every aspect of governmental life and therefore it brings a very negative feeling towards those staff members that are employed in the various Government departments, especially statutory corporations.

I am saying that whenever there is an opportunity for us to praise a particular department we should do so at the highest level of this country which happens to be this Honourable Chamber. It is against that background that I would like to use this occasion to compliment the staff and particularly the Director at the National Assistance Board where I was formerly employed because from the time I was there he brought innovative programmes for the benefit

of the elderly in Barbados. While I was there I remember also that there was the establishment of the promotions committee which is headed by Sir Clyde Gollop. I promise him that the work of that committee, along with the staff and the Assistant Director, the National **Assistance** Board is doing a wonderful job. For instance there may be Honourable Members here in this Chamber today who do not know of the work that they are currently doing and have been doing for the last 4 or 5 years so just let me brief them and bring them up to date on what is really happening at the National Assistance Board. The work at the National Assistance Board is transcending all political boundaries and therefore dealing with what I always believe is the genesis of community development.

It is a strange thing that this promotions committee is doing but it is very developmental. Sir, they have under their arm pits a bereavement programme which basically sets out that when a person dies they offer this service of counselling and **trying** to ease the pain and affliction that death creates. This is a service that I feel should be highlighted some more in Barbados. People in Barbados should avail themselves of this service.

In addition, Sir, that promotions committee has worked assiduously to honour the senior citizens in Barbados who at the lower **socio-economic** bracket have contributed over the years to the development of this country. This award is in terms of a senior citizens award programme which takes place during the latter part of the year to coincide with October 1, which is termed by United Nations as International Senior Citizens day. It is good that the Board recognised these people because they are actually the pillars of this society and I feel it is a tremendous feat by the National Assistance Board to recognise these people and honour them while they are alive.

I have said in this Chamber on more **than** one occasion that we have a concept in Barbados that we should only honour people when they are dead. I think the Board is doing very, very well in that area.

Also I was reading in the newspapers this week that the Honourable Member for St. **Philip** North, the Minister who has responsibility for the National Assistance Board was receiving a bus at the Bridgetown Port and again, Sir, it is through the work of the promotions committee of the National Assistance Board and the hard work that they did that they were able to acquire this bus to help **our** senior citizens, particularly disabled people, who want to attend events throughout the country.  
6.30 p.m.

I think that this is a very good move. Unfortunately, the Honourable Member for St. **Philip** North happens to be the Minister to accept the bus and not the former

Minister of Transport, Mr. Johnny Tudor. But I think it is a very good move and I was very glad to see the Minister accepting the bus on behalf of the citizens of Barbados through the auspices of the National Assistance Board.

Sir, this same **Promotions** Committee, and you realize I am dwelling a lot on it because it delves at the heart of community development in Barbados, has organized a drama programme for senior citizens. Outside of Trinidad and Jamaica, there is no other Caribbean country that has a senior citizen drama programme and as far as I am concerned that has been a tremendous step again by the Board. What is happening however is that the work of the National Assistance Board needs to be highlighted a lot more in Barbados, because if the work of the Board is highlighted a lot of other functioning or so-called functioning Government Departments in Barbados will **look** very small.

Sir, the Drama Programme has done wonders for the senior citizens and they have virtually come back alive. We tend to write off senior citizens because in Barbados we believe that when you get 65 years you are supposed to be put on a kind of psychological reservation, fold up your hands and die. That is it. Now with the innovative **programmes** at the National Assistance Board through its Promotions Committee has put that myth to rest and has resurrected a number of senior citizens in Barbados. I am sure that if we **continue** along that vein they will continue to make this country a very happy and proud one, particularly if we could have the young people interact with **them** a lot more. I said that to praise the Promotions Committee.

I am very glad to hear that the Honourable Member for St. **Philip** North has mentioned the fact that we are going to expand the Housing Welfare Department at the National Assistance Board. This is a critical area, Sir, and I am very happy for this because that National Welfare Housing Programme could do a lot to help solve the unemployment problem in Barbados such as employing a number of carpenters, masons, electricians and labourers.

Sir, there is an accumulated amount of private houses to be repaired. **There** could be a possibility of about a thousand or more. It is no fault of the Minister because he would have accumulated that over a period of time when he **got** there. But **the** fact remains that we have over a thousand or more senior citizens private homes in Barbados that need to be **repaired**. In my constituency alone in **Haggatt Hall**, there are over 30 between Pasture Road and Monroe Road and what hurts me is that last week when I **was** in the constituency particularly in **Pasture** Road, Haggatt Hall, I went **to** an old lady's home whose floor has collapsed. When I said in the newspaper that the senior citizens houses are virtually a death trap, no one can **ask**

me to take that back because I saw it for myself. I am saying that we have to address this problem of repairs to the houses throughout Barbados particularly in Pasture Road, Haggatt Hall. If the other Members do not have senior citizens living in their constituency, it is no fault of mine. The fact is that I know that if we apply the ripple effect we will find that other senior citizens throughout Barbados will be suffering the same problems. As the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East who was talking on the policy of urbanization, she has this problem and I am saying that she spoke very eloquently on it. But the fact is that we have to address it because it is affecting the Honourable Member for St. Michael West, St. Michael East and my constituency and certainly hers and other Members on that side. What I am saying is that Government at this point in time has to pay a lot more attention to the problem of senior citizens homes in Barbados. If we approach it systematically, I am saying that the two prong attack will (1) help solve the unemployment problem in Barbados and (2) also the senior citizens will get their homes repaired.

Sir, my whole background is underlining with the community development and at the same time I believe that if we encourage the youth organizations to come out and help clear the debris around the senior citizens homes because a lot of them are over-crowded with debris that needs to be cleared up. There is absolutely no reason why the National Assistance Board cannot give a contract to a youth organization in Barbados to have them paint the senior citizens homes and approach it on that basis. You are doing two things. You **are** alleviating the problem of the senior citizens and you are developing funds for the youth organizations. As we go into the 21st century, we have got to be far more innovative. Sometimes we have to bow away a little bit from tradition and start being more innovative and getting things to happen in this country if we are to successfully chart a new course into the 21st century.

I am very **sorry** like the Honourable Member for St. **Philip** North that because of time constraints that we cannot delve into this whole area of community development, the National Assistance Board and Women's Affairs. But I hope that next year that one of the first Heads that will come up in this Honourable Chamber for discussion will be this Head under Labour and Community Development.

*Aside.*

Mr. H. F. LASHLEY: I believe in Barbados we should start linkages. We **are** now going into the 21st century and we hear about **Internet** and we should start linking. I believe that if we link the Community Development Division with what is happening at the National Assistance Board we will find that we are going to involve a lot more young people and we are going

to create a whole climate of **tranquility** and harmonious interaction between our youth and older persons. I am saying if we continue along that path we can develop a concept of the Prime Minister's Best Village or Best Community Competition which could inculcate the discipline of sports and culture and have one great harmonious interaction.

Sir, as I move to take my seat, yesterday when I was talking on National Housing I said that it is better to light a candle than to curse the dark. Let me say, Sir, there is a popular song writer in Barbados and he also sings a lot of folk songs by the name of Richard **Layne**. He said in his song as a tribute to the elderly in Barbados "Do Not Abandon Them – Lend A Helping Hand". Let me say to this Honourable Chamber this evening, Sir, that unless we get creative and innovative our senior citizens will suffer the same fate as possibly our youth. As I said pertaining to our senior citizens, let us not abandon them. Let us all in this Chamber lend a helping hand. I thank you, Sir.

Hon. Sir HAROLD St. JOHN: Mr. Chairman, I have always believed in saying that the true measure of a Government's democratic posture is gaged by its treatment of its elderly and its **treatment** of the youth. The position with respect to this area of activity is one that the Barbados Labour Party has a very proud record on. After nine years of Democratic Labour Party rule, I am very concerned that the honourable principal spokesman for the Democratic Labour Party in here, the Honourable Member for St. Michael South East, can bring to this Honourable House's attention the deplorable condition of some senior citizens' homes in Barbados.

6.40 p.m.

I have for a long time been reflecting on whether we in Barbados have not reached the stage where a complete and absolute overhaul of the delivery of our social services should not be undertaken. The piecemeal approach to this problem is one that profoundly disturbs me. We speak of the existing number of senior citizens and their needs, but we forget that if the **trend** continues with our demographic profile, we are going to have more and more people reaching senior citizen's age and less and less people who are going to be able to provide the taxes that will be needed to look after these people.

This is a matter that needs a profound study now, a holistic approach. For instance, a review of our existing pension laws, our taxation policies in relation to pensions, our present social security arrangements should be undertaken. It ought to be the aim of every Government to sensitise the public of Barbados to the viewpoint that each man and each woman in this country should make provision for their old age with the aid of the State through special inducements to do so.

This area also needs to be investigated, for another reason. We have some peculiar problems that are coming to the fore in Barbados arising from the fact that a large number of our senior citizens emigrated in the 1950s and 60s and some of them are returning to Barbados now, some very prosperous and well-off and in receipt of pensions and can take care of themselves. On the other hand, little is being said about those who **are** coming back who are ill, whether mentally or physically, or who are coming back in such a condition that they are becoming a charge on our resources. In my own constituency I have had to deal with no less than five or six cases in the last 18 months, and the existing legal framework in Barbados does not touch them. So that is another matter we have to deal with, the problem of the impact of emigration in the 50s and 60s and the welfare problems that arise.

We also have another problem that I must raise here of younger **people** being deported or sent home by **their parents** to their grandparents because of the behavioural patterns that they have been indulging in the countries in which many of **them** have been born. This is another serious problem we have to deal with.

Sir, now that the Government has had the opportunity to fashion its own Estimates in this regard, and has had a good look at what was done over the last nine years, and having looked at that I will say to my colleague do not be overwhelmed by the fact that there were obvious failures in that direction, because the neglect in this area is very notorious. I agree with the Honourable Member for St. Michael South East, we now have to go back to some solutions we were dealing with in the 80s.

The creation of the Home Help Scheme was an innovative decision. I am very glad to hear that they will be put on a five day week in the coming year. I **am** not **too** sure whether the result of that decision will be that those who were appointed as part time people will be able to go to a five day week. I have been discussing this matter and I am told that **there** are two categories of staff, **those** who were formerly on a five day week and were reduced to a three day week, and those who were always **on** a three day week. I do not know how you **are** going to solve that dilemma, because I know that those in my constituency are looking forward to working five days. I know also that there is a need out there for the home helpers to work five **days** to look after the old people, because we do not have any place to put a large number of people who **are** deserving of a place. I am told, for instance, that there **are** 700 applications for people who need to **go** into the geriatric institutions, for whom there is no **place**. **The** more the home helpers go around, the more we **are** discovering – this is really a very serious problem – and the least we could do for these people would be to ensure that our existing manpower in the form of home help will reach these people and help them.

On the question of house repairs, I cannot bear any talk from the Democratic **Labour** Party about house repairs. The Labour **Party** set up a scheme to repair houses on a systematic basis and the Honourable Members met that by a Commission of Enquiry. The Commission of Enquiry can only say that a record number were repaired in a record period of time.

**Aside.**

Hon. Sir **HAROLD** St. JOHN: Nobody over there could **be** a greater lobbyist for the senior citizens in Barbados than me, I am one. I want to see that my fellow senior citizens receive adequate treatment. Our position is that this is really an urgent matter and the attempt at rationalisation could not have taken place earlier. Those of us who are familiar with how the social services were delivered in the past in Barbados, particularly when we had a Vestry system and a Local Government system, would be familiar with the fact that the Public Health Inspector who paid daily rounds to various **districts** was the chief point of contact with the **welfare** Office. Very often because they were in the same Social Services Department, the Public Health Officer informed the Welfare Officer who went out **and** did these things. We have a different system now. The **modern** Public Health Inspector does not go out like that, but you do have the point of contact with the home helpers who can get in touch with the Welfare Office.  
6.50 p.m.

Now, I want to say a few things about the Welfare Office. I think we have a number of people who have great humanity and the right attitude in there, but, on the other hand, I have had to deal with some **too**. We **have** some bureaucrats who **are** interested in form filling, who are interested not in the delivery of the service but more in ensuring that the eligibility is proven 150 per cent. We have that. Now, to cater to that, I have sometimes to tell them, "Listen to me. While you are deciding, give the people a little help. If you find out later that they are not eligible, stop it, but right now you give them a little help." You **have** to deal with that. It is a problem. Now, this is a problem that is not new. It has always been a problem because various people approach their jobs in a different manner.

In the older times when you had a refusal **from** the particular officer you used to have almost an automatic right of appeal and it used to take place within a week. You had the Appeals Committee sitting every week that you would **be** able to appeal to. The procedure now is much more cumbersome. But I would like to see something like that done to ensure that in doubtful cases, borderline cases, that some measure of humanity is allowed to take place while all of the eligibility is being determined. If that does not happen what happens is, as every Honourable

Member in here knows, that as a member of Parliament you have to become the Welfare Officer and you have to provide the temporary assistance.

Some of us have been trying now as a result of years of experience to build up a little trust fund in your constituency where you try and have some money there as a supplement, so to speak. You have to be able to encourage people in your area to give a donation to this fund, but it is a very serious problem. I believe the amount of money that is voted in Barbados in this area is such that you should not have all of these difficulties in that respect.

Now, children are a very separate problem because there has been a complete revolution and outlook among young mothers in relation to the fathers and the support of their children. I remember a time over the last 30 years when you were practising in the Magistrates' Courts that on an affiliation court base the area used to be taken up with people who used to go to ensure that their children's father supported their children and if there was any difficulty every Welfare Office used to give help. I am told now that the Welfare Office usually refers children to the Child Care Board and so forth. They used to be lawyers. Each Local Government had a lawyer dealing with that. I think again there should be coordination of that.

The young people ought to know if they want help in framing their case to collect the money from the fathers that they can get it from the Government. Of course, the young women feel that if it is his child and he does not support it, many of them have a different attitude. I am not bothering my head with him. If he does not want to support his child I will work and support the child myself. That is the new attitude. It is a brand new attitude but I still think it is fair and right that if the State has to be called upon to support the children that at least the State should **try** and institute some kind of machinery. It may not be prosecution of the person before the Courts.

If you really want **to** know, and it really has not changed much, how gentle persuasion can work, I invite Honourable Members to read the **Jackson** Report into Local Government in Barbados and there is a chapter devoted to the informal court that used to be carried on in the City of Bridgetown. Men would come before the Court in the City of Bridgetown and the late Mayor used to say "I fine you \$10 a week or 10 shillings a week" and people used to go away and pay faithfully, although it had no legal sanction.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Mr. Chairman, it is in some ways a pity that this Head has not been permitted to be aired some more because I think the Honourable Member who just sat down could help to enlighten a number of the younger members in this House about the origins of some of the systems which we **have** because unless we

examine the evolution of social services in Barbados carefully, we are likely to have the new approach which seems to come almost every cycle where you **throw** away the baby, the bath water, the **bedroom** and everything instead of our examining the programme to see where it came from, where it is and how it can be improved.

I was taken by the Minister's intervention as he spoke about the need to rationalise the services. Now, I do not think that any sane person is ever going to be against the rationalisation of the dissemination of public assistance because it comes from taxpayers money and taxpayers will necessarily wish to know that they have an accounting system that is acceptable. But if we are not careful, we will apply theories that are promoted elsewhere which are not necessarily in keeping with the philosophy which drives social services in Barbados and, indeed, which drives the society that is Barbados.

There are a number of new-fangled ideas which are emanating from within the bowels of the Republican **Party** in the United States which are promulgated on the television in Barbados through CNN, and which leads a small **coterie** of people to make utterances concerning what needs to be done in Barbados in such a way as to suggest that the exclusion which occurs in the United States should form part of the **societal** arrangements in this country. We must be extremely careful to ensure that any decisions we make concerning the vulnerable groups in this country are based on our own analysis, our own philosophical grounding and our own concepts of what is right and good for Barbados.

Barbados did not achieve the status of being the most desirable place among the developing countries on earth to live by any scientific social engineering of the type which many of the international agencies and some of the regional agencies would submit as necessary for this part of the world. I say that just to caution the Minister that while it is his duty – and therefore he is going to find no resistance when he sets about doing it – to ensure that there is coordination, he must also be very careful that the word "rationalisation" is not permitted to be an instrument by which certain persons with certain agendas can have their way.

Now, Sir, I look at the basis for the establishment of the National Assistance Board, and if the Minister has not done so in recent times he should take another look at the law which established the National Assistance Board, he will see from the Act itself that it was always envisaged that there would be coordination between the Welfare **Department** and the National Assistance Board.

The Chief Welfare Officer under the statute, I had better read it, Sir, actually has the same duties as the

Minister. This is a phenomenon which he will **find** in various Acts in Barbados. For example, the Chief Medical Officer has the same authority as the Minister to carry out the functions of the Minister of Health under **the** Health Act. Similarly under the National Assistance Board, section 7, Part **IV**, "Functions of Chief Welfare Officer and Appeals." Let me just read a section, Mr. Chairman:

"Except as the Minister may otherwise direct, the Chief Welfare Officer shall discharge the functions conferred on the Minister under this Act, and every Welfare Officer or other public officer shall discharge functions under this Act as directed by the Minister or the Chief Welfare Officer and in so doing shall be deemed to be acting under the authority of this Act"

As it goes on, Part IV deals exclusively with the coordinating role which the Chief Welfare Officer is expected to play in the dispensing of social welfare in this country. That arises because of the **change-over** from Local Government to Central Government. **The** National Assistance Board is continuing the national assistance that used to be dispensed by the Local Government.

The other reason why you need to ensure that you have a National Assistance Board or some such entity is that whereas any funds received by **the** Welfare Department from the private sector or any other sector must go into the Consolidated Fund, under the appropriate section in the National Assistance Board Act, they are permitted to receive funds from any quarter, as is the Child Care Board.

Now, Mr. Chairman, what this means, as the Honourable Member for St. **Michael** South East said, is that the National Assistance Board is able to bring innovations to the implementation of their programme for national assistance to the elderly. They are able to **Q** things which might not be immediately possible under the aegis of the Welfare Department. But they cannot function, or ought not to function outside the **ambit** or ken of the Chief Welfare Officer.

From experience with the National Assistance Board and the Welfare Department as a representative of a constituency, I have to say that I have had nothing but the best cooperation from both agencies. We have no difficulty in my constituency arrangements of knowing for which things we should go to the National Assistance Board **and** for which things we should go to the Chief Welfare Officer. If there is a **fire** in the constituency we know that there are certain patterns which have to be followed in terms of making **arrangements** for assistance. We **know** that the Welfare Department is the one that will make provision for the immediate housing of persons who are out of their homes because of the **fire**. We know that it is from that Department that any provision for the immediate

requirements of a family that is made destitute by fire or some other disaster will be made.

7.05 p.m.

We also know that if there is an elderly person in the constituency who – for example, I will give you an exact example of a gentleman who had a stroke, went to the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, sent back home, he is incapable of looking after himself, does not have anybody at home and lives in a very tiny make shift house. He was sent back home because that is the process which is being followed by the Accident and Emergency Department or by the Queen Elizabeth Hospital.

The **point** is that when he comes back home in that environment, he is incapable of looking after himself and he has no one to look after him. That citizen, we believe, is an immediate patient in the Geriatric Hospital, but before he becomes a candidate for the Geriatric Hospital, to which he should have been referred by the Queen Elizabeth Hospital rather than being sent back home, he has to be referred by a doctor because the Geriatric Hospital is not a place for the destitute, it is a place for the elderly that is unwell.

So it is the Welfare Department that has to start the process. If a house is to be provided – in this case a house would not be provided – the Welfare Department would not refer to the National Assistance Board in these circumstances at all.

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

Mr. B. M. TAITT: The Welfare Department would know it has the responsibility to process that individual through the Polyclinic, or through the Hospital again, to the Geriatric Hospital.

Now we have found no particular difficulty with the two agencies and I would really caution the Minister, that he should **seek** to have more dovetailing, that he should **seek** to have a greater coordination. I do not think that in the context of rationalisation the Minister should allow himself to be goaded into any drastic regeneration of the existing services because while the process of rationalisation is going on, the people who need the services will find that they will be falling between two stools since nobody will know what is happening and the anxiety which begins to develop in existing agencies leads to a drop in morale and a diminution in the services.

The resources, the professional resources need to be beefed up in the Welfare Department. Each Welfare Officer has too large an area, I do not know what the case loads are, but I have dealt with three or four of them over the

period I have been representing people in St. Michael West, and they have to cover St. Michael West Central, they have to cover St. Michael West and these people live cheek by jowl and a large number of them are becoming elderly. By the year 2011 the elderly population in Barbados will double. And so we need to examine the capacity to deliver this service. We do not need to eliminate any of the ones we have now.

Mr. Chairman, in the two minutes that I have I want to say to the Minister – I want to say that I am very disappointed when I saw in the newspaper, what appeared to have been a leak, which outlined that a report had been done on the Child Care Board and in that leak it seemed as though the Director of the Child Care Board was being set up. I am not saying that it is so. I am saying, however, that the perception coming out of that article makes a mockery of the concept of having a study done.

If there was an inquiry, if there was a study, if there was a rationale then for that to have been leaked to the newspapers through whatever channel it was done is unacceptable, uncivilised behaviour.

There is a perception now, true or false, that the Government has set up, and, in fact, it has been written in the newspapers by one of the political parties, that the Government has targeted the Director of the Child Care Board. I am not saying that it is so, I am saying that leaking the report of the former Chief Welfare Officer to the newspapers, whomever did it, did the Minister, the Government, the writer of the report and the Child Care Board a disservice.

We are going to discuss this elsewhere because time is running out, but I hope that the Minister will recognise that constitutes a difficulty for a professional officer. I will wish to speak about that subsequently.

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: Mr. Chairman, I am conscious that the Minister would want to wind up and I will condense what I have to say in a few words.

There are some areas that I recognise the Minister has continued the policies that were left in place, certainly, by this Honourable Member when I was the Minister of Labour and Community Development, and I speak specifically about the disabled in this country.

#### **Asides.**

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: I would just like one minute to spend on you, though. One minute. So if it is not five minutes just give me one more minute to deal with you.

Mr. Chairman, the call by the Minister for assistance for the disabled is a call that we on this side of the

House support and would encourage all Honourable Members, wherever they go, to repeat the call on behalf of the disabled persons in this country. They often reported to me, when I was a Minister, that they had been, to some extent, neglected and discarded by the rest of the society and they want to feel very much part of it.

Briefly my comments on the senior citizens. I think that our side is clear in our minds that we are aware that there is additional money available to the Government. This is a time when money is flowing and we expect that the programme for the repairs to senior citizens' homes **will** not be a discriminatory one where you will be hand-picking whose homes you will be repairing from this constituency or that constituency because you are the person doing it, or you are the Government.

When we were in Government, at least when I was the Minister, at no time did I ever attempt to interfere with the smooth running of the department and I allowed all 28 constituencies to be serviced in regards to house repairs, even how little it could be. The **records** are there. The facts are there. The facts are very clear.

In addition to that, Mr. Chairman, I would like to compliment the home helpers who for the last 15 years, there have been award ceremonies recognising the work of the home helpers. I am going to recommend that the Honourable Minister in his restoring the five-day week, make sure that every single home helper is placed on a five-day week. We were confronted with the **same** problem, with some who were appointed on three-day and some on five-day et cetera. Some were downsized to three, but I believe that in all fairness that all home help workers should be placed on a five day week. I feel very strongly about that.

In addition to that, there are workers who have been working in the home help department for 15 years and they have no kind of job security whatsoever. There is no pension for them. I understand, but the time has come that we must seek to pay some attention to the fact that the home helpers have been giving significant service to this society, as has been recognised in the House of Assembly today and they have been praised and they should be given some kind of job security like anybody else. Fifteen years is a long time in a person's life to be making a contribution only to retire at age 65, no pension, you just go home with little or nothing after you have made a significant contribution to the society. We would want to deal with that.  
7.15 p.m.

I am going to come home but there is just one thing I would want to clear for the record because I am conscious of my time. Today in this Honourable House the

Honourable Member for the City made a scathing attack on the shelter which provides a rest for persons who ...

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Mr. Chairman, I did not attack the shelter. I attacked the Democratic Labour Party for seeing and conceptualising housing in the form of a shelter.

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: Mr. Chairman, I sat through that but it was an unfortunate comment because I cannot understand why the Honourable Member for the City would want to attack the Democratic Labour Party and associate that with a housing policy. It was the kind of attack that makes me wonder what else would come from the Honourable Member for the City. Can you imagine, Mr. Chairman, that that shelter sought to take people off the streets in the city where the Honourable Member is representative but she would want to deny those persons who were sleeping by the side of the road a good night's rest. It is typical of the Honourable Member for the City.

Iron. Miss B. A. MILLER: On a point of order, Mr. Chairman. I was making the point that instead of building proper housing the Democratic Labour Party conceptualised housing in the form of a shelter in 1994.

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Member went on to condemn a Knight for having associated his name with that shelter and I am offended when the Honourable Member can **come** into this house and **seek** to do that. It degrades the efforts of the Members of the National Assistance Board and there is the Seventh Day Adventist Church who have volunteered **their** time and services to give comfort to people who are homeless and without somewhere to rest. We must not come into this House of Assembly in this disgraceful manner trying to score cheap political points on the Democratic Labour Party.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member is **asked** to withdraw the word "disgraceful".

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: I withdraw it. Mr. Speaker, the record of this House must not reflect that kind of attitude, especially among Honourable Members.

Hon. R. N. GREENIDGE: Mr. **Chairman** I want to reply, especially to the Member who just sat and who **has** indicated that before they **demitted** office they had plans for a **similar** unit for the disability mentioned but they would have had this in their planning, Mr. Chairman. The point I made earlier was that never before was it actually executed and for the **first** time we are seeing something very tangible where the disabled are concerned.

He also referred to some of the home helpers and some people at National Assistance Board working for

15 years without job security. I want to say that as far as I know, within the last 8 or 9 years and we have only been in office for one year and therefore to say that for 15 years they were there without security of tenure is not so much pointing his finger at this administration but I think it is a real indictment on the last administration more so than on anyone else.

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: I **am** not pointing a **finger** at anybody. I am making the point that after 15 years it is only fair that we seek to address it. We are not the administration now and if we were we would have done it.

Hon. R. N. **GREENIDGE**: Let me explain, Mr. Chairman for the benefit of Honourable Members that what the Honourable Member for Christ Church said is absolutely **correct** and it is that there were some home helpers who were recruited from the very inception as **part**-time employees and therefore when they came to their job they came with the understanding that they would have been on **three** days but there were some who began on 5 days and who were later put on **3**. All of the ones who should have been on the 5-day week are back on 5-day week and it is our aim that all of the home helpers will eventually be put on a 5-day week.

I also want to let Honourable Members know that certainly as long as I am Minister it will be the policy that we will not be doing work at the National Assistance Board by favour as to which constituency you come from and who your Parliamentary representative is so therefore Members like the Member for St. Michael South East who complained about floors that he saw and the Member for St. Michael East will have no need to fear. There will be no favouritism. If there used to be favouritism I am sure that there will be no information.

Now, I know absolutely nothing, Mr. Chairman, about any intention by this Government, certainly not by this Minister, to put any pressure on the Director at the Child Care Board. I do not know where the Honourable Member for St. Michael West got that story. It is not the policy of this administration to put any pressure on any Director.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: On a point of order, I was particular to point out and I **am** not accusing the Government of anything. I was discussing the leaking of a **report** which has led to the perception. I do not know why I should have to defend that.

Hon. R. N. **GREENIDGE**: Mr. Chairman, the point I wanted to reply to is that the Honourable Member for St. Michael West seems to be making the point that no one in his constituency **is** ever confused as to where they should go for certain services.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: I am just making **the** point **that** it is the people in the Constituency office and not the people at large.

Hon. R. N. **GREENIDGE**: Mr. Chairman, what I was going to go on and say was that certainly this **does** not gel with what has been happening because I myself get a lot of calls from citizens asking me exactly what to do when such and such problems arise. Now I want to commend the Honourable Member for St. Michael South East for doing what I really intended to do myself but because of time constraints obviously I was unable to do. It is to make the point that members of the National Assistance Board, especially those who work with the Drama Group and the ones who work with the people who have lost their love ones and so on, I just wanted to commend them and say what a good job they are doing at the National Assistance Board. This particular Head I believe, Mr. Chairman, it is very unfortunate, that it had to come at this particular time when you are **virtually** rushing against the clock.  
7.25 p.m.

*Aside.*

Hon. R. N. **GREENIDGE**: I had enough material to talk for three days.

Mr. Chairman, I do not think that I would have been able to do justice to this particular Head in one and a half hours and it is indeed sad that it would have been debated like this because there are so many things you can say under Welfare. Indeed, Mr. Chairman, things like cricket and so on regarding the National Sports Council we have not even touched sports. It is unfortunate because we have very good ideas and things are beginning under the National Sports Council which we have not been able to discuss. There again this Government has put every worker back on the 5-day week at the National Sports Council. These are points which we would like to make. But, Mr. Chairman, all I can do at this stage is to ask that Head 39 stand part.

*The question that Head 39 stand part was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.*

HEAD 40 – MINISTRY OF INDUSTRY COMMERCE  
AND BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT –  
\$14 604 034

Rt. Hon. O. S. **ARTHUR**: I beg to move that Head 40 stand part.

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

*The question that Head 40 stand part was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.*

**HEAD 41 – MINISTRY OF INTERNATIONAL TRADE AND BUSINESS – \$4 724 674**

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: I **beg** to move that Head **41** stand **part**.

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

*The question that Head 41 stand part was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.*

**HEAD 42 – RECOMMITTAL FOR CORRECTION OF TOTAL MINISTRY OF PUBLIC WORKS, TRANSPORT AND HOUSING – \$98 784 069**

Hon. G. W. PAYNE: I beg to move that Head **42** be passed as amended.

Hon. R. C. EASTMOND: I beg to second that, Sir.

*The question that Head 42 as amended stand part was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.*

**HEAD 50 – POST OFFICE – \$7 563 301**

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: I beg to move that Head **50** stand **part**, Sir.

Hon. G. W. PAYNE: I beg to second that, Sir.

*The question that Head 50 stand part was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.*

**HEAD 12 – PARLIAMENT – \$3 969 731**

Rt. Hon. O. S. **ARTHUR**: Mr. Chairman, Sir, I **beg** to move that Head **12** stand **part**.

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

*The question that Head 12 stand part was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.*

**HEAD 13 – PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE – (As Amended) – \$30 817 076**

Rt. Hon. O. S. **ARTHUR**: Mr. Chairman, Sir, I **beg** to move that Head **13** as amended stand **part**.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: I beg to second that Head **13** as amended stand **part**.

*The question that Head 13 as amended stand part was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.*

**HEAD 15 – CABINET OFFICE (As Amended) \$5 382 440**

Rt. Hon. O. S. **ARTHUR**: Mr. Chairman, Sir, I **beg** to move that Head **15** as amended stand **part**.

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

*The question that Head 15 stand part was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.*

**HEAD 16 – MINISTRY OF THE CIVIL SERVICE – \$3 822 904**

Rt. Hon. O. S. **ARTHUR**: Mr. Chairman, Sir, I **beg** to move that Head **16** stand **part**.

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

*The question that Head 16 stand part was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.*

**HEAD 17 – OMBUDSMAN – \$178 737**

Rt. Hon. O. S. **ARTHUR**: I **beg** to move that Head 17 stand **part**, Sir.

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

*The question that Head 17 stand part was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.*

**HEAD 18 – AUDIT – \$339 638**

Rt. Hon. O. S. **ARTHUR**: I **beg** to move that Head 18 stand **part**, Sir.

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

*The question that Head 18 stand part was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.*

**HEAD 19 – (As Amended) MINISTRY OF FINANCE AND ECONOMIC AFFAIRS – \$60 589 572**

Rt. Hon. O. S. **ARTHUR**: I **beg** to move that Head 19 as amended stand **part**.

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

*The question that Head 19 as amended stand part was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.*

HEAD 34 – MINISTRY OF EDUCATION, YOUTH  
AFFAIRS AND CULTURE – \$148 613 130

Hon. Miss M. A. **MOTTLEY**: Mr. Chairman, I beg to move that Head 34 stand part.

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

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

HEAD 35 – MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS,  
TOURISM AND INTERNATIONAL TRANSPORT  
(As Amended) – \$81 301 518

Hon. Miss B. A. **MILLER**: I beg to move that Head 35 as amended stand part, Sir.

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

*The question that Head 35 as amended stand part was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.*

HEAD 36 – (As Amended) MINISTRY OF HEALTH  
AND THE ENVIRONMENT - \$197 111 956

Hon. Miss B. A. **MILLER**: I beg to move that Head 36 as amended stand part.

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

*The question that Head 36 as amended stand part was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.*

SCHEDULE – (As Amended) – \$771 219 616

Hon. Miss B. A. **MILLER**: I beg to move that the Schedule be the Schedule to the Bill.

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

*The question that the Schedule as amended be the Schedule of the Bill was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.*

*Clauses 1 through 4 were called and passed.*

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

*On separate motions of Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR, seconded by Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS, the Bill as amended was read a third time and passed.*  
7.35 p.m.

ADJOURNMENT

Hon. Miss B. A. **MILLER**: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that this House be now adjourn to Wednesday, the 27th day of March, 1996 at 11 o'clock in the morning.

Speaking on the Adjournment, Sir, I would wish to say that I believe I speak for Members on both sides of the House when I would offer particularly to yourself and the Chairman of Committees, the Clerks at the Table and the staff of Parliament, those who cater to us in every way, including the Reporters, those who sit in the Press Box, civil servants who sat for long hours, I believe I speak for all Members when I say thank you.

This Estimates debate of 1996 has been one, I think, without too much rancour. We have covered a lot of ground. We would have wished, as we often do at the end of an Estimates debate, that we had covered even more ground, and that is a matter for regret. It is also a matter for regret, Mr. Speaker, that the Leader of the Opposition, not so much as Leader of the Opposition but as Chairman of the Public Accounts Committee, could bear in mind that these Estimates which we have just approved are the public accounts, this is the substance of the public accounts, and it is a matter of much regret that the Chairman of the Public Accounts Committee and Leader of the Opposition should have flown away, should not have been here for this debate.

*Aside.*

Hon. Miss B. A. **MILLER**: It is not a matter of being cheap. This is the highest committee in the land, there is a high level of responsibility attached to the work that we do here. Not a single cent of the taxpayers' money can be spent in this Barbados without it having passed this House. This is the highest committee of the land in that respect. It is the debate to which we give five consecutive days. No other debate gets that attention in here. It is the debate when all systems are go, it is the debate when we have the opportunity to debate every and any subject.

*Aside.*

Hon. Miss B. A. **MILLER**: Mr. Speaker, it is not a matter of getting leave, it is a matter of how you interpret your responsibility. This is not a job we are doing for charity, this is not a job you are doing out of a sense of civic duty, this is a job for which the Leader of the Opposition is paid handsomely, and just as other Members have seen it fit to give up whatever else they were doing, as backbenchers and Members sitting on the Opposition benches have done to make themselves present here and do the people's business, it really is much deplored and much regretted that the Chairman of the Public Accounts Committee on the debate which discusses the public

accounts saw fit to absent himself. He is not away on an errand of mercy, **as** I understand it, he is not away on any duty as Leader of the Opposition, and I would have to say a special word of thanks to the Acting Leader of the Opposition who, unhappily, is not the Acting Chairman of the Public Accounts Committee, but still he handled it the best in the circumstances, and a special word has to be given to the Acting Leader of the Opposition for the way in which he has sought to pick up the slack that has been given to him. It would have made a great difference to this debate. In fact, Mr. Speaker, I would venture to suggest that it is the first time in the history of the debate **on** the Estimates of Expenditure that the Chairman of the Public Accounts Committee, the Leader of the Opposition, has not been present for the debate. I think that when you look...

#### Aside.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Ungracious? In the private sector he would have been fired for less. I am told I must indicate that he was here on Monday, but for Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday up to about half past 10.00 and for the whole day again today he has absented himself. This is also, Mr. Speaker, the Member on the Opposition bench who shadows Finance and Economic Affairs and a whole host of Heads which are very important in this debate. It really is a matter for regret. I congratulate the Honourable Member for St. Philip South that at short notice he has managed to keep the flag flying on the other side and it has indeed made a difference to the debate.

Mr. Speaker, as we close yet another debate we would say thanks to all those who helped to make it comfortable for us and who helped to make the debate interesting, if not a successful one certainly a productive debate, but we really do regret that it may have fallen short because of the absence of the chief pugilist on the other side.

Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that this House be adjourned until Wednesday, March 27, 1996 at 11 o'clock in the morning.

Mr. F. J. STUART: Mr. Speaker, I rise to associate myself with some of the remarks made by the Honourable Leader of the House, so far **as those** remarks relate to the role played by the staff of Parliament and all those other persons who contributed to the smoothness with which we were able to deliberate in this Honourable House over the past five days. I **am** not susceptible to **flattery**, but I also thank her for the very generous remarks which she made in respect of my role here in this House this week. My personality is not activated either by flattery or criticism. I remain unflappable. Whether they praise me or criticise me it really does not matter, but I really thank her for her very kind remarks. It is not really true to say that my role this week was sprung on me by surprise, I knew well in

advance of the unavoidable absence of the Honourable Member for St. John and fully prepared myself to step into his shoes. I must let him know when he returns, however, that he must not seriously take the protest of Honourable Members **on the** Other Side when he is present that they wish he were not here because when he is not here he is very sorely missed. I shall communicate that to him and I **am** sure he will not hurt the feelings of the Government in this way again.

7.45 p.m.

The only equivalent of this I think I can remember - this was long before I became a Member of this House - is when the late Tom **Adams** was Leader of the Opposition and **Chairman** of the Public Accounts Committee. He abandoned the Opposition on a private visit to New York and left the debate to Lionel **Craig** on national television. That is the only equivalent I can remember so there is nothing **unprecedented** about this. In the same way it **was** forgivable then, I think it is forgivable now.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. I was around here at that time. It was not the Estimates of Expenditure. It was a budget.

Mr. F. J. STUART: He left the Opposition to Mr. Lionel **Craig** on national television and the country has never recovered from **the** disgrace.

Mr. Speaker, I really want to thank all those who contributed to the debate this week and to the smoothness of the proceedings of the House. I thoroughly enjoyed it myself. I thought the standard of debate was quite high and there were some lightning flashes of insight by some Honourable Members on both sides that were wholly enlightening. I think we have **all benefited** from the experience.

With those few words, Mr. Speaker, I would just like to associate myself once again with the remarks made by the Honourable Leader of the House.

I **am** obliged to you, Sir.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Mr. Speaker, speaking on the adjournment, it must be pointed out to this House that the Honourable Member for St. John did a second **reading** speech in these Estimates, lest it be reported that he did not take part in this debate which is very important to these Estimates.

Rt. Hon. L. E. SANDIFORD: Mr. **Chairman**, when members on either side of this House are absent **from** debates or proceedings of the House I believe it is normal to attribute the best motives to their absence. I believe that should be extended not only to ordinary Members of

the House but to those who carry certain constitutional responsibilities. I **Q** not believe, however, that the major **significance** about this week's debate should be in terms of whether the Leader of the Opposition was present or not. This is not a meeting of **the** Public Accounts Committee. When the Public Accounts Committee meets, it will have before it all **the** records that may be necessary for the conduct of the affairs of that Committee. So I believe that **the** comments and statements made by the member for the City, it **is** just a lot of **grandstanding**.

*Asides.*

Rt. Hon. L. E. **SANDIFORD**: There have been many precedents, good and bad, and there have also been unprecedented things in the House. I have been searching my own recollection and I do not recall any or many occasions on which we have gone through the Estimates and the major Heads relating to Finance and Economic Affairs, the backbone of the Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure, have not been debated. I have searched my **memory** and I am ready to stand corrected on this. I am saying I do not recall it. In this particular instance, we have had the occasion, Sir, and a spectacle of the Prime Minister and Minister of Finance not debating the Heads which are central and core **to** the whole budgetary process and the process of the Appropriation of Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure not being debated at this time. I think, Sir, that account to this Honourable Chamber is far more worthy of **attracting** condemnation, or attracting criticism rather than the absence of the Leader of the Opposition on this occasion, Sir.  
7.50 p.m.

I would hope that those comments by the Leader of **the** House would not be taken seriously and that the comments made would be recognised for what they were, **an** attempt to score a cheap political point behind the back of **the** Member for St. John.

Mr. J. O. **TUDOR**: Mr. Speaker, speaking on the adjournment, I am submitting that the comments attributed to the Honourable Member for the City regarding the **Leader** of the **Opposition** should be properly struck from the record of this House. The reason why I am submitting that to you, Sir, is that the record of this House will show that for this sitting that the Honourable Member for St. John was present. I believe that in the interest of the accuracy of this House, that we should not have the Leader of **the** House deliberately misleading the House to suggest that the Honourable Member for St. John was absent. Nowhere in the record of this House will it show that the Honourable Member for St. John was absent at this sitting. This must be corrected and those comments made by the Honourable Member must be struck from the record.

*Aside.*

Mr. **SPEAKER**: Please, please. The Honourable Member, please.

*Asides.*

Mr. **SPEAKER**: You are asking that the records... please, please, please. You are saying that the Honourable Member for St. John was present, that the records would show that the Member was present?

Mr. J. O. **TUDOR**: Yes, Sir. I am saying, Sir, that the record of this House for this sitting will record the Honourable Member for St. John as being present. Therefore any suggestion that he was absent will be contrary to the record of this Parliament.

*Asides.*

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

Rt. Hon. O. S. **ARTHUR**: Mr. Speaker, Sir, at the outset of this debate I had expressed the wish that the House ...

*Asides.*

Mr. **SPEAKER**: I believe you were here for all of this sitting. I would like you, of course, to help the Chair in understanding what is your interpretation of "record" and of "sitting". You are telling me that the Honourable Member was not here and you are telling me that he was here. It is a little confusing.

Mr. B. M. **TAITT**: On a point of order, Sir, if I can be of some help with regard to the point being made by the Honourable Member. I am **speaking** only, Sir, with regard to the point being made by the Honourable Member. The record of **Hansard** for each sitting of the House begins with an attendance list headed by Your Honour. The record of this sitting, which is about to come to an end, if Honourable Members allow, will show that your Honour was present, that His Honour the Deputy was present, and then it will list the Member for Christ Church West, and it will go right to the Member for St. Michael South in the other order and it will go down and it will include the Leader of the Opposition. That is the only point he was seeking to make.

It means therefore, Sir, that in the body of that document, which will be an accurate record of the proceedings of this House, the front will show that the Leader of the Opposition was present but the Leader of this House will be reported as saying that he was not. That is the only point he was making, Sir.

Hon. Miss B. **A. MILLER**: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I never in my remarks referred to a sitting. I talked about

the Leader of the Opposition and the Chairman of the Public Accounts Committee flying away from the debate. That is an old time trick that people played in school and Sunday school. You go in for five minutes, get your name written on the register and then you go along about your business. That is an old time trick.

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

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Speaker, Sir, at the outset of this debate I had hoped that the House was going to have the benefit of a productive debate, Sir, and in many respects the Heads that were discussed, were discussed, I think, in the best parliamentary spirit.

I just want to say, Sir, that I was one of **the** people in whom the Member for St. John confided that he was not going to be here for the entire debate. I believe I can say that, Sir, without doing violence to him.

I am also in a position to say, Sir, that we did agree we would try to do the Heads that fall under our portfolios for the time that he was in the House. Therefore, Sir, if Head 19: Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs was not done, it is not because I was not interested in doing it, but that on the second day, and the day after, when it could have been done, Sir, he was not here.

I know, Sir, that the Member for St. Michael South wants me to say that because he is too experienced a parliamentarian, Sir, to issue an attack on which, too, such an easy defence could be advanced, were there not such a broader purpose to be served by his statement. I just want to say, Sir, that there was no intention on the part of this **Government** to avoid discussing the economy. Unemployment is down, **the** reserves are up, the economy is growing, inflation is low, Sir. I **am** willing, anxious and ready to debate the economy with the Member for St. Michael South, or the Member for St. John, or anybody in Barbados. Sir, I would want to debate the economy.

I have taken note, Sir, of those who before used to debate the economy and have now become social engineers. So, Sir, I have nothing to hide, nor run from, where a debate on the economy is concerned, Sir, but I just want to enter for the record that the Member for St. John did speak to me and I did agree that we would try to do the Heads in which we have a mutual interest in the period that he was here. He was not here, Sir, after a certain time.

I just want to say that for the record because the Member for St. Michael South has entered statements into the records of this Parliament that would convey the perception that we avoided dealing with the economy, after I had spoken, Sir, for three and a half hours in a second reading speech on the economy.

I just want to say, Sir, that I was made aware of the intention of the Member for St. John. I **trust**, Sir, that all other Members on that side were equally **made** aware. I can only assume that they were, Sir. I can only assume that they concurred fully in his decision **because** I know, Sir, that parties function **as** parliamentary **parties** and that a decision on the part of a Leader of a party not to be present at something as important as an Estimates &bate when the allocations and **provisions** of supplies to all Government Departments are going to be discussed, is something that a parliamentary group in full will discuss. I must assume that in **the** same way as the Leader of the Opposition discussed the matter with me, Sir, he discussed it fully with all of his colleagues and they all **agreed** there was no need for him to be here.

Sir, that the point that might be implicit in what I **am** trying to say is that if there is a stricture to be applied, I think it would be grossly unfair to apply the stricture to the Leader of the Opposition who did what he did with the full concurrence and support of his parliamentary colleagues. I **am** sure they **are all** ready and waiting, Sir, to share in the general stricture.

The only point that was being made by the Member for the City, Sir, is that a Chairman of the Public Accounts Committee ought to have an interest in that **part** of the budgetary process which is required by the Constitution. Perhaps, Sir, I ought to reinforce the point I made at the very outset of my speech that the budgetary process in Barbados has various parts. Sometimes, Sir, there **are** fireside chats, sometimes there are presentations of Budgetary Proposals. They are not required by the Constitution of this country. What is required by the Constitution...

#### **Asides.**

Rt. Hon. L. E. SANDIFORD: Mr. Speaker, I rise **on** a point of order. According to my count, Sir, there are only a few hours difference in terms of attendance in this Chamber during these Estimates between the Leader of the Opposition and the Prime Minister.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I give the House **the** assurance that I was very much here, as I am now, and I really must say, Sir, that the Member for St. Michael South has to be hallucinating.

Sir, the point I am making, in all this is, **as** I said, that the Estimates debate is not to be **under-estimated** because it is the only part of the budgetary exercise in Barbados that is specifically required by **the** Constitution of the country. The Constitution at Sections 108 and 109 speak to the process in which we have been embarked this week. It does not require a Minister of Finance to present what is called the Budgetary Proposals, and the

Member for the City, Sir, could be forgiven if, she feels **that** the Leader of the Opposition, who has a constitutional responsibility, should have taken seriously that part of the **budgetary** process that is required in the Constitution.

I can only say, Sir, speaking as a person who was once myself a Leader of an Opposition Party and a Chairman of the Public Accounts Committee, that I do not think that I would know how to begin to suggest to my parliamentary party that I should miss the Estimates debate, either in whole or in part, Sir. I do not know how I could **do** that. I can only speak for myself. The Member for Christ Church West has been Leader of the Opposition and Chairman of the Public Accounts Committee and I believe I can speak for him in this matter and say also that I do not know how he would have convinced his parliamentary party, whether it was 3 or 10 that it would have fallen properly to the Chairman of the Public Accounts Committee to miss the Estimates Debates, Sir. As I said, Sir, this has to do with our own interpretation of our role **in** relation to the discharge of our constitutional **responsibilities** and if the Democratic Labour Party parliamentary group was of the judgement that it was appropriate then I believe I cannot condemn them for that judgement. It was their judgement, they would have been given the full reason, the reason was not advanced to me and it is not therefore for us to enquire into mysterious **workings** of the Democratic Labour Party. Suffice it to say, Sir, that the parliamentary group of the Democratic Labour Party did agree that the Chairman of the Public Accounts Committee and their leader, should not have been present in the country for most of the meetings of the Public Accounts Committee when the question as to how much **was** to be paid to maids and so on, Sir, was being debated.  
8.05 p.m.

I want, Sir, to thank Members.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order, please.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: This, Sir, is my contribution to this debate. I just want to make a few points, Sir. The **Leader** of the Opposition, in fairness to him, did not make a secret of his intentions to me and that explains why Heads that would fall to him as Shadow Minister were not debated by me in this debate. He did not make it a secret to me and I am absolutely sure as well that it is not for me to enquire into the reasons.

Mr. Speaker, it is not for me to enquire into why the Democratic **Labour** Party's parliamentary group accepted it. It is none of my business. I just want to set the record clear that he said he was not going to be here. He asked me to advance those Heads that would fall to us and once he was not here, Sir, we did not discuss Finance for that reason. That, Sir, is a fact because it was my intention to debate all.

I just want to say now, Sir, that the House now would have had the benefit of discussing the Estimates and I just want to close on this point that earlier in the year the Budget circular sent out by the Director of Finance and Economic Affairs to Government Departments was made available as a document to the public when in point of fact it was intended to be a working document to Government Departments. A lot of sensationalism surrounded the publication of what at that time was perceived as the ceilings being prescribed and I really would like to speak through you, Sir, to those Members and the public that we are now in a position to get a better understanding of the budgetary process by comparing what was put out by the press as the intention of Government and its strictures, and what in fact are the facts. Every year there has always been the difference between the ceilings as set out in the budgetary circular and what comes to the House as the Estimates of this country. I just want to make the point that I trust that propriety will obtain in this process and that those persons who come into possession of public documents will in future put them in the correct context rather than seek to make sensational capital out of them in the way in which the public was led to believe that there was going to be a deficit of less than \$250 million and this was going to be cut and capital funds were going to be cut and things of that character. We have now had an opportunity to put it in context, Sir, and I feel a responsibility to put it into context if only because, Sir, the sending out of a budgetary circular is part of the process of administering the affairs of this country that must go on and on without being misrepresented by persons in the media who want to attach interpretations to public matters, not just our position of wanting to inform and enlighten the public but to seek sensation and in instances cheap sensation.

I truly want to thank Members who have participated in this debate. I have followed the debate keenly even when I was not on the Floor, Sir. When I thought my presence was necessary I came back on the Floor to defend the Government and to put the position of the Government. I thank all Members who have participated and I want to say it was the intention of the Government to discharge its responsibilities to execute these Estimates and the policies that are embodied in them.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I am disappointed that this debate on the adjournment which is customarily the opportunity to thank those who make our work smooth and easy during the week, has been steered into a direction that is both unnecessary and in some respects unseemly.

Mr. Speaker, **first** of all when you are leaving this House you do not have to beg for a step out. You do not have to go up and salute and say, "please teacher may I

go for a step out." Secondly the rules of this House allow an Honourable Member to be away for three months before the House has to take cognizance of it. But the point I want to make and the point that disappoints me most, is that the direction we have gone in, we were steered there by a loose canon type approach by the Leader of the House.

Mr. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member is asked to withdraw those words.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: I will rephrase it, Sir. I withdraw those words. I am sorry, Sir, that the traditions which have been upheld in this House by previous leaders appear in danger of falling to the ground. When the Leader of the House, whose major responsibility is to pour oil on troubled waters, to see that the Government's business is carried on in an expeditious manner, to establish good relationships between the various parties within the house, generally speaking to add to the dignity and perception which the public might have of the House. All of these fall within the **ambit** of the Leader of the House and when we come to a point where we should be saying thank you to the persons who helped to make this smooth and the Leader, herself, takes us in a direction which is then adumbrated by the Prime Minister who gets up in here and says that he was fully seized of the reasons why ...

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: On a point of order, Sir. I said I was not seized of the reasons. I was told in advance. I do not know why.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: The Prime Minister was told in advance but not only was the Prime Minister told in advance but the Leader of the House was told in advance. **8.15 p.m.**

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Mr. Speaker, Sir, on a point of order. I was never told anything in advance. On Monday behind Your Honour's Chair - you want it all now. You are going to get it all now. - the Leader of the Opposition said to me that he was going to be away and that he thought that he could get back for Friday, but he did not see the point of coming back Friday because he wants to meet with the branch in New York. That is what he said to me.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: So he cannot be in Bermuda if he is in New York. But that is part of what I am discussing, Sir. It is traditional that what is said behind the Speaker's Chair is left behind the **Speaker's** Chair. That is traditional. But I am making the point that the Leader has the position of Leader tottering, Sir, when he is on the brink of falling flat on his face. You saw and heard for yourself, Sir, our Leader of the House, this session, this night, that Honourable Member.

*Aside.*

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Well, Sir, if you are not sure, I have to make sure that you understand, Sir. That Honourable Member has the position of Leader of the House tottering on the brink of falling into...

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, please take your seat. Please must we have a "who did it" so far? I hope you would not want to continue like this.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Yes, Sir. We need to, Sir, because the Honourable Member's integrity has been put on line by bringing into account in talking about the Chairman of the Public Accounts Committee. I am going on to make two points, Sir. First of all, the Honourable Member was here when we went into Committee. We went into Committee at **5.48 p.m.** on Monday afternoon and, if the Prime Minister wanted to do his Heads, he could have done them at **5.49 p.m.** and the Honourable Member was here.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Chairman, on a point of order. The Head falling to me as Prime Minister started the debate and that is the point I have made. I am being serious now. The Leader of the House asked me to make sure that we do those Heads that fall to me and to him and we started with the Heads falling to us. That is a fact and it was by his agreement that we would start with Agriculture on the Tuesday morning. That was discussed with him as well, Sir.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: I am dealing with the Prime Minister's inability to deal with his Heads because he had reached an agreement with the Leader of the Opposition. I am saying so that the information is made crystal clear that we **went** into Committee at **5.48 p.m.**

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: The **Prime** Minister does not call Heads in this House, Sir. There is no inability of the Prime Minister to deal with his Head, Sir. I am going to ask that those remarks be withdrawn. My Heads have not **been** called. I would have been glad if my Heads had been called, Mr. Speaker, and I am going to ask that the remark of my inability to deal with my Heads be withdrawn.

Mr. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member is asking that those remarks be withdrawn.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Very well, Sir. Sorry, Sir, I withdraw those remarks. If the Honourable Member said that he had the ability to call the Heads, I am only saying that he did not call them. He had the ability to call them and he did not call them.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Speaker, that is hypocrisy because the Member for St. Michael West also lambasted the Leader of the Opposition for not being here behind the Chair too.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: And I say that that is an untruth. I am saying that the **Prime** Minister is now telling an untruth. I state categorically that, if I discussed with the Prime Minister his absence, my eyes should **roll** out here. If I discussed with that Prime Minister anything to do with the absence of the Leader of the Opposition, may I go deaf, dumb and blind now. He is telling an untruth in this House, Sir – that **Prime** Minister. I swear on my children's lives that I did not discuss at all with the Prime Minister any matter to do with the Leader of the Opposition. You **cannot** come in here and keep telling lies. I withdraw that, Sir.

*Aside.*

Mr. B. M. TAITT: I need to make it absolutely clear that a Prime Minister has a responsibility not to make frivolous statements of untruths. Any Prime Minister must be very careful of what he utters in the House of Assembly. I am going on to make the point, Sir...

*Aside.*

Mr. B. M. TAITT: You cannot do that to me. You can do it to the others but not to me. You have to come good when it comes to me.

Mr. Speaker, I am making the point that this part of the debate is thoroughly and completely unnecessary, this business of who is here. They talked about the Public Accounts Committee. Nothing goes before the Public Accounts Committee that has not been laid in a document by the Accountant General in this Parliament and therefore for the **Chairman** of the Public Accounts Committee to have to be here for a debate that is current is utter intellectual rubbish. What goes before the Public Accounts

Committee under the terms of reference of the Public Accounts Committee of Parliament must first form part of a report by the Auditor General to this House. Therefore, the need for the Chairman of the Public Accounts Committee to be here for a current debate is pure rubbish.

I am going to stop now, Sir, but I had to put that into the marketplace in the unlikely event that any reporter of this House would have taken the remarks of the Leader of the House **too** seriously. It was necessary to put the counter-information into the marketplace as well. I think, Sir, to seek to make a massive issue out of the absence of the Leader of the Opposition indicates that the Government did not feel that it has won this debate. If the Government felt that it had won this debate, it would not be necessary to manufacture an issue in the language in which it was put. It appears to me that the usual pattern of having sent certain information via the scribes to the place where such information is disseminated to the rest of the population may have led them to feel it necessary to put a double dose of propaganda out in respect of these Estimates. If the Member for St. Thomas had been leading this House...

*Aside.*

Mr. B. M. TAITT: All right, Sir, I will not go down that road.

*The question that this Honourable House be now adjourned until Wednesday, March 27, 1996 at 11.00 a.m. was put and resolved in the affirmative without division, and Mr. SPEAKER adjourned the sitting accordingly. 8.25 p.m.*

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ARTHUR, Rt. Hon. **O. S.** (St. Peter)  
CARTER, Mr. D. (Christ Church East Central)  
CLARKE, Mr. G. A. (St. George North)  
EASTMOND, Hon. R. **C.**(St. James North)  
EDGHILL, Mr. J. M. (Christ Church West Central)  
FORDE, Mr. H. **deB.** (Christ Church West)  
GREENIDGE, Hon. R. N. (St. **Philip** North)  
HAYNES, Dr. R. C. (St. Michael South Central)  
KELLMAN, Mr. D. St. E. (St. Lucy)  
LASHLEY, Mr. H. F. (St. Michael South East)  
MARSHALL, His Honour R. D. (St. Michael West Central)  
MILLER, Hon. Miss. B. A. (City of Bridgetown)  
MOTTLEY, Hon. Miss. M. A. (St. Michael North East)  
PAYNE, Hon. G. W. (St. Andrew)  
St. JOHN, Hon. Sir Harold (Christ Church South)  
SANDIFORD, Rt. Hon. L. E. (St. Michael South)  
SIMMONS, Hon. D. A. C. (St. **Thomas**)  
STUART, Mr. F. J. (St. **Philip** South)  
TAITT, Mr. B. M. (St. Michael West)  
THOMPSON, Mr. D. J. H. (St. John)  
**TOPPIN**, Hon. R. St. C. (St. Michael North)  
TUDOR, Mr. J. **O.** (St. Michael East)  
TULL, Mr. L. R. (St. George South)  
WEEKES, Mr. L. A. (St. Michael North West)